

21st November 2014

Eden Bros' Good Time Circus
25 Landscape Street, Stafford, Qld 4053
[REDACTED]
www.edencircus.com

The Secretary
Agriculture, Resources & Environment Committee
Parliament House, Queensland 4000
Attention: Mr Ian Rickuss, MP, Chair, Member for Lockyer

Dear Sir

Re: Regulations that could kill Queensland-based Circuses

Thousands of your constituents, especially the young, visit animal circuses each year. Most circuses are based interstate (although some still own properties in Queensland). Two circuses, both small and mainly visiting country towns and schools, are licensed in Queensland.

The four Acts of Parliament and six different licensing regimes we operate under are being consolidated into one. 'The Exhibited Animals Act 2014'. We were consulted, as were the big inter-state circuses and local zoos, and generally we agree with the principles behind this consolidation and most of its proposed Regulatory Regime.

However in its current form (first reading) it has some major long-term consequences.

- It discriminates against the Queensland-based circuses, the only ones going to small centres and schools. (List enclosed). (Eden Bros' Good Time Circus, the only one in Queensland performing by invitation on State School grounds, has performed at more than 90 schools. A list is available).
- It discourages foreign and interstate circuses from locating to Queensland.
- Through the 'death of a thousand cuts', it makes it certain that Queensland circuses atrophy and die.

You may be aware that 'Circus' is so popular as an elective primary school subject that 60% of eligible students (more in the country) study it. If they are denied this opportunity to see traditional circuses, animals and human skill, they will be placed at a cultural and educational disadvantage, compared with their city-based peers.

Queensland trained circus artists have been acknowledged among the world's standard-setters. A separate page highlights some of them.

There are two steps we ask you to take, in the Agricultural, Resources and Environment Committee and in your own Party Room.

Actions:

1. Ask for a clear statement of intent "that the 150 year cultural tradition of animal circuses in Queensland be preserved as a Heritage Art Form", be included in the legislation.
2. That the sections outlined separately be amended along the lines suggested. To ensure this, and that Queensland licensed circuses be placed at no disadvantage when operating in open competition against foreign and inter-state based circuses.

We seek your support, to the benefit of future generations.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
John MacDonnell
Proprietor/Ringmaster
Eden Bros' Good Time Circus



Ways the Bill should be Amended

1. It requires Queensland-based licenced circuses to provide a fixed exhibit, open to the public for those animals. Both Queensland-based licenced circuses meet all the requirements for the four existing (and planned to be maintained) Acts, regarded overseas as the most stringent requirements in the world. Major overseas countries are currently copying them. Both own local real estate.

To add a requirement, which Local Government zoning would prohibit in most areas, places a harsh and unconscionable condition on these two circuses, which interstate and other circuses would not be required to meet. It would encourage the existing trend of animal circuses to move Interstate, and it would place a huge financial burden on the local operators. There has never been a recorded instance of conviction under these Acts of any Exhibitor.

2. The fee system envisaged is a "one-size-fits-all" system. To ask a small local circus with a maximum of three types of licenced animals to pay the same licence-fee as huge interstate operators (there are no large Queensland-based animal circuses) places them at an economic disadvantage, vis-à-vis others.

We support the principle of "user-pays" licensing and our submission during the Regulatory Impact Statement submissions lists a revenue-neutral method of cost recovery to meet this budgetary need, without further disadvantaging Queensland-based circuses.

3. It should contain a clear Statement of Intent that the Parliament intends to protect and encourage the 150 year old cultural tradition of animal circuses in Queensland, as a Heritage listed performing art form, in the "Policy objectives and reasons for them" pre-amble.
4. Clause 197 The Bill provides for forfeiture of animals, "if it is progeny obtained by allowing reproduction in contravention of an exhibition authority". This restricts both Queensland Exhibitors from allowing nature to take its course and prevents reproduction. This should be amended to allow permits to be granted for natural reproduction.
5. Part 4 The length of term for an Exhibited Animals Authority (Queensland) ought to be two years (as is the License itself) not six months.

WORLD STANDARD CIRCUS ARTIST TRAINED IN QUEENSLAND

History World Standard

It is generally accepted world-wide that several Queensland trained circus performers set new world standards in performing their art.

- Con Colleano (real name Sullivan) (part Aborigine)
First person in the World to perform the forward somersault on the wire. (Eighty years later, only a handful of performers worldwide have mastered it). (Featured on Australian Post Stamps 1997).
- May Wirth
Lauded as the World's Premier Horseback Acrobat, famed for her back somersault from the back of a galloping steed to a following galloping steed. (The Wirth family joined Ashton's Circus, from Mt Perry) (Also on Australian Post 1997)
- The Royal Flying Ashtons
Risley performers (Juggling family members with their feet). Featured in the Cecil deMille movie "The Greatest Show on Earth" and several Royal Command Performances. (Gold Coast) (Sole Bros Circus toured Queensland every year for 80 years).
- Sue Rerry
Invited to perform at a Royal Command Performance in Scandinavia on the single Descent Rope.
- Bevan Rainer (Townsville)
Took the first Boomerang Ad to Europe
- Aramac Mohomet (Aramac)
Set the standard for Australia acrobats for a half a century.
- Stanley Gill & Mary St Leon
"The Prettiest Flyer in the World", Ringling Bros', Barnum & Bailey, centre-ring in 3-ring circus.