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The Research Director
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee
Parliament House George Street BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Research Director and Committee,

Barry Nixon submission concerning Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee and the Queensland Exhibited Animals Bill 2014

My name is Barry Nixon and I reside in Maroochydore Queensland having semi-retired following 30 years full time employment in Australian circus industry management. I was born in Clermont Queensland and was educated at Marist College Ashgrove. My background and training is in Media and Communications and Arts Management.

I joined the Australian classic circus industry as a twenty one year old and was mostly employed in tour management positions with broad responsibilities covering every aspect of classic circus operation.

During my career in Australian circus management I was actively involved in the formation of the Circus Federation of Australasia Code of Practice for Circus Animals and was an industry advisor to the NSW Exhibited Animals Advisory Committee. I was strongly involved in establishing the NSW Standards for Exhibited Animals (Circus).

I estimate that during my 30 years in circus management that I observed circus animals for no less than 10,000 hours and I know that I have never seen circus animals disadvantaged by travel, training or performance. I remain an active classic circus supporter in retirement.

Australian circuses sell more tickets annually than any other form of live show entertainment. People buy tickets; Classic circuses with animals are hugely popular especially in the rural towns and more remote locations.

Only two circuses in Australia exhibit exotic caged animals, there are no elephants in any Australian circuses, every classic circus has domestic animals like horses, llamas, dogs, geese.

The Australian classic circus industry is a very healthy and diverse industry. 2 new circuses commenced touring in 2014 and a further two are planned for in 2015.

The Fédération Mondiale du Cirque is a non-profit organization under the patronage of H.S.H. Princess Stephanie of Monaco to promote and preserve Circus arts and culture worldwide.

A group of professional circus associations from Europe, Canada, Australia, South Africa, the United States and organizations in Mexico, China, Japan and Afghanistan.

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The recent Fédération Mondiale du Cirque annual World Circus Day saw celebrations by circuses and circus enthusiasts in 47 countries, including open animal training sessions and other animal-focused events.

Here in Australia, circuses have been plagued by four decades of prominent and well-funded campaigns created by activists and the RSPCA to turn the public against classical circus, however the paying public continue to make their way to the Big Top to enjoy and experience circus complete with performing animals.

The RSPCA has been represented on the various Australian national and state Advisory Committees that set the Australian Standards for the exhibition of circus animals. A fact they never mention publicly.

The penalties for non-compliance in Australia are real and would cause financial hardship.

The Australian state based Exhibited Animal licensing system addresses every welfare concern.

To prohibit or limit to six (6) months maximum licensed interstate animal exhibitors from conducting their performances in Queensland, because a small portion of the local community prefers a different form of entertainment is nothing less than censorship.

The Australian circus proprietors have a clear right to trade and I know of no valid reason for this draconian and discriminatory restriction of the right to utilise their tools of trade in Queensland. Other non-circus exhibitors are being granted 3 year licences under this legislation.

The Queensland public has the right to decide for themselves whether to attend live performances involving animals. The decision as to whether to attend a circus should rest with the paying public, not be made for them by a state government prohibition that has nothing to do with animal welfare.

Australia has appropriate and successful Federal and Interstate animal welfare and licensing regulations for circuses in place, Queensland should look to embracing the positives not impose seriously restrictive licences, permits and further administrative burdens on tradition circus operations and owners.

I ask that you seriously and rationally re visit the circus provisions in this legislation.

Please do not allow this legislation to harm, destroy and restrict Australian classic circuses.

Faithfully,

Barry Nixon 0447 377 159

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