



Tina Wort
General Manager
Dundee's at the Cairns Aquarium

20 May 2020

Dear Ms Wort,

Good morning from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). I hope this letter finds you well. I'm writing after reading a report that fish at the Cairns Aquarium are "lonely" and "sulking" because the facility is currently closed to visitors owing to COVID-19. **We, too, recognise that sea animals have emotions, so we'd like to make a proposal on the basis of common sense, moral consistency, and conservation: remove fish and other sea animals from the menu at Dundee's at the Cairns Aquarium.**

As the aquarium's director, Daniel Leipnik, rightly notes, fish "really have got brainpower" and do indeed "have emotions" and "connect with people". Experts agree that fish are sensitive animals who feel pain, form complex relationships, have good memories, and possess cognitive abilities that can actually surpass those of dogs and some primates. Yet, as victims of fishing, *trillions* of fish each year are yanked from their homes – gasping for breath – and bludgeoned or left to suffocate before being beheaded and gutted.

It's as unnerving for your diners to tear apart the flesh of sea animals alongside tanks full of their brethren as it would be for zoo visitors to devour elephant burgers outside the elephant enclosure.

Leaving fish in the sea is a powerful act of conservation. In 2015, researchers from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University found that fishing removes important predatory fish such as coral trout (who are on your menu) from the reef ecosystem, causing significant changes to the make-up of its fish populations.

Removing fish from the ocean to supply restaurants like yours is crippling the planet's most important ecosystem. Oceans supply us with every third breath we take, yet the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that [over half the world's fish stocks are "fully exploited"](#), and experts are predicting fishless oceans by 2048. Conversely, a 2018 study pointed to vegan eating as the ["single biggest way"](#) humankind can reduce its negative impact on the planet.

Additionally, more than 640,000 tonnes of nets, lines, pots, and traps used in commercial fishing are discarded in the sea *every year*, and up to 70% (by weight) of the macroplastics floating on the ocean surface are related to fishing.

Replacing the sea animals on your menu with vegan fish would reflect your values, protect animals and the planet, and enable you to tap into the global vegan food market, which is projected to be worth around AU\$49 billion by 2026.

We hope you seriously consider making this evolution.

Kind regards,

Emily Rice
Senior Outreach and Partnerships Manager

PEOPLE FOR
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OF ANIMALS

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