

Submission
No 244

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

Name: Barry Nixon
Date Received: 4 January 2020

Please do not harm, destroy and restrict Australian classic circus animal content in NSW!

Attention: portfoliocommittee4@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Portfolio Committee,

Barry Nixon re Traditional Circus Animal Performances

My name is Barry Nixon and I reside in Ballarat Victoria having semi-retired following 30 years full time employment in Australian circus industry senior management.

My background and training is in Events, Project Management, Media and Communications.

I joined the Australian classic circus industry as a twenty one year old and was mostly employed in tour management positions with broad responsibilities covering every aspect of classic circus operation.

During my career in Australian circus management I was actively involved in the formation of the Circus Federation of Australasia Code of Practice for Circus Animals and was an advisor to the NSW Exhibited Animals Advisory Committee. I was strongly involved in establishing the NSW Standards for Exhibited Animals (Circus).

I was also consulted by Dr Debra Kelly when she fully investigated the Australian circus industry on behalf of the South Australian State Government. Dr Kelly's reports lead to SA not banning circus animals but introducing Standards and regulations.

I estimate that during my 30 years in circus management that I observed circus animals for no less than 10,000 hours and I know that I have never seen circus animals disadvantaged by travel, training or performance.

The Australian classic circus industry is a very healthy and diverse industry.

People buy tickets; classic circuses with animals are hugely popular especially in the rural towns and more remote locations.

It is also true that the circuses have changed to suit the times and current audience expectations.

The Fédération Mondiale du Cirque is a non-profit organization under the patronage of H.S.H. Princess Stephanie of Monaco to promote and preserve Circus arts and culture worldwide.

A group of professional circus associations from Europe, Canada, Australia, South Africa, the United States and organizations in Mexico, China, Japan and Afghanistan.

The Fédération Mondiale du Cirque annual World Circus Day celebrated each April sees celebrations by circuses and circus enthusiasts in 47 countries, including open animal training sessions and other animal-focused events.

Here in Australia, circuses have been plagued by four decades of prominent and well-funded campaigns created by activists and the RSPCA to turn the public against classical circus, however the paying public continue to make their way to the Big Top to enjoy and experience circus complete with performing animals. (The circus with caged performing animals sells the greatest number of tickets annually.)

The RSPCA has been represented on the various Australian national and state Advisory Committees that set the Australian Standards for the exhibition of circus animals. A fact they never mention publicly. The RSPCA in NSW is a signatory to the NSW Circus Standards.

The penalties for non-compliance in Australia are real and would cause financial hardship.

The Australian state based Exhibited Animal licensing system addresses every welfare concern. (The existing NSW Standards are so good; they were embraced by and implemented by the other Australian states.)

The decision as to whether to attend a circus should rest with the paying public, not be made for them by government decision, prohibition and or regulation.

Australia has appropriate and successful Federal and State animal welfare and licensing regulations for circuses in place.

Portfolio Committee should look to embracing the positives and not impose seriously restrictive permits and further administrative burdens on tradition circus operations and owners touring in New South Wales.

Please do not harm, destroy and restrict Australian classic circus animal content in New South Wales!

Faithfully,

Barry Nixon

03/01/2020