

Submission  
No 266

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

**Name:** Danielle Lennon

**Date Received:** 3 January 2020

---

## Introduction:

My name is Danielle Lennon, I am the director of Lennon Circus & Entertainment Pty Ltd, and a highly recognised leader in Education. I hold a Bachelor of Arts (Literature), Diploma of Education (Secondary), Diploma Dance Teaching & Management and Certificate IV Training & Assessment. I am the director of the only dance school in Australia that is a Registered Provider of Vacation Care and I am the wife of a retired Australian Circus lion trainer. I believe this gives me a unique perspective on this bill. I am entering my 26th year in the Australian circus industry and I am a passionate advocate for young adults, animals, the Australian Circus Industry and animal trainers. I am against the removal of exotic animals in circuses and the exhibition of cetaceans in NSW.

In an increasingly disconnected world, children and young adults need the opportunity to connect to, to witness and to develop relationships with animals. The removal of exotic animals in circuses and the exhibition of cetaceans in NSW would limit the ability for young adults and children to connect with animals and hinder the educational opportunities for these children to connect and value their environment.

Animals have always been part of my life, having grown up in Western Sydney rescue dogs were part of my childhood. I grew up understanding the love and relationship that humans and animals could have. Like most uneducated people, at 21 years of age I thought that circuses were freak filled sideshows. When I was employed by Lennon Bros Circus in 1995, I learnt how misinformed I had been. I learned how passionate the Lennon family were about their animals. I witnessed their care and the positive effects, on both human and animal species, that positive relationships could bring.

Through my journey, I learned how to feed, care and adore the animals in the care of Lennon Bros Circus and our sister shows. I learnt to respect animal trainers. As a professional educator I often note that training children or young adults is just the same as training an animal. Good trainers and good educators learn the behaviour of the animals/humans in their care, they understand what they need and through this knowledge they are able to create a positive learning environment.

## Submission:

### 1. Should Exotic Animals be in Australian Circus?

Yes exotic animals should remain in Australian circuses. There is no evidence to prove otherwise. Circus animals lead rewarding lives. They are continually enriched by new sites, smells and sounds, as well as through relationships with humans at show and training time. Animals like children learn through play. Zoo Keepers of exhibited animals in captivity, have taken to daily 'play based training' to enrich their animals lives similar to that already utilised in Australian Circus.

Since the implementation of the Compulsory Code of Conduct, animals in Australian Circuses have been trained with reward methods for the last 25 years. The Australian Circus industry are leaders in their field and should not be judged by extreme outdated overseas cases. It is rational to note that 25 years ago, NSW schools were still using the cane as punishment for children in their care. Yet, we do not feel the need to judge the Department of Education based on archaic footage or outdated case studies.

Circus with animals are amongst the most successful circus shows in Australia. The animals in their care are protected by an extensive Compulsory Code of Conduct. Therefore, this is not a State government decision, the paying public will decide with their own hip pockets whether this is a valuable resource for our community. Clearly it still is.

## 2. Does The Current Legislation /Acts Adequately Protect The Welfare Of Animals?

Good animal welfare requires disease prevention, veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, nutrition and humane handling. Australian Circuses and Marine Parks are already ensuring these needs for animal welfare are met and are regulated to do so.

A long-term study, funded by the RSPCA by animal behaviourist Dr Marthe Kiley-Worthington found circus animals suffer no stress during performance, training or transportation.

The 18-month study, sponsored by the RSPCA and published as *Animals in Circuses and Zoos* Identifies that the relationship between animals and trainers could contribute to our scientific understanding of how animals think, learn and perceive the world.

Circus is a form of entertainment that travels the wide ranges of our country. It is inexpensive and available to low income earners. Circus allows young children and adults to witness and begin to understand the positive relationships human beings can have on their world and the environment. There is nothing quite like being meters away from an animal and their trainer to move your soul to protect the environment.

### Conclusion:

I believe that we should be proud of the Australian Circus Industry and the leaders that they are. I respectfully ask the committee to pay attention to the experienced, educated, submissions that have been presented to you. We are all busy Australian business owners who have taken the time to present our thoughts. Do not be guided by an “outrage culture” that is educated by outdated youtube posts and social media vitriol. The use of exotic animals in circuses and exhibition of cetaceans in New South Wales should remain unchanged as they are protected by an effective and continually updated Compulsory Code of Conduct.

Kind regards,

Danielle Lennon BA.,GRAD. DIP.ED. (Secondary), Dip. Dance Teaching & Management,  
Cert. IV TAE

Director

Lennon Circus & Entertainment Pty Ltd