

Animal Welfare Policy

The Green Party will align regulation with animals' rights to good nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state, and provide strong oversight and accountability. We will minimise the systemic exploitation of animals and require an ethical and humane approach to managing animals. We will carefully balance the needs of indigenous species and introduced animals, and uphold the Kaitiaki role and whakapapa connections of Māori to animals.

Vision

All animals are respected and their rights are upheld.

Values and Principles

- *Aroha*: All living things possess an inherent dignity and mauri. Animals are due respect, love, and rights. Humans have a duty of care towards the animals they interact with. They should not be violated or exploited, and their distress and pain should be minimised.
- *Whanaungatanga*: All living things are interconnected. We should live in reciprocal relationships with animals. The deep, ancestral connection Māori have with the land and its inhabitants must be respected.
- *Tikanga*: Societal systems, cultural practices, and traditional knowledge shape and are shaped by our relationship with animals. Engagement with companion animals is a privilege, not a right.
- *Kaitiakitanga*: Humans must interact with other animals in ways that support resilience and ecosystem health. Indigenous species and ecosystems are essential for maintaining supporting ecological balance so [they] must be paramount, with their interests prioritised over invasive species.
- *Mōhiotanga*: Humans have an ethical obligation to make informed decisions on behalf of animals, drawing on the best available knowledge of their needs and behaviours. Tikanga and mātauranga Māori must be upheld alongside the evolutionary history and ecology of animals.

Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

"Our laws and practices will respect the biological integrity of all life, while prioritising the health of indigenous species and ecosystems."

Actions in this policy that work towards this goal include:

- Establish a Department of Animal Welfare, led by a Minister for Animal Welfare, with responsibility for legislation, enforcement, hosting the NAWAC and NAEAC, and advocating for the welfare of all animals. (1.5)

- Require people who breed companion animals for sale, and rescue centres, to register and hold a current license. (2.1)
- Ban prolonged confinement of dogs, and prolonged tethering or “life-chaining” of animals such as dogs and goats. (2.5)
- Develop local regulations around pet ownership to cater for the indigenous species residing in that locale, such as requiring catios to keep cats safe and protect local biodiversity. (5.1)
- Introduce national standards for desexing dogs and for registering, desexing, and microchipping cats. (5.3)

Policy Positions

1. Mōhiotanga:

Our Vision

Legal systems uphold an animal's right to a life worth living by recognising and promoting the 5 domains of animal welfare: positive nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state. Animal welfare enforcement agencies and organisations are well supported through sufficient funding and appropriate resources.

Actions

- 1.1. Ensure that the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and other related legislation are fit for purpose, evidence-based, and enforced.
- 1.2. Amend the Social Security Act 2018 to include companion animals in household need assessments and financial assistance levels.
- 1.3. Align Codes of Welfare with primary animal welfare legislation.
- 1.4. Develop codes of welfare for home kills and support animals.
- 1.5. Establish a Department of Animal Welfare, led by a Minister for Animal Welfare, with responsibility for legislation, enforcement, hosting the NAWAC and NAEAC, and advocating for the welfare of all animals.
- 1.6. Establish a Parliamentary Commissioner of Animal Justice, and resourcing it to monitor, investigate and make recommendations on animal welfare issues.
- 1.7. Ensure central government adequately supports and funds local government to uphold, monitor, and enforce local Animal Welfare bylaws.

2. Aroha

Our Vision

Animal breeders and rescue centres are well regulated, resourced, and supported to ensure animals under their care thrive. Proper protection, education, and support are available for people and animals in a companion relationship to ensure it is mutually beneficial and ownership is responsible.

Actions

- 2.1. Require people who breed companion animals for sale, and rescue centres, to register and hold a current license.
- 2.2. Create national standards for the registered breeding of companion animals, including limiting the number of litters an individual animal can have over a lifetime.
- 2.3. Review the welfare standards of council pounds and animal rescue shelters to ensure consistent practice and standards.
- 2.4. Limit the number of companion animals an individual can have at once, with pathways for exemptions, such as for owners who can demonstrate being able to uphold welfare.
- 2.5. Ban prolonged confinement of dogs, and prolonged tethering or “life-chaining” of animals such as dogs and goats.
- 2.6. Implement codes of welfare for highly social animals, such as guinea pigs, rabbits, birds, rats, goats, horses and pigs, that require them to always be kept with others of their species.
- 2.7. Review the appropriateness of breed-specific legislation, and ban breeding of lineages with high susceptibility to genetic welfare issues.
- 2.8. Amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 to ensure that renters are able to own a registered companion or support animal, when the animal meets local bylaws.

3. Tikanga

Our Vision

Our culture is conscious of animals’ wellbeing. We effectively transition away from an economy and culture reliant on the systemic exploitation of animals.

The agricultural sector consistently uses an ethical and humane approach to managing animals. Our approach is world-leading, and animals enjoy a good life, with their death managed as humanely as possible. The need for prosecution is rare. (See our [Agriculture Policy](#))

Live animal imports and exports are rare, have strong protections, and only occur where there is benefit to the animal or their species (see our [Trade and Foreign Investment Policy](#)).

Animal testing only occurs rarely, transparently, and has tangible benefits to people or animals (see our [Research, Science and Technology Policy](#)).

Recreational activities that cause unnecessary distress or pain to animals or normalise cruelty are prohibited (see our [Recreation and Sport Policy](#)).

Invasive species are managed using humane and effective methods, so that indigenous species can flourish (see our [Biodiversity and Environmental Regeneration Policy](#)).

Fisheries and aquaculture are sustainably managed (see our [Marine Policy](#)).

4. Maimoatanga:

Our Vision

The regulatory environment for animal welfare upholds Te Tiriti, and incorporates mātauranga and tikanga Māori in design.

Actions

- 4.1. Reform animal welfare legislation to recognise Māori concepts and values, in partnership with tāngata whenua.
- 4.2. Ensure Māori representation in decision-making bodies for animal welfare, such as in the Department of Animal Welfare.

5. Kaitiakitanga

Our Vision

Animal welfare and other relevant legislation help protect indigenous biodiversity.

Actions

- 5.1. Develop local regulations around pet ownership to cater for the indigenous species residing in that locale, such as requiring catios to keep cats safe and protect local biodiversity.
- 5.2. Fund free spaying and neutering for pets.
- 5.3. Introduce national standards for desexing dogs and for registering, desexing, and microchipping for cats.
- 5.4. Regulate activities such as hunting and fishing where they have negative consequences for indigenous species.