

Submission
No 41

**INQUIRY INTO EXHIBITION OF EXOTIC ANIMALS IN
CIRCUSES AND EXHIBITION OF CETACEANS IN NEW
SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 15 October 2019

Partially
Confidential

I put forward the following proposal.

Ban any circus that uses exotic and domestic animals in its performances.

This is not a proposal to shut down circuses.

I would like to begin by directly quoting from the policies of the RSPCA

'RSPCA Australia is opposed to the use of animals for any kind of entertainment, exhibition or performance where injury, pain, suffering or distress is likely to be caused. Animals used in performances must be treated with respect and not objectified or subjected to indignity or ridicule.'

In terms of circuses the RSPCA goes on to say:

'The requirements of circus life are not compatible with the physiological, social and behavioural needs of most animals.'

Unfortunately, the RSPCA does not go far enough. Instead of most animals, one day the policy will read all animals.

We don't need experts giving different sides to this debate.

- Ponies do not naturally walk on their hind legs. We have objectified these gentle animals.
- Dogs do not naturally ride on wheels. We have treated mans' best friend with ridicule.
- Horses and dogs are not seen with harnesses in their natural state. We are not treating all sentient animals with dignity.

In the next decade change will occur in Australia, for it happening already in other parts of the world. And like falling dominoes we will effect change. We will ban the use of exotic and domestic animals in circuses.

This time let's lead and not be dragged to change as has happened in the not so distant past.

Historically, we have led the world on social issues. We led the world with women's suffrage: the right to vote. Change took decades, but in 1861 South Australia women who owned property were granted the vote in local elections

But we now can reflect when we realise how slow we were to action when some home truths are raised:

- o Aboriginal adults were not given the right to vote until 1962.
- o Aboriginal people were not included in the census until 1971.

And our slow actions continue to this day.

- In 2017, 75% of Warringah voted Yes for same sex marriage. Fantastic news, but we hardly led the world. The Netherlands granted gay couples the right to marry in 2001.

Sometimes our slow actions are held to ridicule on a global scale.

In 2016, we all watched on in disappointment as live baiting in Greyhound racing was bought to our attention. We then watched in disbelief as the Baird government back flipped its decision to ban this sport. Instead, we are now just one of eight countries that run legal dog tracks.

And so to the circus. In the last decade dozens of countries all over the world have banned exotic animals in circuses. And the ban on domestic animals in circuses is taking place right now. Bolivia led the way in 2009. No animals in any circus.

Greece has banned the use of domestic animals.

Cyprus.

So let us not be the last to ban this activity.

Treating animals with dignity is not a new message.

In 1789 Jeremy Bentham stated:

'The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?'

A domestic animal in a circus is not provided the quality of life that should be afforded to all sentient beings.

Ban any circus that uses exotic and domestic animals in its performances.