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15 February 2006

LAWYERS FOR ANIMALS

MESSAGE FROM JUSTICE MICHAEL KIRBY

I am just back from a conference in New Zealand. I took legal papers with me and intended to work on a spare afternoon on a pending judicial opinion.

At the invitation of the organisers, I went instead to see the Sanctuary for the Royal Albatross, in the Promontory outside Dunedin. What a spiritual journey. These magnificent birds, that show endurance, loyalty and skill were an inspiration to watch. We are lucky that, in our generation, only just before it was too late, humanity has begun to realise its links with other forms of life.

In the law, what began as statutory protection for domestic animals with whom humans could empathise (horses, cats and dogs) has now been extended to other sentient beings. We must preserve them in their variety and love them as part of our world and conscious existence. We must also ensure that they are protected by enlightened law.

I support the launch of Lawyers for Animals. Only my duties prevent me from being at the launch. Steal away from your law books. Watch the animals. In their existence, we observe features of life in all of its magnificent variety.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael Kirby".

MICHAEL KIRBY

The Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG

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