

TODAY Online

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Hard for Resorts World Sentosa to advise on dolphin protection

Letter from Christina Lee Campaigns Officer, Animal Concerns Research & Education Society

I REFER to the report "Dolphins 'to play vital role in public education'"(Dec 1). The Animal Concerns Research & Education Society (ACRES) is fully supportive of the education programmes that Resorts World Sentosa will be rolling out.

But these should not be at the expense of animal welfare and the survival of wild Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins.

We recognise the benefits of exposing students to marine research projects, but these can be achieved without having dolphins at the Marine Life Park. ACRES is in principle not against animal captivity, but we must keep animals who can cope with captivity.

RWS could follow the example of Monterey Bay Aquarium (in California), which draws 1.8 million visitors annually without housing dolphins. Instead, information about dolphins and whales is imparted through life-sized models and signs.

Ultimately, it is difficult for RWS to urge students to help in dolphin protection efforts, since it did not walk the talk.

The issue is not only about how the dolphins are housed and cared for but, most importantly, whether they were acquired ethically and responsibly.

RWS has the opportunity, though, to show the world that it truly embraces the marine conservation spirit by making a moral decision to rehabilitate and return the dolphins to the wild.