

Submission
No 268

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

Name: Damien Syred and Circus Royale

Date Received: 6 January 2020

Damian Syred and Circus Royale Australia Submission to New South Wales Portfolio Committee re Circus Animals

*Should exotic animals
be in circuses? YES*

*Should the breeding
of animals in marine
parks and circuses
continue? YES*

*Does the current
legislation adequately
protect the welfare of
animals? YES*



Via email portfoliocommittee4@parliament.nsw.gov.au



Contacts and links:



Damian Syred Phone
Owner Circus Royale Australia

Circus Royale
www.circusroyale.com.au

Circus Royale Animal Information
<https://www.circusroyale.com/index.php/mnuinfo/mnuanimals>

Caring for the animals in Damian's Circus Royale

Damian Syred owner and ringmaster of Circus Royale is proud of his animal partnerships, and the physical and behavioural needs of all his animals are a top priority in every town Circus Royale visits.

A relationship built on respect, trust, affection and uncompromising care. The animals in Circus Royale are fed, watered, groomed and cleaned daily. The entire stable area, including individual stalls, is cleaned regularly. The manure is removed and fresh bedding is provided.

Our animal partners are healthy, well cared for, and content, and we know that because we have individual relationships with each and every one of them.

Circus Royale performances in 2020 will include horses, camels, dogs, geese and household cats.





Introducing Damian Syred Owner of Circus Royale & Chinese Circus Spectacular

Damian Syred (40yrs)
Owner and Ringmaster Circus Royale Australia
www.circusroyale.com.au

Damian Syred is a new generation Australian show business entrepreneur. He is a young professional who is touring the traditional Circus Royale (with performing animals) and using temporary structures (tents) as venues for a variety of cabaret and other live performances, including Chinese Circus Spectacular, Circus of Illusion, Dinosaur Exhibitions, and Thailand Ladyboy Superstars.



Circus Royale Established 1971

In 1960, the famous Australian Bullen Brothers Circus contracted two Swiss acrobatic trapeze artists Franz Gasser and Rene Katherina to come to Australia for a two year all states tour.

Both men married Australian women and ultimately settled in Australia.

Franz Gasser and his new bride Manuela established Circus Royale in 1971. From humble beginnings, Circus Royale grew in audience and reputation, prospering through touring Australia, and in New Zealand and South East Asia.

Damian Syred took control in 2007.

A mix of clever domestic animals, hilarious comedy and astounding human skill appear as part of Circus Royale's 49th annual tour in 2020.



Does the current legislation adequately protect the welfare of animals? YES!

Circus Royale supports the existing legislation, the Standards for Exhibited Circus Animals

Less than 25 Australian councils refuse Circus Royale event applications based on animal performances. In recent years many local Governments have reversed previous restrictions on leasing sites to circuses with animal content.

For two principal reasons firstly because the Standards for Exhibited Circus Animals are working well and there have been no prosecutions since they were introduced in to law in 1996.

As detailed in NSW parliamentary speech re Exhibited Animal Standards inserted below.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (former NSW Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Small Business until 2 Apr 2015) [NSW Parliament 14 September 2011 at 6.20 p.m.] said:

"I draw to the attention of members that under the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986 New South Wales has had prescribed standards for the exhibition of circus animals since 1996.

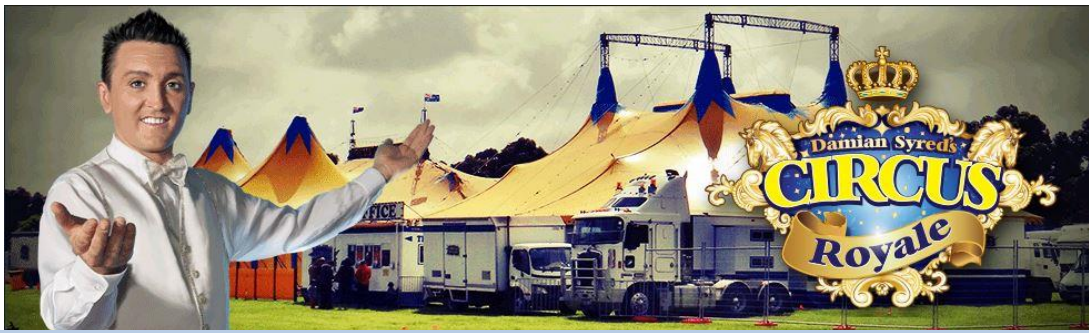
I understand that these standards were adapted and adopted at the national level by all States and Territories and that, in fact, New South Wales has some of the toughest standards in the world.

I am advised that there have been no prosecutions of any circuses in New South Wales for cruelty since the introduction of the standards. The standards, which were introduced in 1996, cover a wide range of requirements such as animal suitability, animal housing and management, transport, performance and training, animal dignity and public safety.

Inspections of circuses are carried out by the Department of Primary Industries animal welfare branch, which assesses and enforces compliance with the Exhibited Animals Protection Act and its standards for the exhibition of circus animals.

If the allegations are shown to be correct, the RSPCA has the power to investigate and take appropriate action. Reports of non-compliance with the tough New South Wales standards are taken very seriously and are promptly investigated.

The conclusions of overseas research upon which the RSPCA is relying should be assessed by the Exhibited Animals Advisory Committee to ensure that any conclusions reached are scientifically sound and applicable to the circuses that operate in New South Wales.



The Exhibited Animals Advisory Committee is an independent statutory committee established under the Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986. This committee assesses the validity of evidence and provides advice to me on whether there is agreement among animal welfare scientists that is objective and reaches scientifically sound conclusions. I encourage everyone to follow due process.

The issue of whether a ban should include all animals or specific species must be canvassed and a consensus reached before a ban can be considered. Although the petitioners are motivated by a well-meaning concern for the welfare of circus animals, the petition is flawed by its sweeping statements and lack of detail.

There is no place in New South Wales for circus operators who do not comply with our intentionally high standards, nor is there a place here for any operator involved in animal cruelty. Incidents of cruelty should be reported to enforcement agencies such as the RSPCA so that the incidences can be investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

I stress that a world of difference exists between acts of animal cruelty and failure to meet the standards for circus animals. Since the introduction of the exhibition of circus animal standards in 1996, the Department of Primary Industries animal welfare branch has conducted numerous inspections at circuses and investigated a small number of reported incidents. Inspections have shown that compliance levels are very high. The few incidents reported were resolved with the cooperation of the circus operators.

Circuses have existed for centuries and remain a highly popular form of family entertainment in New South Wales. Performing and exhibited animals are a very important attraction for some circuses that tour New South Wales. Without animals, those circuses may not survive.

Compliance with our strict standards ensures that circus animals in New South Wales receive an appropriate level of care. While incidents of poor standards and cruelty elsewhere may be used to justify the call for a blanket ban on exotic animals, circuses in New South Wales are complying with our tough standards.

----- I certainly do not accept, and I hope no member in this House would accept, animal cruelty of any kind. New South Wales has very strict standards for the exhibition of circus animals and excellent compliance with those standards. The New South Wales Government does not tolerate the mistreatment of animals."

http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlament/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LA20110914029?open&refNavID=HA8_1



Secondly, Circus Royale has been able to demonstrate compliance and educate civic administrators about the Standards for Exhibited Circus Animals, circus animal husbandry and about the results of serious investigations into the truth about circus animals.

In 1988, the United Kingdom RSPCA sponsored an 18-month study of circuses by Dr Marthe Kiley-Worthington. The society refused to publish the results because she concluded circuses caused animals no distress and could have benefits for conservation, education and science.

Kiley-Worthington subsequently published her report in the book *Animals in Circuses & Zoos - Chiron's World?* (Aardvark Publishing). In Greek mythology, Chiron was half man, half horse and symbolises the relationship between humans and animals.

There have been further studies concerning stress, transportation and broad aspects of animal husbandry in circuses.

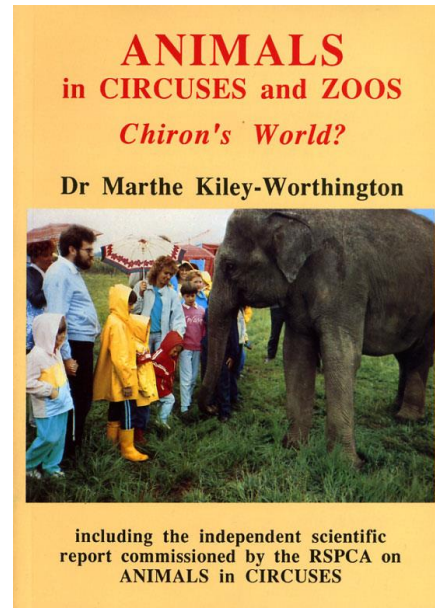
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/226075.php>

The link below is to a video showing checking for stress levels in circus lions when travelling, this video shows that what the animals rights protesters claim about travelling causes stress to animals is false, this shows that animals love to travel. <https://youtu.be/2eIsbOchpxA>

As the former NSW Minister for Primary Industries stated to the NSW parliament in the speech quoted above it is extremely important to understand that materials circulated by animal rights do not reflect how Australian circus animals are treated, trained, housed, transported or exhibited. The Australian Standards has some of the toughest circus standards and regulations in the world.

There have been no prosecutions of any circuses in Australia since the introduction of the standards.

The standards, which were introduced in 1996, cover a wide range of requirements such as animal suitability, animal housing and management, transport, performance and training, animal dignity and public safety.





Should exotic animals be in circuses? YES

Should the breeding of animals in marine parks and circuses continue? YES

Circus Royale is pro circus animals and supports the work done by all pro-circus groups and associations.

Circus Royale supports the breeding, training and exhibition of suitable exotic species in circus performances.

Circus Royale supports the breeding, training and exhibition of suitable animals in marine parks.

Circus Royale supports Stardust Circus husbandry and exhibition of Australian born lions in performance.

The Fédération Mondiale du Cirque, European Circus Association, Association of Circus Proprietors, Classical Circus Association, Association for the Promotion of Traditional Circus Arts and many other organisations all advocate for traditional classic circuses with performing animals.

The 2007 UK Radford report on circus animals concluded that there was insufficient scientific evidence to demonstrate that travelling circuses are unable to meet the welfare needs of circus animals. That position is also true for Australia in 2020.

With no evidence of welfare concerns and apparently lacking any definable "ethical" grounds, the basis for greater restrictions on circus with performing animals operations and itineraries appears to be based on opinions only.

Most "arguments" advanced to support restrictions on circus animals concern aspects of circus animal welfare: e.g., performance is "unbefitting their wildness and potentially harmful"; "loss of their ability to behave naturally as a wild animal"; "not naturally suited to travelling circuses"; "may suffer as a result of being unable to fulfil their instinctive natural behaviour"; and "implications for their treatment".

Each one of these arguments can be set aside as deficient as a valid basis for any proposed ban on circus animals and greater restrictions on circus operation and itineraries.

There is currently insufficient evidence of irredeemable welfare problems in traveling circuses with animals to justify a ban on welfare grounds or opinions.



The 2007 UK Radford report, also addressed potential welfare implications of travel. It concluded: "[A]lthough circus animals are transported regularly; there is no evidence that this, of its own nature, causes the animals' welfare to be adversely affected." Radford Report, para. 5.4.3.

Once the welfare arguments are set aside, what remains as the legal and factual basis for any proposed ban on circus animals is very thin: that it is "not necessary" to use wild animals in the circus to experience the circus; that performing animals represent an outdated view; that performance is "unbefitting to their wildness"; and that performance provides little or no benefit of any kind.

The suggestion that performing animals in the circus is a "traditional, but outdated" view is nothing more than an ideological or personal opinion held by some. That many hold a different opinion is clear.

The most frequent inquiry at the Circus Royale ticket office when the circus comes to town is "which species of animals are in the show?"

Live Performance Australia's published 2013 Audience Survey showed circus performances both classic and contemporary combined were the strongest growth sector of Australian entertainment.

Countries across Europe and elsewhere continue to mostly regulate, not ban, animals in the circus.

This shows governmental respect for the training and presentation of animals in a circus setting and reflects the ongoing appeal of the classical circus to the public.

Animal trainers are professional persons employed full time in their chosen careers.

Australian circus owners like those in France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and other countries, proactively formed together and organised the first Australian Code of Practice for the Exhibition and Husbandry of Circus Animals.

Specific rules for travelling circuses requiring proof of inspection of facilities, husbandry, recordkeeping and other aspects.

These self-imposed guides and standards formed the basis of the first state circus animal regulations enacted in New South Wales.



Damian Syred & Bo in Circus Royale Bonython Park 2013



To prohibit licensed circus exhibitors from conducting their performance with any animal, just because a tiny vocal portion of New South Wales or Australian society prefers a different form of entertainment is nothing short of censorship of those who do not subscribe to animal rights agendas.

The New South Wales public has the right to decide for itself whether it thinks classical circus, built on the three traditional pillars of acrobatics, animals and clowns, has value to them and whether they want to see human/animal interaction – particularly when visiting a cultural, festival and entertainment city like Sydney.

Human/animal interaction as seen in classic circus shows is hard to access in rural and remote areas of New South Wales.

The decision as to whether to attend a circus should rest with the paying public, not be made for them by prohibition that has nothing to do with circus animal welfare.

Often the first entertainment New South Wales children see is a classic circus with animals. This is especially true for children living in rural and remote New South Wales.

Circus is unique in that it takes its entertainment to all areas of New South Wales both the larger cities like Sydney and into the tiny village communities.

In 2005, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in which it noted that it "would be desirable for it to be recognised that the classical circus, including the presentation of animals, forms part of European culture" and urged "the Member States who have not already done so to recognise the circus as part of European culture."

Now that Australia has appropriate animal welfare and licensing regulations in place in every state and territory all Australian Governments , National, State and Local should look to protect the cultural heritage of Australian traditional circus rather than destroying it on the basis of what comes down to personal taste concerning performing animals in circuses.

Faithfully,

Damian Syred
Owner Circus Royale – Australia
(Unsigned sent electronically) Saturday, 4 January 2020