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## **OVER 50 CONCERNED AUSTRALIANS STAND UP IN UNITY AGAINST ANIMALS USED FOR ENTERTAINMENT AT SEA WORLD ON THE GOLD COAST**

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December, over 50 concerned Australians representing the anti-captivity, animal-rights group 'Justice for Captives' legally entered Sea World on the Gold Coast and disrupted animal shows throughout the day in an effort to continue raising awareness about the cruelty behind using dolphins, seals, polar bears and other marine animals for human amusement and entertainment.

Bearing large banners espousing their cause, Justice for Captives targeted both Dolphin Affinity shows and the Seal Guardian show. Some groups entered the water peacefully in an effort to stop the show altogether and draw awareness to outdated practices. By the end of the day, police and Sea World workers became violent. 5 Arrests were made.

Anti-captivity actions such as these represent a confronting, yet necessary plea to animal show-goers to look beyond veils of 'conservation' and 'education' and recognise that there is no form of animal entertainment or 'up-close and personal' experiences that does not come at a cost to the animal themselves.

Justice for Captives relentlessly pursue highly contentious issues surrounding the divide between animals in entertainment and education and conservation. We acknowledge conservation efforts presented by numerous organisations, but will be the burning voice behind hundreds of captive animals with their free will removed for profitability. We are the catalysts behind an everchanging culture which is ever inspiring to our children. Setting a good example of what is acceptable for the entertainment industry is at the forefront of our concern. We are a peaceful assembly of dedicated and professional Australians from all backgrounds united by a common goal - to put animal entertainment in the history books.

Chelsea Hannah, a full-time psychology student and corporate professional from Melbourne explains why she chose to protest at Sea World today:

*"We [Justice for Captives] have concerns regarding the welfare of the animals kept in Village Roadshow theme parks such as Sea World, as its apparent that whenever profit is the primary focus the health, happiness, and wellbeing of these sentient animals becomes sidelined. The entire animal-entertainment industry in Australia needs to catch up with the global animal-rights movement and come to an end. This change can be achieved in Australia if everyone just stops buying a ticket to the show."*

Sev Avedis, an optical clinician from Cairns further states:

*"Dolphins have incredibly complex social skills and display emotional awareness just like humans. Keeping them in captivity for any reason is unjust to their existence as they are unable to socialise"*

*or communicate with each other naturally. Dolphins are not commodities, they are individuals- commonly sighted on coastal shorelines, it is not necessary to pay to see these suffering animals perform in unnatural enclosures..."*

## **ANIMALS USED FOR HUMAN ENTERTAINMENT (SEA WORLD)**

**DOLPHINS:** In the wild, the common bottlenose dolphin can swim up to 70kms a day, playing and hunting amongst hundreds of other dolphins in complex social pod networks and hierarchies. Dolphins also spend approximately 80-90% of their time under deep sea water and have the freedom to make their own choices. In contrast, dolphins at Sea World are housed in small artificial enclosures with compromised family structures, unable to swim in a straight line for long or dive deeply, and they spend approximately 80% of their time at the shallow waters surface, looking for food and attention from their trainers, and waiting for the next close encounter with the public.

For decades humans have been using dolphins and whales for entertainment purposes. However, 17 countries have now banned dolphin captivity, including India who declared dolphins as 'non-human persons' and the most recent being Canada, who banned keeping and breeding these marine mammals in captivity through amendments to the Criminal Code.

Confining dolphins to unnatural environments come at a cost of unimaginable cruelty towards these emotionally sophisticated mammals. Disguising animal cruelty with conservation is a weak attempt at undermining the intelligence of every-day Australians.

**\*Note:** In 1985, the Australian Government enlisted a Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare to write a [comprehensive report on dolphins and whales in captivity](#). The intent of the report was to target the marine park facilities who were housing dolphins and using them for entertainment purposes. Several dolphin welfare recommendations were proposed by the committee, essentially postulating that it is profoundly unacceptable to capture and house dolphins and use them as commodities for human entertainment. Following these recommendations, all but two dolphinariums in Australia ceased operation. Those remaining are Sea World Australia on the Gold Coast, QLD and Dolphin Marine Magic in Coffs Harbour, NSW.

Justice for Captives invite Sea World to demonstrate a moral responsibility and start retiring all of their performing dolphins as a first step to abolishing the animal-entertainment industry in Australia and have drafted a formal proposal outlining past dolphin-rehabilitation successes.

**SEALS:** Seals are highly intelligent and curious animals - keeping them in unnatural confined pools and dressing them in costumes for human entertainment serves no purpose in education. This practice fundamentally destroys our children's perceptions of wild animal behaviour, and how it is acceptable to treat animals. Australia needs the public to become more involved in correcting Sea Worlds augmented entertainment practices, which is why Justice for Captives have disrupted today's Seal Guardians show. **Justice for Captives are calling for the end to using seals in theatrical shows for children's amusement.**



**POLAR BEARS:** Polar bears are critically endangered, solitary animals that roam over 30 kilometres per day in the wild, and can swim up to 100kms per day in the ocean. They have a black skin, a thick layer of blubber and a thick fur coat to protect them from the harsh icy conditions in which they are native to. The small, exposed subtropical environment Sea World provides critically compromises the wellbeing of these mammals and severely limits their ability to express their natural behaviours in a natural life. **We are calling on Sea World to retire their polar bears to the world's only polar bear sanctuary - in Canada.**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-09/study-looks-at-creating-sanctuary-for-nsw-captive-dolphins/10093592>

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/sea-world-dolphin-show-sabotaged-by-justice-for-captives-animal-activists-20170211-guanq5.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/7NewsGoldCoast/videos/vb.840702249361798/1179152592183427/?type=2&theater>