



Animal Defenders
Office

Using the law to protect animals

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Serrin Rutledge-Prior is our lovely editor of this edition of the ADO's newsletter. Serrin has been volunteering with the ADO since April. Serrin already has a BA in Politics and Philosophy under her belt, and now studies biology and biological anthropology at the ANU. Serrin is passionate about making systematic changes to the status of animals in society, and hopes to use her areas of expertise to bring our scientific understanding of animals into line with how we treat them in political and legal spheres.

Issue 1 | 2017
August

ADO Newsletter

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

-- Gandhi

Case against animal activists dismissed

On 8 August 2017 the prosecution of two animal advocates under the *Surveillance Devices Act 2007* (NSW) was dismissed by the Cootamundra Local Court. The hearing had been scheduled to run for

three days but was dismissed in under two hours. This was the first time a so-called 'ag-gag' case had gone to trial in NSW, so the outcome was welcome news for animal protection communities.

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Animal advocates Christopher Delforce and Dorottya Kiss after the charges against them were dismissed in court. [Photo credit: Animal Liberation Facebook page]

Animal law in the news

Legislation will soon be introduced in the ACT to ban greyhound racing due to its inherent animal welfare concerns. The ban will take effect from 1 July 2018. **Show your support for the decision by writing to the ACT's Attorney General, Mr Gordon Ramsay, to commend him on the decision to ban greyhound racing, and urge him to ensure it is implemented.**

New York City has passed a new law that bans the use of 'any wild or exotic animal' in circus performances - including kangaroos! It took campaigners 11 years to pass the law. Congratulations NYC!

Meanwhile in Australia, Mark Pearson, member of the Animal Justice Party in the NSW Parliament, and Alex Greenwich, Independent MP for Sydney, have joined forces to draft a bill to ban animal circuses in NSW. **Show your support for the proposed law by downloading and signing their petition:** <https://goo.g/aEDN9j>.

Christopher Delforce and Dorottya Kiss were charged with various offences under the *Surveillance Devices Act 2007* (NSW) ("the Act"), in relation to certain intensive piggeries in NSW. The Act deals with the 'installation [and] use...of surveillance devices'. It also aims 'to restrict the...publication and communication of information obtained through ... surveillance devices'.

Eminent barrister Peter Singleton represented Mr Delforce in the hearing. He began by arguing that the prosecution had not complied with a technical requirement that was there to protect people whom the State had accused of serious offences. The Magistrate was

persuaded and dismissed the hearing, acknowledging that the technical requirement had been placed in the legislation by Parliament, and was no insignificant matter. The Magistrate then found it just and reasonable to award costs in favour of the two defendants. He said he was disappointed the two defendants had to undergo the stress and possible damage to their reputations associated with this trial.

Representatives from the ADO were the solicitors on the record. We congratulate Mr Delforce and Ms Kiss for the courage they have shown throughout this drawn-out and stressful process.

ADO Gains National Accreditation

In an exciting development for animal law in Australia, the ADO has been awarded accreditation by the National Association of Community Legal Centres! This is a major milestone for our small independent volunteer law practice. Now the ADO is the first accredited national community legal centre specialising in animal law in NSW and the ACT.

Without this formal recognition we would not have been able to continue to operate,

and to give animals a voice from 'within' the system.

The National Accreditation Scheme is an industry based certification process that supports and recognises good practice in the delivery of community legal services.

We thank all our wonderful volunteers who have helped us along the way, as well as CLCNSW, NACLC and Voiceless for their



Members of the ADO Board with the accreditation certificate



A shiny new accreditation sticker!

A DIALOGUE

Interview with Catrin Moller, Law Graduate and PLT Intern at the ADO

Welcome to *A DIALOGUE*, where we interview people who have made a contribution to animal law and animal protection.

First up is **Catrin Moller**, a law graduate from South Australia who has just completed the practical component of her Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (GDLP) with the ADO. Originally a Perth native, Catrin has lived in California, where her father worked as an agronomist, and Adelaide, where she completed her tertiary studies in Commerce and Law at the University of Adelaide.

The decision to study law, Catrin explains, was inspired by a long-held belief in the importance of the principle of justice:

I've always believed in fairness and equality. I was the second oldest of four kids and so I think I took on the role of ensuring everything was always fair and equal for all of us. Throughout my adult life I have continued to believe in these core concepts and the equal opportunity for all people and living things, regardless of gender, age, economic status, [or] species.

Catrin's interest in animal law was inspired by a subject called 'Animals and the Law' which she studied at the University of Adelaide.

Catrin also learnt much about the rights of individuals, both human and nonhuman, whilst on exchange in Sweden.

When asked about the importance of nonhumans in her life, Catrin mentions a childhood of companion animals:

Rabbits, cats, dogs, fish, hermit crabs... you name it and we probably had one!

Then a few years ago Catrin adopted a dog, Indianna. This was when Catrin "realised the range of emotions [Indi] could show and how similar she truly is to humans."

Given these interests in animals and the law, an internship with the ADO seemed the perfect fit (until, that is, Catrin had to experience first-hand Canberra's fearful winter weather!).

Having now completed her Practical Legal Training with the ADO, Catrin is interested in finding a job where she can use her law and commerce experience in an animal-related field. Catrin knows that this may mean volunteering, given the current niche status of animal law. In the meantime, she plans to continue with her role on the Animal Law Committee of the Law Society of South Australia.

On the topic of the animal protection movement more generally, Catrin has this to say to those who argue that we should be addressing the problems faced by humans before we focus on the plight of nonhuman animals:

I believe we can focus on more than one issue at a time. Of course, there are many injustices within the human race, but that shouldn't stop us from



**Catrin at the ADO office in
Canberra**

also fighting for the voiceless at the same time. As seen with many issues throughout Australia and worldwide, it takes time for change to occur. The issue of animal welfare is long standing and progress has been slow and so the fight must continue.

We asked Catrin what changes she would like to see—what the ideal outcome of this fight for the voiceless would be. First up for Catrin is the legal status of nonhuman animals: "I'd like to see animals legally recognised as sentient beings in Australia!" She also pointed out the continuing importance of educating members of the public about what really goes on behind the scenes with those animals who are a part of the agricultural industry, so that people can "make a more informed choice as to whether or not they will continue to fund these industries".

We thank Catrin for her amazing contribution to our Centre, and wish her the very best of luck with her future endeavours in animal law and beyond.

Film review: *Okja* (2017)

If you haven't yet seen *Okja* (pronounced with a hard "j"), a film that has bypassed cinemas to be released on Netflix, be warned—your tear ducts and sense of indignation are going to be getting a work out.

The film centres on the relationship between Mija (the stunning, 13-year-old Ahn Seo-Hyun) and Okja, a genetically modified "super-pig" created by Lucy Mirando (the ever-bizarre Tilda Swinton) and her Mirando Corporation. Okja is placed with Mija and her farmer grandfather to be raised in the idyllic hills of South Korea. When Mirando Corp re-claims its investment by taking the suitably fattened Okja back to the United States, the stage is set for a heart-wrenching rescue mission. Mija, with the sometimes-help-sometimes-hindrance of activists from the Animal Liberation Front, races against time to save her

before she joins the other super-pigs as "ecologically-friendly" fodder for human consumption.

The horrors of the meat industry are viscerally portrayed in *Okja*. But there is another equally important feature of the film, one that might be slightly lost amidst the scenes of slaughter, torture and even rape. *Okja* doesn't merely take aim at Big Ag, but also at the animal activists. While ultimately they redeem themselves, they are largely portrayed as both out-of-touch extremists (refusing to eat tomatoes because "all food production is exploitative"), and as capable of the kind of 'for-the-greater-good' fanaticism that has been used so often to justify acts and regimes of unspeakable horror. They are willing to use Okja as a spy in the slaughterhouse, knowing full well the danger they are putting her in. It is not until they meet Mija, a human, that they seek permission to use Okja in this way. No one seemed to think to consult the



visibly distressed Okja herself, who would clearly not consent to such a scheme. It's a powerful reminder not to lose sight of the individual animals we want to save whilst we are fighting on behalf of animals more generally.

Ultimately, the film is a reminder that we still have a long way to go. When Mija catches a fish early on in the film, allowing the creature to suffocate to death in her bag before she and her grandfather eat the fish for dinner that night, this goes by unremarked and seemingly unremarkable. We are willing to protest the injustices done to the super-pigs, but somehow that fish – without Okja's crying, human-like eyes – seems less of an individual worthy of our concern.

- Serrin Rutledge-Prior

Upcoming events

It's on again! Join the ADO in the **Canberra Times Fun Run**, where we'll be walking, jogging and running for FUNds to support our ongoing work providing free access to justice for animals and animal advocates! So come join us on **Sunday 3 September** - you'll be all done by 10am and ready to head over to the Vegan Day Out! See our Facebook page for information on how to donate or register for this great event.

What better way to reward yourself for joining in the Fun Run, than by spending the rest of the weekend at the **Vegan Day Out in Canberra**? Local businesses throughout Braddon will be offering sales prices, samples and special vegan menu options – simply head into the **Cruelty Free Shop (3/24 Mort St, Braddon)** to collect your map of participating businesses and vouchers. See you there on **2 & 3 September!**

Canberra's **Living Green Festival** will be held at **Albert Hall** on **Sunday, 1 October**, from **10am-4pm**. Featuring over 80 market stalls, live music and entertainment, workshops and cooking demonstrations, this dog-friendly event (that's right, bring along Fido too!) is not to be missed! The Festival features an amazing range of global plant-based cruelty-free cuisine.



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