



**To:** Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare, Skills)

**From:** Karen Adair, Deputy Director-General Agriculture and Investment Services

## Meeting with New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association representatives

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<b>Date</b>	2 May 2024	<b>Reference</b>	AM24-0408
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### Purpose

- You are meeting with members of the New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association (NZRCA) on Wednesday 8 May 11:30am-12:00pm in the Level 1 Parliamentary Library meeting room. In attendance will be s9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
- The NZRCA has requested this meeting to discuss the sport of rodeo, the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee's (NAWAC's) review of the Code of Welfare: Rodeos, and NAWAC in general.
- This aide-memoire provides you with background information for your meeting. Biographical information for the attendees from the NZRCA is attached at **Appendix One**. Talking points are attached at **Appendix Two**.

### Background

- Rodeos must operate under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) and relevant codes of welfare and regulations. The Act requires owners and people responsible for animals to ensure the animals' physical, health and behavioural needs are met and that appropriate treatment is provided for any sick or injured animals under their care.
- The Code of Welfare: Rodeos 2018 (the Rodeo Code) sets out the Minimum Standards and Recommended Best Practices for rodeos in New Zealand.
- In 2022, a legal challenge of the Rodeo Code, brought by the New Zealand Animal Law Association (NZALA) and Save Animals from Exploitation (SAFE), was dismissed.
- In his decision<sup>[1]</sup>, the Judge made note of NAWAC's current review of the Rodeo Code, which involves 'NAWAC, a panel of experts, considering and forming a view on the contentious scientific and ethical evidence relating to rodeos and animal welfare'.

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<sup>1</sup> THE NEW ZEALAND ANIMAL LAW ASSOCIATION v THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL [2022] NZHC 1844 [29 July 2022]

5. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Animal Welfare Inspectors attend rodeo events each season to monitor that there are no breaches of either the Act, the Rodeo Code, or regulations. Veterinarians are also in attendance to ensure the welfare of all the animals involved.

#### *New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association*


6. The NZRCA is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation with over 600 members that governs and promotes the majority of rodeos in New Zealand.
7. An objective of the NZRCA is the betterment of conditions and rules governing rodeo events in which its members participate.
8. The rodeo season runs from October to March each year. Many of the rodeos are organised by the NZRCA, but other organisations also hold events that would be considered rodeo activities, such as bull riding.
9. As of 2024, 30 rodeo clubs throughout New Zealand are affiliated with the NZRCA.

#### *Rodeo Animal Welfare Committee*

10. In 2019, following a suite of non-regulatory recommendations made by NAWAC, the NZRCA formed the Rodeo Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (RAWC). The aim is to improve welfare outcomes for animals used in rodeos by advising and making recommendations to the NZRCA Board.
11. Membership of the RAWC is made up of representatives from the NZRCA, Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), New Zealand Veterinary Association and MPI Compliance. NAWAC also sits on the committee as an observer.
12. The RAWC provides quarterly reports to NAWAC and you as the Minister responsible for animal welfare.

#### *NAWAC review of the Rodeo Code*

13. As part of its strengthening Codes of Welfare work, NAWAC is currently reviewing the Rodeo Code. It released an early draft Rodeo Code to key stakeholders for feedback in 2022.

14. s9(2)(g)(i)
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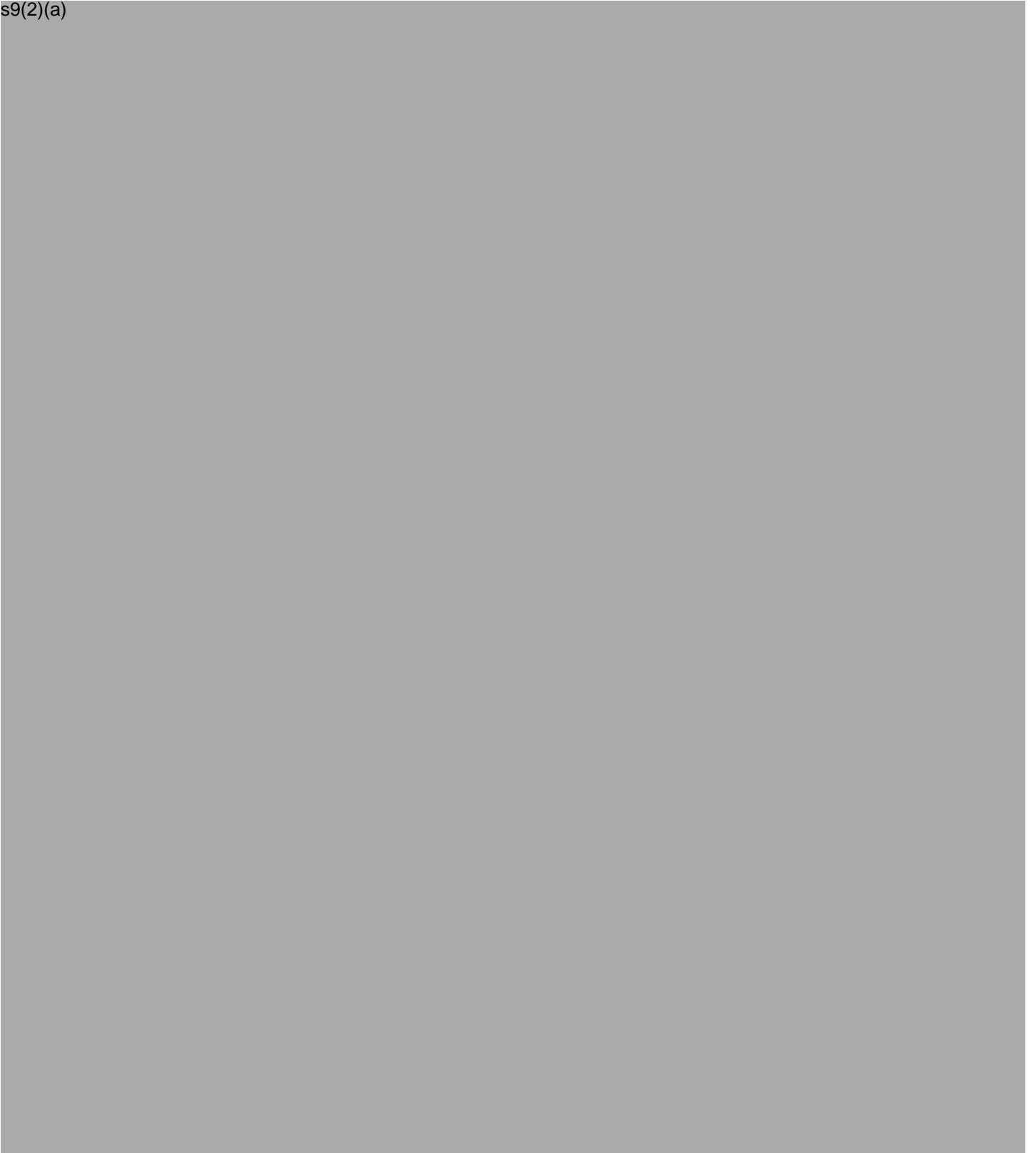
15. The NZRCA argue that NAWAC is proposing changes that would risk ending rodeos in New Zealand, and possibly affect other equestrian events, without supporting evidence.
16. NAWAC is continuing through the review of the code and is currently considering stakeholder feedback.
17. Once NAWAC finalises the draft, it will seek your approval to publicly consult on the code. An accompanying evaluation paper will also be provided that will explain why the changes are being proposed (including scientific evidence and NAWAC's considerations).

**Minister / Minister's Office**

Seen / Referred

/ / 2024

s9(2)(a)



## Appendix Two: Talking points

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[You may wish to acknowledge s9(2)(a) stepping down as New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association (NZRCA) President last year after six years in the role]

- In my role as Minister responsible for animal welfare, I am committed to ensuring that New Zealand maintains high standards of animal welfare, and I look forward to having a positive and engaging relationship with the NZRCA.
- I am keen to hear about rodeos in New Zealand and the NZRCA's role in governing and promoting the sport.
- I am also keen to hear about the Rodeo Animal Welfare Committee and its key areas of work.

### *National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) Rodeo Code review*

- I understand that the NZRCA provided feedback to National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) on its current review of the rodeo code. Thank you for contributing to the process; it's important all voices are heard in these discussions.
- The process of reviewing the code has been delayed due to the Judicial Review in 2022, and due to cyclone-related impacts last year. Currently, NAWAC is working towards finalising a draft code for public consultation for me to approve.
- I note your concerns with NAWAC's process during this review. It is important to me that we engage openly, positively, and in a genuine way with all relevant stakeholders in this work, particularly with those who will be affected by changes to animal welfare standards.
- If the code is approved for public consultation, it will be publicly released along with a report describing NAWAC's consideration of the evidence underpinning proposals. This is the appropriate time for well-informed public discussion generating feedback on the proposals and I encourage the NZRCA to be involved in this.
- NAWAC's primary focus must be science, good practice, and available technologies in its work. However, when proposals raise questions of feasibility or the likelihood of economic impacts to rural communities, it is important that these are also considered.
- I am looking forward to seeing NAWAC's draft code, what New Zealanders have to say during the consultation period, and what NAWAC's final proposals will look like.

### *If reform of NAWAC is raised*

- As you will be aware, the Government has committed to reforming NAWAC to ensure its functions, membership, and mandate are appropriate.