



About the SPCA

How did the Society originate?

The Society originated in England in the late 1800's at a time of great animal use and abuse. Animals were used in many situations to provide power for things such as transport. Blood sports such as bull-baiting and cockfighting were commonplace, providing savage forms of crude "entertainment". The first law to protect animals was passed in 1822 after a long struggle by several people, in particular William Wilberforce of anti-slavery fame, and Richard Martin, otherwise known as Humanity Dick. Two years later, in 1824, the Rev Arthur Broome formed the SPCA in London. These three men, with others, proceeded to take many prosecutions for breaches of the new Act. The Society received royal patronage in 1840.

New Zealand origins

Along with other things British, the early settlers brought with them the laws of England, and thus the English Protection of Animals Act 1835 became part of our law. This was replaced in 1878 by the first New Zealand Act protecting animals. By this time the settlers had time to think of other things besides establishing the necessities of life, and in 1872 the first SPCA was formed in Canterbury, quickly followed by the other main centres. In 1933, the various separate Societies decided to amalgamate as a Federation. Out of this has grown the national organisation known as the RNZSPCA. Gradually, smaller communities established their own branches and today there are about 50 local SPCA's throughout the country.

Wellington SPCA

Wellington SPCA was formed in 1884 and on average helps about 5,000 animals every year. Wellington SPCA consists of two animal centres, one in Newtown and the other in Waikanae. There are six Animal Welfare Inspectors that handle animal emergencies and investigate animal welfare complaints. The shelters helps reunite lost pets with their families, finds permanent loving homes for pets with new families, provides advise on animal behaviour and training, offers full veterinary services and low cost and even free de-sexing of animals for people who qualify. The shelter also has a retail shop providing animals with collars, food, flea control, and more. An education programme is available to schools, community groups

and anyone wanting to learn more and is run alongside an Animal Therapy programme that visits people in hospitals, rest homes and youth at risk.

How is the Society funded?

The Society relies on donations, bequests and its own fund-raising efforts. Unfortunately the SPCA does not get automatic central or local government funding. Wellington SPCA is completely reliant on donations from members of the public to raise the \$2.8 million it needs to run each year. The SPCA is the only non profit organisation that enforces government legislation (Animal Welfare Act 1999) yet receives no funding do so.

Animal Centres

Facilities vary throughout New Zealand from large animal centres to a few cages in someone's backyard. Even where large complexes exist, much reliance is placed on the help of voluntary workers.

What is the law relating to animal welfare?

This is the Animal Welfare Act 1999. It is a very wide-ranging Act and deals with offences in the handling and management of animals in this country. The act requires people caring for animals provide five things including; proper and sufficient food and water, adequate shelter, the ability to display normal patterns of behaviour, appropriate physical handling, and protection from and rapid diagnosis of injury and disease. Codes of minimum standards based on the Animal Welfare Act are set so low that factory farming situations such as battery hens and sow crates are perfectly legal yet clearly do not allow hens or sows to express normal patterns of behaviour in factory type situations.

What are the more common offences?

- Failing to provide an animal with adequate food, water and shelter.
- Deliberate acts of cruelty towards an animal.
- Failing to seek necessary veterinary advice.

How can I help?

1. Always set an example yourself of kindness and thoughtfulness towards animals.
2. Notify your local SPCA of injured or suffering animals.
3. Become a financial supporter of the SPCA. Wellington SPCA has a donation programme which allows people to sponsor cages.
4. Volunteer or become a fosterer.