

**Submission
No 270**

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

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Date Received: 5 January 2020

NSW INQUIRY INTO THE USE OF EXOTIC ANIMALS IN CIRCUSES AND THE EXHIBITION OF CETACEANS IN NSW.

Written by and on behalf of Zelig Bullen.

Introduction

I am writing in support of the involvement of exotic animals in circus and also of cetaceans in marine parks in Australia. I am a professional animal trainer in the film, television and live show industries and am passionate about supporting circuses and marine parks within Australia who hold animal welfare in the highest regard. I was born and raised around animals and have been fortunate enough to have worked with a large array of animals during my career. I am the Managing Director of Animals All Around, a company who cares for, trains and works with domestic and exotic animals and the welfare and emotional wellbeing of our animals always takes priority in our work. I have worked on over 100 productions around the world over the last 28 years, from small family run circuses to blockbuster feature films and am renowned for my compassion and devotion to all animals and people alike. My most notorious work is arguably my credit as a liberty horse trainer for the 2011 Steven Spielberg film titled War Horse.

As an animal lover and professional animal trainer I have an invested interest in observing other trainers at work so I have made it my business to meet, watch and witness every other Australian circus animal trainer as well as many marine mammal trainers during my career which is why I am in a good position to be able to support the use of operant conditioning using the trusting relationships that have been nurtured and developed by the trainers and carers over time with the animals in their care. Those of us who have first hand experience in this industry and who know the truth about the lifestyles that these captive animals lead need to speak up to combat the horrendous lies, propaganda and accusations that Animal Rights Extremists have tainted the performing animal industry with.

Should Exotics Still Be Used in Marine Parks and Circuses? Yes. Circuses and marine parks provide the public with the opportunity to see, learn about, appreciate and enjoy animals just as zoo and wildlife parks do. The fact that circuses are a non permanent attraction (to any one location) allows spectators from multiple locations to enjoy all they have to offer, including people in remote areas who may never have the chance, funds or opportunity to visit zoo's or wildlife parks.

Exotic animals and marine mammals are an extremely emotive topic which is exactly why we need to keep these animals leading enriched, well cared for lives in the public forum. It is well known amongst those of us who work with these types of animals that people experience immeasurable elated emotions during up close and personal encounters with these animals as well as when they witness incredibly trusting relationships between these animals and the trainers and presenters. These individual experiences awaken people's desire to protect and save the species in the wild. Circuses and marine parks provide a forum for the public to be able to engage in an animal world they otherwise couldn't so allowing these well cared for animals to remain in the public eye ensures they can continue to be intensely important advocates for their species.

Should the Breeding Of Animals Still Continue in Circuses/Marine Parks? Yes, absolutely.

This is crucial to the long term sustainability of the industry, an industry that brings enjoyment, awareness, compassion and proactivity to the very real issues surrounding conservation.

Does the Current Legislation/Acts Adequately Protect the Welfare Of Animals? Yes. The current legislation is strict, thorough and completely adequate. The NSW Department of Primary Industries are an impressive and innovative team who are constantly monitoring, updating and improving conditions and requirement for all animals held under an Exhibited Animals Licences in NSW.

The Animal Rights Movement

Whilst I support society's significant shift into the new aged thinking and awareness surrounding animal welfare I most definitely do not support the animal rights movement which is driven by extremists aiming to eliminate animals in human care and all forms of human-animal relationships. Society's new aged animal welfare awakening has made it is easy for animal liberationist and extremist to mislead the innocent well meaning masses by circulating inaccurate propaganda in order to gain donations, numbers of supporters and power. Many of the animal rights supporters do not even realise that they are acting on behalf of groups who intend to take away the opportunity for the supporters to keep their own beloved pets. There are more Animal Rights groups now than ever before due to the financial gain and political power that is to be made from lying to the public to obtain their massive donations

The RSPCA and it's recommendations

I would like to express my concerns over the RSPCA's recommendations as a result of my own personal experiences.

During my time training, working and presenting animal acts with various circuses I have welcomed numerous random and unannounced RSPCA inspections that were conducted on the animals owned by the circus. I personally have shown RSPCA inspectors around to view the circus animals and the animal facilities and answered all of their enquiries with enthusiasm and pleasure knowing that the inspections were carried out with the animals' best interests at the forefront. During 100% of these inspections I witnessed inspectors write glowing reports and on more than one occasion I had friendly, satisfied RSPCA inspectors tell me that they would be bringing their families along for leisure to watch the talented animals and their compassionate presenters perform in the circus before the circus left town, indicating that they were not only completely satisfied with the on site inspection but also expressing their obvious support for the animals in circus. However, RSPCA's management has obviously been given authority to make such negative and opinionated recommendations based on 'welfare grounds' as stated in their submission dated 22nd November 2019.