

Submission
No 272

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

Organisation: Animals All Around

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**NSW GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION - INQUIRY INTO THE USE OF EXOTIC ANIMALS IN CIRCUS
AND THE EXHIBITION OF CETACEANS IN NSW
(on behalf of ANIMALS ALL AROUND)**

Introduction

Animals All Around has a strong family background with exotic animals dating back to 1921 this includes 5 African Lion Safari Parks across Australasia, Bullen's Animal World in Wallacia, NSW and Bullen's Circus.

As managing director of Animals All Around I am writing on behalf of our company, a company which over more recent years (since 2005) has become primarily renowned for supplying world class animal action to the cinema. Some of our most recent feature film credits include Storm Boy, Red Dog True Blue, Koko: A Red Dog Story and Buckley's Chance (currently in post production status).

My own personal resume extends across over 100 film and television productions and includes Steven Spielberg's War Horse, The Legend of Zorro, Racing Stripes, Charlottes Web and Babe II. My husband and partner Craig Bullen is 3rd generation from one of Australia's oldest circus families, our children 4th generation, putting us in a very good position to give an honest inside account of circus animals within Australia and the enriched lives that they lead.

Our company also cares for, provides, trains and works with animals and animal personnel for the live show industry including The Australian Outback Spectacular, multiple agricultural shows Australia wide and traditional circuses.

Awareness and Conservation

The staff at Animals All Around have extensive experience with a large range of exotic and domestic animals and are passionate about continuing and expanding the 4th generation Bullen family tradition of working in harmony with these animals to be able to share foreign, rare and endangered animals with Australia (and the world), up close and personal and also on screen.

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 and also when they witness incredibly trusting relationships between these types of animals and their trainers and presenters. These individual experiences awaken people's desire to protect and save the species in the wild which is needed more now than ever before. Circuses and marine parks provide a forum for the public to be able to engage in an animal world they otherwise couldn't therefore allowing these well cared for animals to remain in the public eye ensures they can continue to be intensely important advocates for their species.

Circus Animals and the lives they lead

General; To state the obvious, anyone in charge of an animal, including animal exhibitors, must comply with Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (POCTA). POCTA sets out the minimum requirements for all people in charge of an animal. This includes requirements to provide food, drink and shelter, arrange veterinary treatment when needed, and provide

adequate exercise to confined animals. Circus animals however get so much more than this. Circus animals live within the heart of the traditional circus community and are considered not only assets to the circus but very much part of the family, their owners and carers often putting the animals needs, welfare and emotional well being in front of their own. It is also important to note that circus animals can be seen by members of the public both during performances and at all other times, thus showing there is no breach of conduct to the above.

Training; As a professional animal trainer I can highlight that it is our job to build trusting connections with our animals through literally countless hours spent caring for and socialising with the animals that we are working with. Ensuring training sessions are an enriching experience for the animal is a key factor to making progress and achieving strong relationships. Circus families and those who have had the good fortune to be around them have had their training techniques handed down to them through generations. They not only have the benefits of modern day studies, academic statistics and training research but also lifetimes of hands on animal handling techniques.

Travelling; Circus animals are almost always raised and trained 'on the road' which means that the animals get conditioned to traveling very early in their lives. It is common to witness excited behaviour from the animals as early as when the circus big top gets pulled down as the animals learn to anticipate their trip, travelling to the next location where they have learned they will be unloaded onto fresh grounds often with fresh grazing/browsing, new sights and smells. Traveling conditions and transport trailer sizes for exotic animals in NSW also falls under the NSW Department of Primary Industries standards.

Performing and ethics; No different to humans animals have individual personalities, some introverted, others extraverted. As the leisure time and training sessions take place any good animal trainer is able to determine what the individual animal will excel at, just the same as any good parent or school teacher. This is the way we chose which animal will learn which behaviour.

Performing animals are taught routines and learn schedules quickly. Many of them enjoy performing so much that they fret if they need to be left out of an act or routine due to illness or injury.

Sustainability and breeding

Perhaps most importantly point under this heading is the fact that animals under stress WILL NOT BREED. Breeding exotic animals takes careful management and planning due the nature and responsibility of needing a solid life long plan (management, facilities, enclosures, etc) for each animal bred. Breeding animals in captivity plays an important role in conservation programs for many endangered species and it is also critical for the sustainability of exhibited animal facilities. Animals All Around supports the ongoing breeding of exotic animals for conservation, the circus industry and also for exhibited cetaceans.

Governing Body for Exotic Animals in NSW

The ownership and exhibition of all exotic animals in NSW come under very stringent jurisdiction of NSW Biosecurity, circuses and marine parks are no exception.

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services are partners in the delivery of animal biosecurity. Biosecurity regularly demand heavy record keeping and updated Standard Operating Procedures from exhibitors. They also enforce exhibitors to abide by the General Standards to Exhibit Animals in NSW as well as carry out regular inspections and audits on licenced premises, including traveling circuses.

Authorities to exhibit exotic animals in a circus may only be issued if the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (Secretary) is satisfied that an establishment conforms to, and an animal will be exhibited according to, the Standards. Exhibitors are required to renew their authorities annually, meaning that exhibitors must continue to demonstrate that they are meeting animal welfare requirements after an authority is initially granted. Animals All Around is confident that the current legislation/acts adequately protect the welfare of animals discussed in this submission.