



# N E Wells & Associates

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Tom Didovich  
Manager Animal Welfare Services  
Waitakere City Council  
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Dear Tom

## Internal Audit – 24 August 1998

On Monday 24 August 1998, I assisted Suzanne Grivelle to carry out an internal audit on the Waitakere City Animal Welfare Services.

The audit commenced at 9.30 a.m. by randomly taking street name files and assessing each 1998 complaint against a number of criteria:

- Was the complaint properly assessed (priority/urgent/non-urgent)?
- Was the response to the complaint within the time frame specified by the procedures?
- Was there adequate information recorded on the action taken?
- Was the complainant adequately informed?
- Was there sufficient attention given to inter-agency procedures and in particular, was the complainant asked, "Has this matter been re [ported to SPCA/MAF/Police?"

The standard in all the above criteria was high, with one exception. Very rarely is the complainant being asked, "Has the incident been reported to another agency?" This is being missed on the form but this can probably be attributed to the form layout.

It is recommended that the complaint form be changed so that the question appears in a highlighted box with the response "Yes/No" in a separate box in bold. At the moment the question looks like a note and is easily missed.

Further, the reverse of the form needs a response box to indicate what contact has been made with another agency (when appropriate), who that contact was made with, and what decisions were taken. It needs not be more than a few lines.

There is an omission in the Procedures Manual in that the procedure for qualification and obtaining a warrant needs to be added as a new section 9. The procedures do exist but they do not form part of the manual. I am running through a quick draft for Suzanne to fine-tune.

The definitions page in the manual needs to be updated with references that "MAF RA" is now known as "MAF Reg" and the "Ministry of Agriculture" is now known as the "Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry". References to the "Henderson District Court" should now read "Waitakere District

Court". There is no need to issue new pages for every reference. A change notice and new definitions page should suffice.

In general, the standard of compliance with the procedures is high. The attention to response times was, in the random selection audit procedure used, correct in every case. The recording of advice to complainants is much better than in previous audits. There are some instances though where attempts were made to contact the complainant resulting in telephone tag that has not been completed. In these instances it would wrap up the file if a short letter were written.

Improvements to the procedures will continue with every day experience, however, compliance with the standards is very satisfactory.

In the original procedures internal audits were meant to be carried out every 3 months during the pilot programme. The pilot programme has now passed into an "interregnum" phase. It is questionable whether internal audits need be quarterly. Consideration should be given to changing this to every six months with a view to reducing it to annually.

The audit concluded at 4.00 p.m.

The staff should be congratulated for their adherence to the procedures and the high level of attention to detail.

Warm regards

Sincerely

Neil

Neil Wells