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Animal Activism QLD, PO Box 312, Landsborough, QLD 4550

Cr Don Aldous  
Caloundra City Council  
PO Box 117  
Caloundra QLD 4551

c.c. Byron Hall  
RSPCA QLD  
PO Box 6177  
Fairfield Gardens QLD 4113

c.c. Senator Andrew Bartlett  
Australian democrats  
7/421 Brunswick St  
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

4<sup>th</sup> March 2004

## **Request to Ban Animal Circuses in the Caloundra City Council Area**

Dear Cr Don Aldous

Please find enclosed this request to ban circuses in the Caloundra City Council area, a document outlining the evidence of cruelty witnessed at **Charlie Ridgways Circus**, Landsborough sports ground November 2002, **Lorraine Ashton's Classic Circus**, Landsborough sports ground May 2003, **Eden Bros Circus**, Beerwah, October 2003. All three circuses breached the Animal Care and Protection Act 4. (1) (b), (d) (referring to provision of water and transportation), and RSPCA's Five Freedoms according to the photographic evidence by AAQ.

The RSPCA's Five Freedoms state that animals should have:

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - By ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from Discomfort - By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease - By prevention by rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to Express Normal behaviours - By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals own kind.
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress - By ensuring conditions and treatment, which avoid mental suffering.

RSPCA Australia is opposed to exhibitions or presentations of animals in circuses (s1.22 RSPCA Policy).

*"The life of circus animals is harsh and demanding. Although some circuses are better than others at caring for their animals, no circus can ever provide an acceptable way of life for an animal. Hours, even days are spent travelling between different sites and however well managed the travelling arrangements, Confinement and restriction of movement are inevitable."*

(RSPCA UK)

The Code of Practice for the welfare of circus animals, under which must be provided by law: water at all times, food, shelter including shade from harsh summer sun, behavioural enrichment – toys, exercise, companionship, a decent sized enclosure freedom from abuse, and veterinary care.

The circus is no place for animals and only provides a restricted, cruel and impoverished environment. Circuses are constantly travelling across the country, with animals locked in small cages for long periods of time. Circuses set up temporary cages and enclosures when they reach their temporary destination. Circus animals spend most of their lives in this boring environment. If a member of the public were to keep a dog in these conditions they could incur a hefty fine.

Circus animals are not provided with an adequate environment due to constant travelling, isolation from others of their own species, being made to perform tricks, oppressive training regimes, restrictive and unnatural living conditions and what appears to be a complete lack of understanding of animal's basic needs by circus owners based on the investigations by AAQ.

Recognising that circuses are an inadequate home for animals, **36 councils around Australia have passed laws banning circuses with animals** from council controlled land. These Councils are Hindmarsh-Woodville, Noarlunga, Marion, Tea Tree Gully, Elizabeth and Thebarton. Australian Capital Territory In 1992 made it illegal to confine exotic animals in circuses. Primates may only be brought into the Territory with the Minister's approval. Exotic animals are banned from Perth. The RSPCA has lobbied councils in WA. Mitchel Shire in VIC has adopted a policy to ban exotic circus animals.

Based on the recent local evidence of cruelty offences by circuses in the Caloundra City Council Area and the extensive history of acts of cruelty also provided with this letter. We request that the Caloundra City Council ban circuses from performing in the Glass House District.

Yours Sincerely

Spokesperson for Animal Activism QLD

## Cases of Cruelty

Circuses have from time to time been found guilty of specific acts of cruelty.

- February 1980, the Monte Carlo International Circus was charged with failing to conform with minimum cage requirements.
- 1983, the Director of Circus Startime (later Circus Santos) was found guilty of failing to conform with caging regulations.
- A bear trainer from Edgley's World's Greatest Circus Spectacular pleaded guilty to a charge of overcrowding.
- Stafford Bullen, of Bullen's Circus, was convicted of cruelty because a monkey had a chain embedded in its neck.
- 1984, Sole Brothers' Circus was convicted of cruelty to a camel, whose halter was embedded in its nose.
- December 1984, the proprietor of Silvers' Circus was convicted of cruelty to lion cubs. They were unable to walk, emaciated and suffering from malnutrition, calcium deficiency, worms and mange.
- March 1991, NSW Environment Minister, Tim Moore, refused Sole Brothers' Circus a permit to import 9 trained lions from Papua New Guinea. The Minister said: "*Sole Brothers' Circus has failed to meet the standards required under the Exhibited Animals Protection Act and has been unable to demonstrate that the lions, if imported, would be housed to the standards considered acceptable in New South Wales.*"

## History of Circus Animal Injuries

- September 1980, 3 lions and 5 tigers were trapped for 4 hours when their cage overturned near Herbert (Qld).
- In August 1993 near Cardwell (Qld), two Sole Brothers' vehicles were involved in a road accident. Two lions were left in an overturned semi-trailer for 90 minutes. Two Sole Brothers' drivers were charged with unlicensed driving and dangerous driving, and the vehicles were ordered off the road after being issued with 13 defect notices, including one relating to faulty brakes in the truck carrying the lions.
- December 1981, Sole Brothers' elephant Tara fell from a semi-trailer, suffering a wound to the head.
- In February 1983, two Sole Brothers elephants were killed in a road accident.
- August 1986 in Darwin, a camel belonging to Sole Brothers' Circus was attacked by 2 lions who had escaped from their cage.
- May 1991 in Townsville, a monkey in Sole Brothers' Circus was trampled to death after falling from a horse and being dragged around the ring.
- June 1991 in Penrith (NSW), a lion in Robert and Alby Perry's circus collided with a burning hoop, which then fell across its back.
- In May 1993 in Werribee (Vic), an elephant belonging to Sole Brother's Circus was lucky to escape injury when the circus wagon to which she was chained caught fire.
- June 1992 in St Marys (NSW) a tiger belonging to Robinson's Family Circus was shot dead after escaping from its cage.

## Frustration of Captive Animals can Turn to Aggression.

- Ashton Circus elephant Abu killed 3 circus employees, one in 1974, one in 1983, and one in 1987.
- Sole Brothers' elephants Betty and Jodie have killed a journalist and a spectator respectively.
- 1981 circus elephant Cardie was shot after knocking down his trainer and crushing him with his head and another elephant, Toby, crushed a man to death by ramming him against the wall of a truck.
- 1983 Sole Brothers' lion tamer, Joe Eronis, needed 80 stitches after being attacked by a lion. In 1984 the proprietor of Circus Royale, Frank Gasser, needed 64 stitches after being attacked by a lion.
- 1988 an animal handler from Robert and Alby Perry's circus was hospitalised after being mauled by a tiger. In February 1989 Ashton's lion keeper, Brett Hall, needed 170 stitches after being mauled by a tiger called Moscow, who had been reared by the circus since birth.
- June 1991 circus owner Bruce Russell was mauled by one of his lions during a photo session.
- December 1993 Ashton's lion tamer Charlie Wang Quay received multiple stitches and lacerations when a lioness attacked him during a performance.
- May 1980 a lion in Lennon Brothers' Circus attacked and injured a girl, in spite of the 'precaution' of having had his claws removed as a cub.
- 1984 a young child received severe injuries to the abdomen when attacked by a horse belonging to Sole Brothers.
- June 1994 the child of an Ashton's Circus member was attacked by a tigon. The child lost one arm and received serious injuries to the other.

## References

Animals Australia [www.animalsaustralia.org](http://www.animalsaustralia.org)  
Animal Liberation NSW [www.animal-lib.org.au/](http://www.animal-lib.org.au/)  
Animal Liberation SA [www.animal-lib.org.au/](http://www.animal-lib.org.au/)

## Circus Cruelty in the Caloundra City Council Area

**Charlie Ridgways Circus  
Landsborough Sportsground, November 2002**



Monkey, Mr Muggins was noted to scream and wave his arms frantically when he was brought into the ring. The ringmaster explained that this was because he was excited about performing. He also went on to spend some time explaining that Mr Muggins was treated like part of the family and slept with him and his wife. Mr Muggins was forced to ride on a tricycle amongst other demeaning acts. The very small crowd did not appear impressed with any of the animal acts. The trapeze act was by far the most popular, impressive act and received the loudest applause. This empirical evidence supports the claim that animal circuses are outdated and human skills are recognised by a sophisticated society who are no longer amused by animals performing tricks. (Note the whip behind Mr. Muggins)



The miniature pony was made to perform tricks with a whip held during this performance, it can be seen behind the clown in this shot. Probably a clear indication of the training methods used to enforce this act.

When not performing the pony was kept in a small area outside of the ring. We could not see any water supply.

### **Lorraine Ashton's Classic Circus Landsborough Sportsground May 2003**



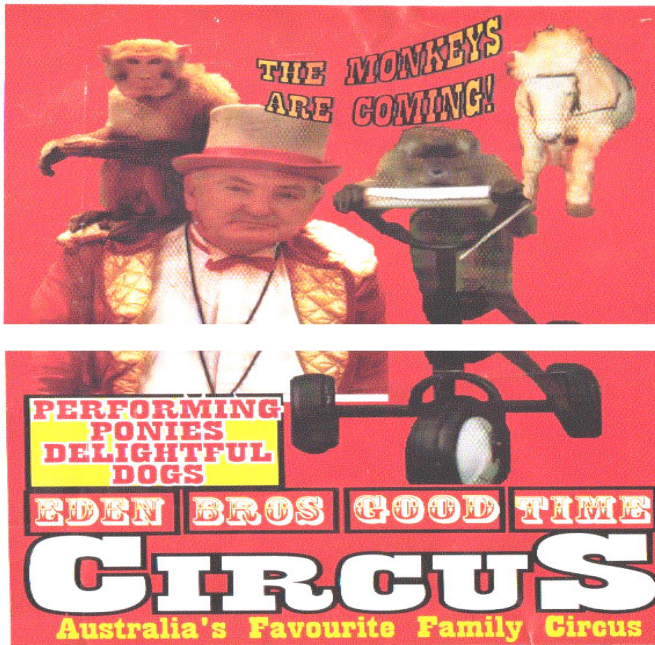
### **Ponies**

Over a 12-hour period we checked the ponies three times. Each time during this period we noted that the 3 ponies were not provided with water by their owners. Following a complaint to the RSPCA on the 19/5/03 the ponies were moved to an open area where they had no shade. The pony's water buckets were positioned so that the tethers knocked over the buckets and left the ponies with out water. One pony's back and neck was covered in oil (pictured below) indicating that he may have got stuck under a truck.



All the ponies looked in poor condition – dull and dirty coats, ribs showing and generally unhealthy demeanour. One of the ponies appeared overly scared when approached and struggled to get away, on a 5-metre tether.

## Eden Bros Circus, Beerwah, October 2003



Activists checked miniature pony 3 times over a week at the Landsborough sportsground and at vacant land next to Woolworths at Beerwah. Each time we visited it was noted that the pony was not provided with water or shade. We did not see the dogs or monkeys.



This photograph shows a miniature pony tethered next to the Beerwah Woolworths car park with no water or shade. The pony is able to walk over a large area of the car park putting drivers and the pony at risk of injury.