RETURN THE ANIMALS

Gerry Wood, Independent Member for Nelson, says that today he read the Coroner’s report into the death of Prisoner Peter Fittock on 22nd February 2014 at the Darwin Correctional Centre, Berrimah and feels the Government should also study the report and lobby for a change at the new Holtze Correctional Centre.

He says whilst we know the prisoner had committed a terrible crime, he at least was trying to turn his life around by caring for animals, working off site at the Ark Animal Hospital in Palmerston and studying to obtain a veterinary nurse’s qualification.

Unfortunately word had got out that no animals would be allowed under the management agreement at the new Holtze Correctional Centre.

Gerry said the Coroner Greg Cavanagh wrote in his report

26. However, there was evidence from the Vet where he worked that the deceased had been quite stressed because the animal program was under threat. He was of the belief that the government had signed a lease for the new prison that had a clause that did not permit animals on the site.

31. It appears likely that the stress consequent upon the possibility that losing the animals produced in him and his pragmatism resulted in his decision to end his life.

Gerry says this sad case should not happen again and animals should be permitted to be used in Holtze Correctional Centre as part of rehabilitation programs.

Gerry said he saw how important these programs can be when he visited, some years ago, a therapeutic community within a women’s reformatory in Marysville, Ohio, USA,. There he saw an inmate on death row who was able to find peace looking after injured animals and other inmates looking after retired greyhounds.

Gerry says the Government and the management of Holtze Correctional Centre need to read the coroner’s report, research the benefits of animals in a rehabilitation centre and bring back the type of animal care program that was running at Berrimah before it was closed down.

Cessi foro gallinarum sed surgo