

Submission  
No 228

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

**Name:** Phil Demers  
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Phil Demers

November 21, 2019

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Industry  
New South Wales Legislative Council  
Sydney, New South Wales  
Australia

Dear Committee Members:

**Re: New South Wales Inquiry into Whale and Dolphin Captivity**

My name is Phil Demers and I'm a former marine mammal trainer of 12 years. My experience includes the hands-on training of orcas, beluga whales and bottlenose dolphins.

Many of the animals I worked with were wild caught, forcibly taken from their family groups, and my job was to acclimate them to their new, concrete worlds. This provided me with much insight into the suffering of animals over prolonged or, too often, short lives in captivity. I was witness to their transitions from freedom in the wild to confinement for human entertainment. Sadly, what is not often known to the public is just how many of those animals simply didn't survive the transition, only to be replaced with more wild animals.

Another sad reality is that despite many orcas, belugas and dolphins being born at the facility I worked for, not a single orca or bottlenose dolphin born during that period is alive today. In fact, few lived longer than mere months.

On account of their constant state of stress, whales and dolphins held in the captivity industry are often drugged with psychotic medication (valium, anti-depressants and sedatives). Food deprivation is the basis of cetacean training, so animals are under duress from lack of food. Separating mothers and calves, and even inbreeding, are other heartbreaking and unjustifiable consequences of captivity. Calves are also killed by adult males belugas, as calves have nowhere to hide as mothers fight desperately to save their babies. I've witnessed all of the above, and I've provided photo evidence to corroborate these claims (see attached).

With what we've come to learn, we cannot justify the unnecessary suffering of these highly social, long-ranging, emotional beings. Whales and dolphins deserve our respect, and that means establishing suitable legal protections. Captivity has taught us that captivity kills. It's time to end this cruel practice worldwide. As a member of the Canadian team that successfully fought to pass Bill S-203, I urge you to take strong action in Australia and never to give up. I am prepared to help however I can, as are many, and I hope our countries can work together as global leaders for the protection and humane treatment of whales and dolphins.

Phil Demers

**Photographs 1 & 2:**

Marineland's CAZA accredited indoor tank, void of natural sunlight and quality air ventilation. A 2012 breakdown in the disinfection unit caused the water to turn green and cause permanent eye and health issues among its resident dolphins & pinnipeds.



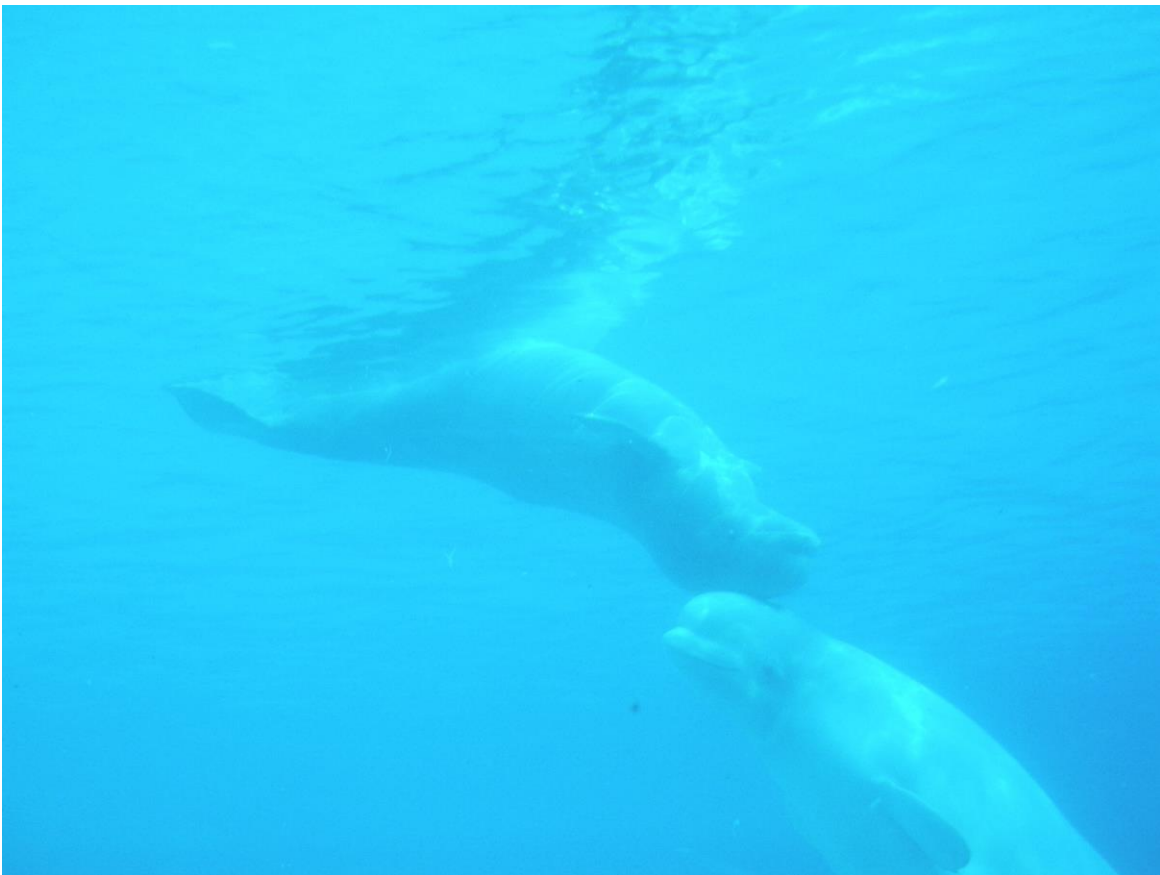
### Photographs 3 & 4

The aftermath of moving a Beluga whale between tanks at Marineland. As the Beluga thrashed on the sharp edged steel trailer, she was repeatedly cut and bled profusely.



## Photographs 5 & 6

Beluga Whale 'Sasha' lays motionless below her dead baby calf at Marineland. Beluga calves are left defenceless in unnatural social groupings and in captivity they are unable to escape adult male Belugas who often kill the calves.



**Photograph 7:**

Kiska, Marineland's lone remaining orca lays motionless as she is heavily sedated from an accidental valium overdose.

