

Submission  
No 45

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

**Name:** Ms Maria Soria  
**Date Received:** 16 October 2019

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Inquiry into the exhibition of exotic animals in circuses and the exhibition of cetaceans in NSW.

NSW cannot allow wild animals including lions, monkeys and dolphins to be imprisoned and forced to perform for human entertainment.

The welfare needs of animals in circuses cannot be met and forcing these animals to perform is not in line with community expectations.

- Over 40 councils across Australia have banned the use of animals in the circus.
- There are no national welfare standards for circus animals, only guidelines. These animals are not protected.
- Animals in circuses are routinely subjected to months on the road confined in small, barren cages.
- Circus animals are forced to live in enclosures denying them every opportunity to express their natural behaviour and their training is often based on fear and punishment.
- There is one remaining travelling circus in NSW exhibiting wild animals including lions and monkeys (Stardust Circus).
- According to the DPI guidelines, the 6 lions in Stardust Circus require only 70m<sup>2</sup> of space, which is equal to 1/4 of a tennis court.
- According to DPI guidelines, the 4 Rhesus Macaques at Stardust Circus require only 12.5m<sup>2</sup> of space, which is equal to 3 king sized beds.

The welfare needs of captive cetaceans cannot be met in dolphin tanks and is not in line with community expectations.

- As far back as 1985, the Australian Senate found dolphins in captivity suffer stress and behavioural abnormalities.
- Space in dolphin tanks is severely limited, sparking aggression and frustration in dolphins - captive dolphins also often bear scars or rake marks, evidence of a clash with a tank mate.
- Many captive dolphins are regularly treated with ulcer medication or antidepressant medication to alleviate the frustration of captivity.
- Dolphins in captivity often have severe dental issues as a result of frustrated chewing on their tank walls.
- Because tanks lack the depth of the open ocean to permit deep diving, dolphins in captivity frequently experience overexposure to the sun, which can result in sunburn and blistering. Zinc oxide must be applied to their backs.
- The deaths of 2 dolphins, Bucky and a baby dolphin Ji-Ling occurred at Dolphin Marine Conservation Park in Coffs Harbour.
- Tanks are often heavily chlorinated, burning the eyes of dolphins and causing permanent damage to eyesight.
- Dolphins who participate in swim with interactions often have persistent wounds and abrasions from being handled by customers, their beaks raw from pushing guests through the water or being grasped for kisses and photo opportunities.

The breeding of exotic animals for entertainment in circuses should cease immediately and the breeding of dolphins and whales for entertainment in marine parks should also cease immediately.

Circuses which use exotic animals for human entertainment and marine parks which use dolphins and whales for human entertainment should be phased out within 12 months and the animals sent to a reputable sanctuary.

Maria Soria  
16th October 2019