

## Yahoo News

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### **1,000 gather to petition against dolphin enclosure**

*By Jeanette Tan*

With Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) set to bring its 25 wild-caught dolphins to Singapore within the next few months, some 1,000 animal lovers gathered at Hong Lim Park on Sunday afternoon to call for the dolphins' release.

Founder of the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) Louis Ng underlined the urgency of the matter.

"Within the next few months, they're (RWS) going to bring the dolphins here, and we're hoping to block that before it becomes a bigger problem here in Singapore and with the rest of the world," he told *Yahoo! Singapore*.

"We're not telling the whole of Singapore to drop everything and focus on (the dolphins), but we're saying obviously this is an important issue, as it is about to happen."

The *Save the World's Saddest Dolphins* campaign, which started in May, is organised by Acres with support from some nine other animal welfare groups.

Between 2008 and 2009, RWS purchased 27 wild-caught Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins from the Solomon Islands. Two of them died last year while undergoing training in Langkawi.

All the dolphins are now kept in the Philippines and will eventually be transferred to RWS.

Local music acts, who performed for free on Sunday, shared their reasons for supporting the cause.

"Dolphins are very intelligent and should not be held captive in an area out of their natural habitat because it puts a lot of strain on them, and they cannot lead a healthy life," said solo act Alicia Pan, 26.

Singer Michaela Therese, 30, said, "It's outrageous what RWS is doing, to take wild dolphins and put them in captivity. ... It's not something any of us should feel we have the right to do."

SIXX drummer Joseph Saleem said the band wants to help create awareness for this campaign.

"That's the way we see our music. If it's going to change a life and help somebody, we want to be a part of that," added the 30-year-old.

"We're all very big animal lovers," said lead singer Aarika Lee, 28. "If there's anything we can do to help, even if it's to come here and play a show for the people who have come to support, we're always up for it."

While some members of the public came in support of the cause, others wanted to find out more about the impact of dolphins in captivity.

"We know they (RWS) are bringing dolphins into the theme park, and we're really against it," said wardrobe supervisor Eve Tan, 37, who was with her two sons, aged 7 and 4.

However, sales director Shanavas Vijayan, 45, wondered if the situation is "really that bad".

"If it helps to create funding for research and helps educate people, that will be good. But if it's for pure moneymaking, that's not benefiting (the dolphins). We'll need to know what their (RWS's) intentions are," he said.

"I don't expect the impact to be great, but things like this take years of effort," noted psychotherapist Sunita Rai, 36, a volunteer with ACRES. "The idea is that you have to keep saying it, and maybe five or 10 years down the road, people will stop."

ACRES is currently collecting signatures to petition RWS for the release of the dolphins. It already has more than 670,000 signatures.

"Hopefully RWS will realise that this is not just a moral issue, but a business one as well," said Acres' Ng.

"More than 670,000 people have joined us in this movement, and they will not go to Resorts World because they have dolphins."