

# Open Letter to the New Zealand Government

## Calling for an **Urgent Ban on Rodeo Events**



**We, the undersigned, urge the Labour-led Government to uphold Labour's pre-election promise to ban the use of flank straps, calves under 12 months of age, electric prods, and rope burning at rodeo events.**

**The signatories below represent a broad range of expertise in veterinary medicine, animal behaviour, animal welfare, and animal law, and believe rodeo events are of great concern. The physical pain and emotional distress that these practices inflict on animals are not only cruel but at odds with the Animal Welfare Act 1999.**

Rodeo events are brutal and often disturbing exhibitions of human domination over animals, showing rodeo to be an outdated and cruel spectacle. Otherwise docile bulls and horses are induced into aggressive behaviour by painful or irritating means such as flank straps, electric prods, and rope burning.

Video evidence has shown that young calves may be repeatedly slapped and riled up by handlers before being forced to perform. Injuries inflicted upon animals include torn ligaments, broken bones, and severe bruising. Two horses and a bull have been killed at rodeos already this season.

This treatment of animals breaches our country's animal welfare laws. The New Zealand Animal Welfare Act states that physical handling of an animal should be performed in a manner that minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

A 2018 report by barrister Catriona MacLennan stated that the way animals are used in rodeos contravenes the basic purposes and protections of the Animal Welfare Act.

Rodeos are banned in several countries where they were once held, and specific events are outlawed in others, due to their inherent

cruelty. Even our Government's advisors, the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, stated recently that calf roping and steer wrestling have 'substantial negative impacts' on animals.

New Zealand is a country that has made bold decisions to stand up for our values and for justice in many areas. We urge the progressive, Labour-led Government to make good on their pre-election promises to end these cruel practices that allow animals to suffer injury and/or death in the name of entertainment.

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