

Submission
No 201

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 24 November 2019

Partially
Confidential

I am against the use of and breeding of exotic animals and cetaceans for entertainment.

While circus owners may claim they love and look after their animals and even provide air conditioning, it is the circus environment itself that leads to inevitable compromised animal welfare, e.g. long periods of transportation and associated confinement, limited social groups, limited ability to express normal behaviour etc. For exotic animals, and potentially some domesticated animals, even the best housing, treatment or training methods a travelling circus can provide, cannot overcome these inherent problems.

Even when exotic species are captive-bred over multiple generations, they retain their 'wildness' and should not be considered domesticated. Legal restrictions on keeping potentially dangerous exotic species such as lions acknowledge this, as have circus trainers themselves.

Macaques are highly intelligent primates (monkeys) with complex behaviours and social relationships, forming strong lasting bonds. In the wild, they live in large mixed social groups. Providing for the needs of non-human primates such as macaques in captivity is extremely difficult. Space, social interactions and an interesting and stimulating environment are critical to prevent boredom and frustration. Interactions with trainers can help reduce boredom and frustration but this is not an effective or acceptable substitute for the important social bonds and dynamics with animals of the same species. In addition, repeated transport and long-term confinement in transportable housing are incompatible with achieving a good quality of life for these animals.

Lions In their natural state, lions spend time hunting or foraging, engaging in social interactions, breeding and territory marking. A study examining the impact of captivity on large carnivores concluded that naturally wideranging species such as lions show the most evidence of stress and psychological dysfunction in captivity (Clubb and Mason 2003).

In Australia, there are limited number of veterinarians that specialise in exotic species such as lions and macaques. Accessing veterinary expertise for prompt diagnosis and treatment when the circus is operating some distance from where these specialists are located may be difficult. In summary, the available scientific evidence indicates that exotic species such as lions and macaques in a travelling circus environment are unable to fully experience natural behaviour and positive welfare states, thereby denying their basic physiological, social and behavioural needs.