

# 2023 Election Scorecard: Background Document

## Overview

We know that animals are important to people. Animals are central to the New Zealand way of life: our heritage is closely bound with farming and animals<sup>1</sup>. We have one of the highest rates of companion animal ownership in the world<sup>2</sup>, 90% of New Zealand adults believe it is important to protect the welfare of farmed animals<sup>3</sup>, and many of us are driven to protect our native wildlife<sup>4</sup>. Public support is strong for effective animal protection policies.

SPCA is the preeminent animal welfare and advocacy organisation in New Zealand. The Society has been in existence for over 150 years with a supporter base representing more than 100,000 New Zealanders across the nation. The organisation includes 29 Animal Welfare Centres across New Zealand and approximately 60 inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

Ahead of the 2023 Election, SPCA has launched a scorecard outlining where parties stand on eight key issues. The scorecard has been prepared to raise awareness of animal welfare issues and to prevent cruelty towards animals by summarising the position of political parties on the policy issues relevant to the charitable purpose and vision of SPCA. SPCA does not promote or oppose political parties or direct people how to vote. To find out more about SPCA's advocacy work, visit [spca.nz/advocacy](https://spca.nz/advocacy).

## How we created the scorecard

In early 2023, SPCA published our [policy recommendations](#) document as a guide to action for political parties to improve the lives of animals in New Zealand.

From mid-August to early September we contacted all registered political parties asking for their responses to a questionnaire against eight key animal welfare priorities. One additional question was open-ended to understand any additional goals the party had for improving animal welfare. Every party that responded is included in the scorecard. The information they provided has been used to create the scorecard graphic.

The scorecard represents the view of SPCA New Zealand on the party positions, and should not be relied upon as a sole source of information. More information on party policies can be found on each parties' website. In addition, the verbatim responses are included below for those who wish to read the full responses.

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<sup>1</sup> [New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Companion Animals in New Zealand 2020 Report](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Animal Policy International: 2023 Horizon Poll](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Department of Conservation National Survey: Attitudes to Conservation](#)



## What can you do?

- **Educate yourself and others**  
Learn about where the parties stand on key animal welfare priorities and share our scorecard
- **Engage with political parties**  
Write, call or contact parties on social media to let them know what you think
- **Follow SPCA**  
Keep up with SPCA's advocacy work by following us and [signing up to our newsletter](#)

## The priorities

SPCA sent the below background information to every party, and included a link to our 2023 [policy recommendations](#). We asked each party whether they supported these priorities, which were gathered from our policy recommendations document, SPCA's strategy and position statements, and our most frequently asked questions from supporters.

Issue	Description	SPCA Position
<b>Implement a National Cat Act</b>	Current ad hoc management of cats is ineffective and inhumane, impacting on the cats themselves, native wildlife, and our communities. <a href="#">A National Cat Act</a> will provide for comprehensive and consistent management (including requiring desexing and microchipping of companion cats).	<a href="#">National Cat Legislation for New Zealand: Background Document</a> <a href="#">Desexing Position Statement</a> <a href="#">Identification of Companion Animals Position Statement</a>
<b>Phase out commercial greyhound racing</b>	The greyhound racing industry has a demonstrated history of being unwilling or unable to address animal welfare concerns. In an independent poll commissioned by SPCA, 74% of respondents would vote to ban greyhound racing in a referendum.	<a href="#">Greyhound Racing Position Statement</a> <a href="#">Greyhound Racing – a survey of New Zealand opinion</a>
<b>Ban the private sale and use of fireworks</b>	Firework noise has a serious negative impact on the welfare of companion animals, wildlife, and farmed animals. Harms are preventable through the prohibition on the sale and use of fireworks by members of the public.	<a href="#">Fireworks Position Statement</a>
<b>Pets in rentals</b>	In an environment where animal rescues are struggling with adoption rates, over half of households who don't own a companion animal would like to - but 33% of them cannot adopt due to living in rental accommodation. The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act 2020 failed to allow more tenants to have companion animals.	<a href="#">Keeping People and Pets Together Position Statement</a> <a href="#">Pet-friendly Communities Position Statement</a>



<b>End the use of cages in farming</b>	The use of cages and close confinement prevents animals from displaying normal behaviour, causing distress and suffering. Over 112,000 people signed a petition to ban farrowing crates, and all supermarkets and major retailers have already agreed to go cage-free for hens.	<a href="#">Farrowing Crates Position Statement</a> <a href="#">Layer Hen Housing Position Statement</a> <a href="#">Intensive Farming Position Statement</a>
<b>Maintain the live export ban</b>	One of the most celebrated and significant signs of progress for New Zealand animals in decades was the ban on the export of livestock by sea, which came into force in 2023. Those who profit from the livestock export industry continue to lobby for the ban to be overturned.	<a href="#">Live Export Position Statement</a> <a href="#">SPCA celebrates historic decision to ban live exports following decades-long campaign</a>
<b>Appoint a Commissioner for Animals</b>	The Ministry for Primary Industries serves a dual function of promoting growth of the animal agricultural industry while also safeguarding animal welfare, creating a conflict of interest. To address this conflict it is vital to appoint an independent office for animals with the appropriate authority and resources to advocate for animal welfare.	<a href="#">Commissioner for Animals Position Statement</a> <a href="#">SPCA supportive of “prompt and substantial review” of animal welfare secondary legislation</a>
<b>Permanent tethering/chaining of dogs</b>	The issue of permanently tethered dogs is one of the most common issues encountered by SPCA Inspectors. Some dogs are being subject to years of continual physical and mental suffering. Regulating permanent tethering of dogs would allow inspectors to take appropriate steps.	<a href="#">Tethering (Companion Animals) Position Statement</a> <a href="#">Policy Brief calling for regulations to address prolonged tethering and confinement of dogs</a>
<b>Improving animal welfare in general</b>	Animals are central to the New Zealand way of life: our heritage is closely bound with farming and animals. We have one of the highest rates of companion animal ownership in the world, consumers are increasingly concerned about where their food comes from, and we have unique wildlife to protect. Public support is strong for policies that address animal welfare.	See our <a href="#">advocacy webpage</a> for more about SPCA’s advocacy work



## Full response from each party

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**If elected, what will your party do to create a better New Zealand for all animals?**

## ACT New Zealand

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
<b>Does your party support new national legislation for cat management that would require owners to desex and microchip their cats?</b>	ACT has no policy on a National Cat Act. In general, ACT prefer to leave local issues up to local councils to make decisions for their areas.
<b>Does your party support a ban on commercial greyhound racing with a phase-out period?</b>	No. Animal welfare issues should be dealt with through the Animal Welfare Act. If there are issues with animal welfare in the greyhound racing industry, those can be dealt with through a Code of Welfare.
<b>Does your party support a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks?</b>	No.
<b>Does your party support legislative changes so that responsible owners are more easily able to have companion animals in rental properties?</b>	No. Property owners are entitled to set reasonable conditions on the occupancy of their property. The matter is one between the property owner/landlord and their tenant.
<b>Does your party support phasing out the use of colony cages in egg farming and farrowing crates in pig farming?</b>	ACT has no position on this, as it is already covered by the Animal Welfare Act.
<b>Will your party commit to maintaining the ban on the export of livestock by sea?</b>	ACT is committed to resuming the export of live animals subject to strict animal welfare standards.
<b>If elected, will your party establish an independent Commissioner for Animals?</b>	No. ACT notes that MPI has numerous functions including food safety, biosecurity, and veterinary verification of animals, and the setting of animal welfare codes is already functionally separate from other parts.

<b>Does your party support the introduction of regulations to address the permanent chaining of dogs?</b>	The matter is for NAWAC under the Animal Welfare Act.
<b>What has your party committed to do to improve the lives of New Zealand animals in the next term of Parliament?</b>	ACT remains committed to the effective functioning of the Animal Welfare Act.

## Animal Justice Party Aotearoa New Zealand

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
<b>Does your party support new national legislation for cat management that would require owners to desex and microchip their cats?</b>	Yes. We love our cats, but we need to tackle overpopulation and the threat that cats pose to our native species. Desexing, microchipping and registration are proposed.
<b>Does your party support a ban on commercial greyhound racing with a phase-out period?</b>	Yes, we have a policy on this. But the ban should be effective immediately.
<b>Does your party support a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks?</b>	Yes, a complete ban, effective immediately.
<b>Does your party support legislative changes so that responsible owners are more easily able to have companion animals in rental properties?</b>	Yes. We have a policy on this.
<b>Does your party support phasing out the use of colony cages in egg farming and farrowing crates in pig farming?</b>	Yes. Our policies prevent all factory farming, as it is immensely cruel to animals and is also against the Five Freedoms of the Animal Welfare Act, 1999.
<b>Will your party commit to maintaining the ban on the export of livestock by sea?</b>	Yes. We have a policy on this, and our policy includes banning all live export by air as well as by sea.
<b>If elected, will your party establish an independent Commissioner for Animals?</b>	Yes, long overdue. We have a policy on this.

<p><b>Does your party support the introduction of regulations to address the permanent chaining of dogs?</b></p>	<p>Yes, we have a policy calling for an outright ban on permanent chaining of dogs.</p>
<p><b>What has your party committed to do to improve the lives of New Zealand animals in the next term of Parliament?</b></p>	<p>As Aotearoa's newest political party, the Animal Justice Party is committed to advocating for animal rights and welfare. This is the reason we exist. Our policies are not incremental; they aim to create a paradigm shift in the way we view and live with other animals. We leave no animal out, whether they be our companions, farmed, or wild animals. They are all sentient. They all suffer. Our enlightened policies will promote ethical treatment and protection for animals in New Zealand, and create a better New Zealand for all.</p> <p>Guiding our party ethos are five principles that shape our positionality not only towards other animals, but in response to current and emerging issues affecting New Zealanders, for example climate change.</p> <p>These guiding values are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Nonviolence</li> <li>-Animal Rights</li> <li>-Equality</li> <li>-Sustainability</li> <li>-Just Transition</li> </ul>



## The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
<p><b>Does your party support new national legislation for cat management that would require owners to desex and microchip their cats?</b></p>	<p>We support national cat management legislation to ensure that companion cats are desexed and microchipped; with exceptions for licensed breeders.</p> <p>Our laws require dogs to be registered and microchipped, but not cats. Some councils such as Whangarei, Wellington City and Selwyn have progressed cat microchipping bylaws in their areas, but the work is piecemeal and inconsistent. Feral cats have major impacts on wildlife and desexing would help reduce the stray cat population.</p> <p>It's time to have a constructive conversation about how to best manage cats, including by introducing legislation. Every cat should be a wanted cat.</p>
<p><b>Does your party support a ban on commercial greyhound racing with a phase-out period?</b></p>	<p>The Green Party, alongside the SPCA and many others, have long called for an outright ban or phase-out of greyhound racing. The industry has persistently failed to meet animal welfare standards for over a decade and no longer has the social license to operate. As one of only a few countries in the world which still allows this practice, the time is now to end the needless suffering inherent in the sport.</p>
<p><b>Does your party support a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks?</b></p>	<p>We know that fireworks cause hundreds of accidents each year, start fires, and cause distress and sometimes injuries to animals. We believe it's time for the private sale and use to end, and be replaced by safer, better, public displays.</p> <p>We have proposed a public consultation on the issue, and if there isn't public support for a ban, Parliament should consider limiting their use to a defined time period, as occurs in many countries.</p> <p>In the absence of political action, we have welcomed decisions by The Warehouse and others to listen to their customer base and stop selling fireworks.</p>
<p><b>Does your party support legislative changes so that responsible owners are more easily able to have companion animals in rental properties?</b></p>	<p>Yes – subject to any restrictions aimed at protecting wildlife, the Green Party supports legislative changes to allow responsible pet owners to have pets in rentals.</p> <p>Our A Home for Everyone plan also makes it easier for first time home buyers to get out of their rental and into their own home, ensuring that more people can decide for themselves whether or not to have a pet.</p>

<b>Does your party support phasing out the use of colony cages in egg farming and farrowing crates in pig farming?</b>	Yes – we are committed to phasing out harmful activities including greyhound racing, debeaking hens, factory farming and farrowing crates.
<b>Will your party commit to maintaining the ban on the export of livestock by sea?</b>	The live export ban was hard fought for – for years, the Greens, and so many other advocates and activists, worked tirelessly to get this legislation across. We are fully committed to maintaining this ban, and would like to see it expanded to include the protection of our taonga longfin eels.
<b>If elected, will your party establish an independent Commissioner for Animals?</b>	Yes – the Green Party is committed to strengthening Aotearoa’s animal welfare standards and creating a new, well-resourced Parliamentary Commissioner for Animals to independently monitor and enforce these, and to advocate for animal welfare.
<b>Does your party support the introduction of regulations to address the permanent chaining of dogs?</b>	The Green Party supports an outright ban on the life-chaining of animals.
<b>What has your party committed to do to improve the lives of New Zealand animals in the next term of Parliament?</b>	<p>The Green Party has championed animal welfare for decades. Over the last three years we have been the leading voice in Parliament on issues like winter grazing and greyhound racing. We’ve also successfully pressured the Government to phase out live animal exports. The time is now to make Aotearoa a place where all animals are treated with the care and respect they deserve.</p> <p>Our plan will strengthen Aotearoa’s animal welfare standards and create a new, well-resourced Parliamentary Commissioner for Animals to monitor and enforce these. We will also outlaw harmful activities such as greyhound racing and rodeo, factory farming, and farrowing crates.</p> <p>Whether they are our daily companions or living on a farm, only the Greens will ensure every animal can live a happy, comfortable life.</p> <p>Our 2023 priorities to create an Aotearoa that cares for all animals can be found here:  <a href="https://www.greens.org.nz/welfare_of_animals_2023">https://www.greens.org.nz/welfare_of_animals_2023</a></p>

## New Zealand Labour Party

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
<b>Does your party support new national legislation for cat management that would require owners to desex and microchip their cats?</b>	The Department of Conservation is initiating a review into the Predator Free 2050 strategy and plan to raise the question about including cats within PF2050 as part of their public consultation. DOC already controls feral cats on public conservation land where they pose a significant threat to native species and eradicates feral cats from offshore islands where this is feasible.
<b>Does your party support a ban on commercial greyhound racing with a phase-out period?</b>	In April 2021, the Labour Government commissioned a review of animal welfare and safety in the greyhound racing industry. As a result of those findings, Labour put the industry 'on notice'. The industry was instructed to make the recommended improvements to animal welfare or risk closure. We will continue to progress this issue. The Racing Integrity Board have been instructed to continue working closely with Greyhound Racing New Zealand to ensure animal welfare is prioritized until Cabinet can take a decision on the matter.
<b>Does your party support a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks?</b>	This is not part of the Labour Party's policy manifesto.
<b>Does your party support legislative changes so that responsible owners are more easily able to have companion animals in rental properties?</b>	This is not part of the Labour Party's policy manifesto.
<b>Does your party support phasing out the use of colony cages in egg farming and farrowing crates in pig farming?</b>	The transition period to phase out the use of battery cages has been completed. Hens must no longer be housed in battery cages as of 1 January 2023. At the time, NAWAC determined that colony cages met the requirements of the Act and allowed hens to express their normal behaviours such as perching, pecking, nesting, and scratching. Once further advice is provided by NAWAC on a potential review of the code for layer hens, it will be looked at. In relation to farrowing crates in pig farming, the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) has submitted its proposals to be included in the Code of Welfare for Pigs. The Government has also received MPI and NZ Pork's proposals for changes to the regulations. A decision on the Code of Welfare for Pigs is complex and at this stage with the upcoming election, it won't be considered prior to the election.

<b>Will your party commit to maintaining the ban on the export of livestock by sea?</b>	Yes.
<b>If elected, will your party establish an independent Commissioner for Animals?</b>	This is not part of the Labour Party's policy manifesto.
<b>Does your party support the introduction of regulations to address the permanent chaining of dogs?</b>	We share many of the concerns of the SPCA in its campaign. The Ministry for Primary Industries has done work on the issue of dog tethering and their exploration of potential regulation in this area. A key focus has been supporting the welfare of dogs while also not burdening responsible pet owners already doing the right thing. If returned to Government following the 2023 election, we will be looking to take a paper through for Cabinet consideration.
<b>What has your party committed to do to improve the lives of New Zealand animals in the next term of Parliament?</b>	The Labour Party values and is committed to animal welfare. We will continue to update animal welfare codes where recommended by prior consultation. The Labour Party is committed to ensuring that Aotearoa New Zealand takes the welfare of all animals seriously and New Zealand's regulatory environment that supports animal welfare is amongst the most progressive in the world.

## Legalise Cannabis Party

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
<b>Does your party support new national legislation for cat management that would require owners to desex and microchip their cats?</b>	Dogs have had controls for decades. Why not cats? NZ is endeavouring to be predator free. We would probably encourage owner responsibility and support sensible humane measures in this goal.
<b>Does your party support a ban on commercial greyhound racing with a phase-out period?</b>	Phase out as priority. Needs to be over. Inhumane and exploitative, against our party principles.
<b>Does your party support a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks?</b>	Yes. just not safe anymore in so many ways.
<b>Does your party support legislative changes so that responsible owners are more easily able to have companion animals in rental properties?</b>	Yes. We love pets! It's a Kiwi right to have one. One of our party senior members pioneered dog friendly rentals in the Christchurch rebuild while families were displaced during home repairs.
<b>Does your party support phasing out the use of colony cages in egg farming and farrowing crates in pig farming?</b>	Totally support. We have a natural empathy for caged animals. We feel their pain.
<b>Will your party commit to maintaining the ban on the export of livestock by sea?</b>	Absolutely. ALCP is also animal rights, vegan and vegetarian friendly party.
<b>If elected, will your party establish an independent Commissioner for Animals?</b>	Entrenched conflicts of interests in government departments have been key part of NZs prohibition problem for many years now (eg around crime reduction). We would consider the idea of an Animals Commissioner carefully as we have also encountered what appeared to be political interference and bias in some Govt appointed Commissioners roles- particularly around conduct of the referendums.

<b>Does your party support the introduction of regulations to address the permanent chaining of dogs?</b>	Absolutely.
<b>What has your party committed to do to improve the lives of New Zealand animals in the next term of Parliament?</b>	ALCP is an animal friendly party, with a strong environment and sustainability ethic. We promote industrial hemp in general and Hempseed in particular as mainstream food for both animals and humans (displacing meat farming). You can have faith that ALCP will totally support animal welfare if elected.

## New Zealand National Party

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
<b>Does your party support new national legislation for cat management that would require owners to desex and microchip their cats?</b>	We understand the impact of cats on native wildlife, in particular feral cats, and the pressures being placed on our biodiversity. In Government, we will explore what measures can be taken to reduce the impact of cats on native wildlife and supporting responsible pet ownership.
<b>Does your party support a ban on commercial greyhound racing with a phase-out period?</b>	We do not support the mistreatment of animals, whether for commercial gain or not. We support the Government's efforts to promote a greater focus on animal welfare in the greyhound racing industry, and will continue those efforts in government.
<b>Does your party support a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks?</b>	We are aware of the implications of fireworks and especially, the effects of misuse on animals. We wholeheartedly condemn the abuse of animals in any way, including with fireworks. National is not planning to ban fireworks but will consider options in government to reduce their misuse.
<b>Does your party support legislative changes so that responsible owners are more easily able to have companion animals in rental properties?</b>	National is comfortable with existing arrangements which allow tenants and landlords to enter into agreements to allow pets.
<b>Does your party support phasing out the use of colony cages in egg farming and farrowing crates in pig farming?</b>	NAWAC has been reviewing our current Animal Welfare Codes. Cages in farming is an issue that has arisen many times as a point of discussion at the Primary Production Select Committee. We believe both the egg farming industry and the pig farming industry are moving towards cage-free operations and the National Party encourages this.
<b>Will your party commit to maintaining the ban on the export of livestock by sea?</b>	We have released our policy with respect to live exports which explains in detail our reasons as to why we have made a commitment to reinstate live exports and will regulate for the highest animal welfare standards in the world.
<b>If elected, will your party establish an independent Commissioner for Animals?</b>	National believes the Ministry for Primary Industries is capable of fulfilling its animal welfare responsibilities, but we are open to making improvements where evidence suggests these duties are not being met.
<b>Does your party support the introduction of regulations to</b>	A National government will work with operators such as SPCA to establish appropriate steps to resolving dog tethering issues.

<b>address the permanent chaining of dogs?</b>	
<b>What has your party committed to do to improve the lives of New Zealand animals in the next term of Parliament?</b>	The National Party has a proud history of improving the lives of animals in New Zealand, and this will continue by supporting animal operation and care at all levels.



## Te Pāti Māori

The party secretary responded with the following:

*Kia Ora Koutou,*

*We have received a large number of requests for our policies.*

*These can be found on our website: <https://www.maoriparty.org.nz/policy>*

*Please contact me if you have any queries.*

*Ngā Mihi*

As at the publication of the scorecard, SPCA could not identify any animal-welfare specific policies on the website - but encourages our supporters to keep checking all party websites for any updates to animal policies.

## The Opportunities Party

Question	Political Party Response (200 word maximum)
<b>Does your party support new national legislation for cat management that would require owners to desex and microchip their cats?</b>	TOP places a high value on the wellbeing of animals. We believe in responsible pet ownership and Kaitiakitanga of the natural environment. The initiative to mandate microchipping and desexing for pet cats signifies a commendable stride forward for both.
<b>Does your party support a ban on commercial greyhound racing with a phase-out period?</b>	TOP is committed to the wellbeing of all animals, and the welfare of greyhounds is primary. Before any decision is made, we would like to see what the GRNZ Animal Welfare Progress Report (to be released post-election) says, and what the recommendations are.
<b>Does your party support a ban on the private sale and use of fireworks?</b>	Yes, TOP does support a ban on the private sale of fireworks.
<b>Does your party support legislative changes so that responsible owners are more easily able to have companion animals in rental properties?</b>	TOP is a staunch advocate for renters' rights within an economic landscape heavily skewed towards home ownership. We believe that allowing renters, who rent suitable properties, to have pets can have mutually beneficial outcomes for both the animals and renters.
<b>Does your party support phasing out the use of colony cages in egg farming and farrowing crates in pig farming?</b>	TOP supports the phasing out of colony caged eggs. The recent strides made in the egg industry are commendable.  Farrowing crates use should be minimized as much as possible while still being an option to protect piglets from crush injuries or death.
<b>Will your party commit to maintaining the ban on the export of livestock by sea?</b>	TOP has no intention of overturning this current ban.
<b>If elected, will your party establish an independent Commissioner for Animals?</b>	We're not sure we need an independent Commissioner for Animals, however if MPI is doing their job in this space, then we would support some form of independent animal welfare oversight.

<b>Does your party support the introduction of regulations to address the permanent chaining of dogs?</b>	Yes. Pet ownership is a serious responsibility. It is important that dog owners provide suitable environment for their pets to thrive.
<b>What has your party committed to do to improve the lives of New Zealand animals in the next term of Parliament?</b>	As a new party entering parliament this term, we are focused on working across the political spectrum to improve the lives of New Zealand animals with a particular focus on our native animals. This work will require strong action on climate change initiatives to ensure we have an environment where our precious and unique fauna can thrive.