

Peter C. Stroud,
Zoological Consultant
(former Director Werribee Open Range Zoo;
former Senior Curator Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens;
former Taxon Advisory Group Convenor for Proboscidea,
Australasian Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria)

17 Ellen Avenue
East Keilor
Victoria 3033
AUSTRALIA

Dr. Robert Atkinson,
Head of Wildlife
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Wilberforce Way
Southwater, Horsham
West Sussex, RH139RS
UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. Ignasi Cardelús
Presidencia i Relacions Institucionals
Barcelona's Town Hall
Plaça Sant Jaume 1
08002 Barcelona
SPAIN

Dear Mr Cardelús,

We write to you as active professionals in the field of wild animal exhibition, husbandry and welfare.

News of the plight of the elephant Susi, in the Barcelona Zoo, is drawing world-wide attention.

Much has been written and said about elephant welfare in zoos and the opportunities that zoos present to foster care and concern for wildlife. Sadly behind much of the rhetoric there are few facts. We would offer you the following in the hope that you may be influenced to decide to remove Susi as soon as possible from her cramped and outdated facilities and send her to more spacious surroundings where she can enjoy the company of other elephants.

1) Elephants in urban zoos around the world suffer from a variety of health problems and early death, associated with close captivity. Recent research published in the journal "Science" - arguably the worlds most prestigious scientific journal - and supported by a paper lately published in the journal, "Animal Reproduction Science", provides hard and irrefutable evidence of this.

2) Field research has revealed that elephants are social animals of great complexity, physiologically and mentally adapted to lead lives of constant social interaction and continuous movement, across broad landscapes. They are animals of deep

intelligence and powerful emotions. These are not matters of conjecture but matters of fact.

3) No urban zoo in the world currently caters appropriately for the needs of elephants. Attempts to do so by creating small groups of disparate individuals, in small exhibits of a few acres, where constant control of individual animals by keepers must be maintained at all times just to ensure some level of exercise and mental stimulation, are wholly inadequate and ethically questionable.

4) The space devoted to elephants at Barcelona Zoo could be devoted to a variety of other species in a far more cost effective way, providing higher levels of engagement and enjoyment for the people of Barcelona, free of ethical doubt and controversy.

5) The Barcelona Zoo has a brilliant opportunity to join those urban zoos around the world that have rightly decided that they cannot adequately cater for elephants. Susi can and should be sent to a better life. Building any new urban facilities for elephants will inevitably be very expensive and will generate continuous controversy for the city of Barcelona.

6) There is no evidence - remarkably - that keeping elephants in urban zoos in any way encourages people to care enough about elephants to actually take any significant action to assist elephant welfare and conservation. Surely this alone should cast doubt on continuing to keep elephants at the Barcelona Zoo.

Please reconsider the future for elephants at Barcelona Zoo. Only further elephant suffering and continuous controversy can result from any decision to continue to keep elephants there.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Stroud
Zoological Consultant
Melbourne, Australia

Dr. Rob Atkinson
Head of Wildlife Department,
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
United Kingdom