

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

**Organisation:** Hudsons Circus Pty Ltd  
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**Submission to the Inquiry into the use of Exotic animals in circuses and the exhibition of Cetaceans in New South Wales.**

My name is Shane Lennon and I am a fifth generation circus performer, animal trainer, and circus owner. I grew up travelling the length and breadth of Australia with my family's circus, Lennon Bros Circus. During my career, I have cared for and trained many different types of animals including lions, tigers, Rhesus Macaque monkeys, baboons, chimpanzees, horses, camels, donkeys and canines.

During our tours, we present our animal based shows to many regional towns and cities that don't have access to zoos and wildlife parks so seeing the circus roll into town has always been highly anticipated by the locals. Throughout the years, just like many other industries, circuses have evolved. Australian Circuses have changed many aspects of its enclosures, care and training techniques. We have a focus on rescuing animals from abattoirs and culling programs to sustainably source our animals and we regularly host free animal education sessions at most towns.

In my circus management career I have personally managed tours of many circuses in Australia since 1994: Lennon Bros Circus, Burtons Circus, a two year tour of Michael Edgley's 'The Great Moscow Circus', and I now own and operate my own touring show, Hudsons Circus which I have created with my wife, Nancy who hails from a contemporary circus and theatre background in her home town of Montreal Canada, the home of Cirque Du Soleil.

As a company that currently exhibits animals in the state of NSW, I wish to express opposition to the proposed ban on exotic animals in the circus. Hudsons Circus tours Australia wide 11 months of the year currently with domestic animals as an integral part of our performances and New South Wales is an important customer base.

The Department of Primary Industries in NSW is currently responsible for inspection and licensing in accordance with the Standards for Circus Animals. A working body that involved circus industry, entertainment companies, zoological parks and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals wrote the standards. The standards remain current and relevant, with changes made as recently as February 2019. With current legislation and constant updates I feel that the legislative framework is sufficient to provide for the welfare of exotic exhibited animals.

Those in opposition to exotic animals in the circus will tell you that animals are not ours to exploit for entertainment. These people are of the belief that no animals should be used for entertainment not just exotic animals. They are of the belief that animals have rights similar to that of humans and no matter how good the welfare needs of an animal are met that animals are not ours to use and want see the end to all animals in entertainment, farming, hunting, assistant animals and even pets. Their arguments are based on emotion rather than on facts.

As a company that receives no government funding in order to continue operating we must provide a product that the people want to see. Enquiries to my business are people constantly asking what animals we have, making it an obvious inclusion in our show. The removal of the exotic animals limits the possibilities for us to expand our business and provide greater variety to our customers. In recent years many circuses have started up in Australia without animals and without arts funding with limited success with most closing within one to two years due to lack of attendance.

In closing I urge you to allow the constituents of NSW to choose to see the exotic animals in the circus. As I previously stated traditional circus receives no government funding so let the people decide with their feet. Don't deny people in small cities or regional areas the opportunity to see animals that they would not otherwise have the chance to see.

Shane Lennon  
Managing Director  
Hudsons Circus Pty Ltd