Legal action pending over private zoo

Minister for Local Government John Ah Kit today said that legal action was pending under the *Animal Welfare Act* against the owner of the Tipperary Wildlife Sanctuary, Mr Warren Anderson, over his failure to properly care for over 2200 animals.

"I have been advised by the Animal Welfare Authority that it was called to the Wildlife Sanctuary on 9 October by its manager after food supplies had run out. The Sanctuary was visited by two Animal Welfare officers and a Parks and Wildlife officer that afternoon. Since that time, officers from the Department of Business Industry and Resource Development and my department have been supplying feed to ensure the animals would not starve.

"The Animal Welfare Authority has written to Mr Anderson at a number of addresses on two occasions advising that action would be taken under the *Animal Welfare Act*.

"No response has been received from Mr Anderson other than from an intermediary, who advised that he had passed on the correspondence and had spoken to Mr Anderson about the seriousness of the issue," said Mr Ah Kit.

The Tipperary Wildlife Sanctuary holds 1764 animals that are listed on the Prohibited Entrant Permit. They include three Amphibious Hippopotamus; four Pygmy Hippopotamus; two Southern White Rhinoceros, tapir, and a variety of deer. There is also a large number of water buffalo and banteng cattle.

Food has been supplied to the animals at the rate of four tonnes of hay, six bags of horse pellet; ½ a bag of chicken pellets; 1/3 bag of bran and 36 pieces of fruit a day. Over 100 tonnes of feed hay has been supplied to keep the animals alive.

"I have been advised that the new owners of Tipperary had purchased all of Mr Anderson’s interests in the property and that Mr Anderson had two years in which to remove the animals. The station has provided a house for the Sanctuary Manager under this arrangement.

"Despite numerous requests for feed supplies from the Sanctuary Manager, Mr Anderson had not responded and the situation had become very serious indeed for the animals, a number of which were in pens requiring specialist feed.

"It is very distressing to think that so many animals appear to have been left to starve, and I can only praise the public servants involved for their swift response to what could have been a tragedy," said Mr Ah Kit.

A spokesperson from the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs has advised that Mr Anderson faced prosecution under the *Animal Welfare Act* for failure to feed his animals, and that the animals may need to be seized. The penalty under the Act is 100 penalty units ($11,000) or 12 months imprisonment and 5 penalty units ($550) per day for a continuing
offence. The Government will seek reimbursement for the feed that has been supplied to the Sanctuary animals.