



Animal Care Australia

The Animal Care Expert

"Animal welfare by the experts — those who keep, care for and breed animals"



Inside this edition:

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“Animal Care Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we reside, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.”

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Watch out for our next issue
in September 2023.

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Headline Article:

Inquiry into impact of road safety behaviours on vulnerable road users in Victoria.

By Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse & Livestock Representative



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ACA's Recommendations to the Inquiry:

1. The Victorian Government recognise equestrians as vulnerable road users, who are at high risk of injury and death on Victorian roads.
2. Recommendations include helmets, Hi Viz and reflective attire is worn by all equestrians when on Victoria's roads.
3. Amendments are made to 'Road Safety Rules 2017' under 'Part 22—Additional Victorian Road Rules' and 'The Victorian Driver's Handbook' under 'Sharing the Road with Animals: Horses' to include:
 - a. Allow at least one car width on 60km/h roads and more at higher speeds when passing horses
 - b. Slow down to 40km/h or less to pass safely, and
 - c. Stop immediately if indicated to do so by the rider or driver
4. Victorian Government update horse rider road signage to include instruction on what motorists should do – such as "Pass wide and slow."

5. Victorian Government provide funding for motorist education campaigns, including professional driver training and local community led education programs.

As ACA's Horse & Livestock Rep, I was dismayed to see that horse riders, drivers and handlers were not mentioned within the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry. Not only are equestrians not recognised and identified as vulnerable road users, but the industry does not appear to have been consulted.

With assistance from member association Bitless Inc, we quickly established an informal survey to gather opinions from Victorian Equestrians. We notified equestrian organisations in Victoria that regularly use roads in their activities (trail riding and carriage driving groups etc) and shared our survey on social media.

We received 37 responses in time to be included in ACA's submission (and a few more afterwards that will help if ACA or Bitless Inc are invited to participate in any inquiry hearings). Our survey results were consistent with a national survey published in 2015, and was somewhat

disheartening to see that the situation on our roads has not improved with time.

Some notable statistics from our survey:

Of the 37 responses: 33 ride, 11 drive carriages and 22 lead horses on the roads.

⇒ 75% of the respondents take horses on the roads at least once a week.

⇒ 92% wear helmets, and

⇒ 60% wear hi Viz when on Victorian roads

Respondents were asked whether driver behaviour towards horse riders on the road changed during lockdown. One third said yes, one quarter said no, and one third said they did not take their horses on roads during the lockdowns. When asked if they noticed a change in other road users behaviour after lockdowns 41% said no, and 35% said yes. The rest were not sure, or were not riding through both periods of time to compare.

However, when asked if they feel safer riding and driving on the roads compared to 3 years ago:

⇒ 66% said no - they feel less safe or much

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less safe, and

⇒ 32% felt the same.

⇒ None said they felt safer than 3 years ago. This seems to imply that motorists' behaviour has generally declined over time.

Our Survey Respondents told us that in the last 3 years:

⇒ 46% personally experienced or witnessed a road incident with horses

⇒ 16% experienced verbal abuse from motorists for being on a road

⇒ 38% had drivers deliberately pass too close to their horse

⇒ 49% experienced incidents with speeding motorists

⇒ 25% had drivers ignore their instructions to slow or stop

⇒ 70% said that their safety would be improved with driver education

⇒ 65% said that they feel less safe on the roads than 3 years ago.

We hope that this Victorian Inquiry will raise awareness and offer practical and cost effective



solutions to the issues equestrians are facing on the roads. This could then lead to changes that can be adopted nationally.

We will keep you updated on the outcome.

ACA's submission can be read in here:



Bitless Inc's submission can be read here:



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Submissions, Correspondence & Meeting Reports



ACA responds to NSW Draft Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

ACA responds to Federal Government's Inspector General of Animal Welfare Consultation Paper:

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation the majority of the proposal SHOULD remain outside of our direct purview, however, ACA have serious concerns relating to this paper and the apparent lack of understanding and knowledge perpetrated by both the government Ministers and Senior Staff as to the exact responsibilities of the position of Inspector General of Animal Welfare & Live Exports. (Point of note: even the title of the Consultation Paper makes no inclusion of 'Live Export')

Confusion is further exacerbated by the opening Purpose of the Consultation Paper:

"The Australian Government made a commitment to establish an Inspector-General of Animal Welfare to strengthen animal welfare and increase accountability and transparency for animal welfare in livestock exports.

This will be implemented by expanding the current office of the Inspector-General of Live Animal Exports to include animal welfare related objectives and expertise, forming an Inspector General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports (IGAWLAE). "

In light of the above Animal Care Australia made the following recommendations:

- 1) the existing Objectives should be updated to prioritise animal welfare over commercial interests, and
- 2) Strict Conditions are drafted to ensure the focus remains on animal welfare and does NOT include animal rights or related ideologies.

Animal Care Australia does not support the new role having powers outside of Live Animal Exports as this requires removal of powers from the states, who are currently responsible for Animal Welfare.

Our submission can be found here:



ACA contacts the Reserve Bank of Australia to consider animal welfare of pets when making future interest rate rises

ACA highlighted the growing concerns of animal welfare should interest rates continue to increase the pressure of the current cost of living crisis. ACA acknowledged the need for inflation to be controlled but also noted many economists were reporting the previous rises had started to reduce the rate of inflation.

ACA's full letter to the RBA can be found here:



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ACA responds to Review of South Australia's Animal Welfare Act

March 2023: ACA responds to the first step of the review into South Australia's Animal Welfare Act:

For ACA there was a lot to provide feedback on and we submitted over thirty (30) recommendations calling for both change and/or clarification.

ACA raised concerns with the following aspects within the current Act:

- * Powers of the enforcement officers are excessive — in particular references to the RSPCA.
- * The clear lack of provision for accountability of the officers.
- * Appointment criteria, experience requirements and training of officers are insufficient or unclear.
- * Right of entry to premises requires re-writing and tightening to ensure appropriate entry only under a warrant or permission or extenuating circumstances.

- * The destruction of life of an animal MUST require an independent assessment and not at the whim of the RSPCA.
- * Provisions of the Act MUST also apply to all enforcement officers.
- * Regulations surrounding prohibited activities and items
- * Animal Welfare Advisory Committee has no representation for pets/companion animals
- * Lacking 'Minimum Standards of Care' thereby blurring owners' responsibilities under the Act.
- * Educational/research licenses and ethics committee require further expansion to ensure accessibility.

To be clear ACA DOES NOT support the RSPCA as an enforcement organisation. Enforcement should be the responsibility of the government alone and not out-sourced to charitable organisations .

ACA will continue to consult as the review continues.

You can read our full submission here:



ACA Responds to Moreton Bay Regional Council's Animal Management Local Law Review

March 2023: ACA responds to the Council's Animal Management Local Law Review.

ACA highlighted our ongoing concerns with Councils placing restrictions on the keeping of pets.

It is clear the proposed changes are based on ideological views rather than animal welfare or neighbourhood amenity.

Specific points of concern:

- * Restrictions on dog & cat numbers are confusing.
- * People found to be about to commit an offence can be fined BEFORE they commit the offence', that is: 'Thought Crimes' are to be enforced
- * Reclaiming of impounded animals reduced from 5 days to only 3 days—placing more animals in danger of being euthanised.
- * Birds, small mammals and horse numbers based on an animal per square metre

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regardless of the size of the species.

ACA requested to meet with Council to discuss the changes and more appropriate measures than restrictions.

Councils should encourage pet keeping — not restrict them!

You can read our full submission here



ACA responds to review of NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act

April 2023: ACA has called out the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) for its inept implementation of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation the majority of the Act remains outside of our direct purview, however, sections dealing with Native Wildlife Licensing which permit the keeping of native animals as pets required feedback.

ACA responded to call-out the continued obstructionist attitude by the department during the last six (6) years of the reviewing

process. ACA also highlighted the following points:

- * Questioned why the recommendations from the 2019 Review were not implemented and were totally ignored by NPWS.
- * Questioned why the current second review is required which now has seen the cost to taxpayers blow-out beyond \$3.25 million — with still no outcome.
- * Highlighted the NPWS simply make up the rules as they go along and provided examples.
- * Highlighted the clear bias against the keeping of reptiles and native mammals as pets, as well as the different treatment of reptile keeping, including licensing conditions and Expo approval requirements.
- * Called-out the behaviours and attitude of NPWS staff and the departmental ethos of 'ideological dreamings' that continue to inhibit any progress on a range of matters.
- * Lack of updating of the Species List with no system allowing for additions of species or review of license categories — resulting in hundreds of false annual returns.

ACA requested to meet with the Review Team to discuss our concerns and provide documented evidence.

You can read our full submission here:



ACA Responds to Hume City Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 Review.

April 2023: ACA made the following comments:

- * ACA applauds Council on its plans to educate residents on a range of domestic animal issues and we trust this will continue in the next DAMP.
- * ACA notes Council has reported issues relating to dog attacks. It is our strong recommendation that Council employ the services of professional dog trainers in order to appropriately determine whether the behaviour having been displayed was that of a dangerous or that of an irresponsible owner.
- * ACA applauds the option being proposed for the training of owners where dogs have

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been found wandering.

* ACA recommends cat curfews/containment that require cats to remain on their owners property 24/7 as this would solve the majority of issues with pet cats being a nuisance, injured or killed, and unwanted pregnancies adding to the feral cat population.

* ACA supports containment laws that have exceptions for cats that are 'walked' on harness and lead in the same manner as applies to dog owners.

* ACA recommend assistance for cat owners to construct appropriate containment enclosures.

ACA will continue to advocate for pets and their owners when reviewing Animal Management Plans.

You can read our full submission here:



Please Slow Down!

By Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse & Livestock Representative

Stay safe while sharing public spaces with horses

- ⇒ If you encounter a horse on the roads, footpath or trails, please adhere to the following for your safety and that of the horse and rider/driver:
- ⇒ If you are driving a car or riding a motorbike PLEASE SLOW DOWN to 40km/hr or less.
A horse can spook sideways and often are frightened INTO the road, putting you at risk.
- ⇒ If a rider or carriage driver signals you to slow down or stop – please follow their instructions. They are doing so for your safety as well as theirs.
- ⇒ Do not beep, rev your engine, or drive within 1 car space of any horse on the road.

- ⇒ If you're walking, biking, or running and encounter a horse, alert the rider or driver to your presence and ask them how they would prefer that you proceed. Horses will vary in their experience and training level (as do their riders!) and some may need more space than others. Bikes move very quickly and quietly and the sunlight reflecting off metal surfaces can worry a horse.
- ⇒ If you approach a horse from behind, call out to the rider or driver and slow down or stop, until you can pass safely. Even well behaved horses can become fearful of something moving quickly behind them. They can kick out further than you expect – give them a healthy distance as you pass. Try to stay where the horse can see you (if you can see one of his eyes, then he can see you)
- ⇒ If you have children with you, please

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ask your children to stop and stand still. If you wish to approach the horse for a pet, just ask the rider or driver if its ok. Don't be offended if the response is no. Some horses are just learning and are not safe for children to approach. Most horse owners are happy to share the horse experience with others, when its safe and they have time to do so.

- ⇒ Horses have a right to be on all public roads in Australia and you must share the road with them. In some states they are also permitted on footpaths and off road trails (such as rail trails, fire trails and in national parks).
- ⇒ Horses are NOT at all like dogs and easily startled! They can kick out suddenly if they feel threatened. Once a horse has been frightened, it takes some time for them to settle down again. Give the horse plenty of space and do not approach if the horse is not standing quietly.

Thank you for keeping everyone safe while enjoying the outdoors!



MEDIA RELEASE: COMPASSION FOR PET OWNERS!

Australia's Peak Animal Welfare Body says State and Territory Ministers need to be compassionate to pet owners during current crisis.

Australia's peak animal welfare body, Animal Care Australia, has written to all state and territory Ministers requesting they remind their animal welfare enforcement officers of the need to place compassion ahead of prosecution.

"The community is currently experiencing higher cost of living distress. Animal cruelty enforcement officers, particularly the RSPCA must be reminded that compassion is needed during these times.," said Michael Donnelly, President of Animal Care Australia. "The pressures being endured by constant interest rate rises and other rising costs of living across the board are placing a great deal of pressure on society."

Animal Care Australia recently wrote to the Reserve Bank of Australia's Governor Philip Lowe in order to highlight the need to consider family pets in the bigger picture when they are assessing future interest rate rises.

"People are now being forced to make decisions about how they live their lives, including needing to cut back on expenses.

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“Prioritising expenses also comes down to not only being able to feed their children – but their pets,” Donnelly stated.

“Routine pet expenses such as veterinary bills, worming, tick/flea prevention, grooming and even agistment for our larger pets are all expensive necessities – but ones that are more likely to be sacrificed for more important items, and yet are also requirements under animal welfare legislation. With 46 per cent of people reporting high levels of cost-of-living distress and one in six reporting having suicidal thoughts, the last thing our community needs right now is a heavy-handed enforcement of minor breaches of animal welfare legislation”

“People are also being forced out of their homes and into the rental market – and as we all know, where a rental property can be found it is highly unlikely their pets can stay with them. This loss of their family members adds further stress to an already extremely dire situation, and the children are the least likely to understand why their pets can no longer stay with them.”

Animal Care Australia has requested Governments initiate a discount voucher scheme that can be redeemed at veterinary surgeries, etc

“Better still the RSPCA in each State (other than the Northern Territory) has millions of dollars sitting going unused. These organisations already receive funding from both government and the community – it’s time that money was put to its intended purpose – to prevent cruelty. What better way to prevent it than by assisting people BEFORE they find themselves in that situation,” said Mr Donnelly. “I call on the RSPCA to step up and do what people donate to them to do. The P in RSPCA is for Prevention.”

Animal Care Australia is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pets and companion animals in Australia.

ACA is currently seeking funding support

“Animal Care Australia has grown. We have formed new subcommittees of volunteers to help keep pace with the ever-increasing workload. Our membership and supporter base continues to increase, and yet this still does not feel strong enough to take on the ever-increasing rhetoric of animal rights extremists. Being a small team of unpaid volunteers is a huge challenge, and without substantial funding will remain so. Animal Care Australia would benefit from a kind, animal loving benefactor, with some funding support.”

ACA needs your support!



**IT'S TIME TO
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP**

**So we can support you and
your pets!**



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www.animalcareaustralia.org.au

Animal welfare by the experts — those who keep, care for and breed animals



Membership Renewal Time!

We'd like to thank you for your membership with Animal Care Australia.

There are two ways to renew:

Login and renew online - <https://www.animalcareaustralia.org.au/join/>

Go to our Join page (as above) and download the membership form & return it with your receipt of direct deposit payment or cheque (via post or email).

Renewals are due by 31st July 2023.

Members get access to our Members & Supporters Discussion Group as well as our Species Advisory Groups.

ACA has been recognised as a primary stakeholder by all animal welfare agencies nationally. ACA continues to advocate for you and your pets. This past few months we have:

- * Responded to South Australian Draft Veterinary Services Bill
- * Responded to South Australian Biosecurity Act Review
- * Responded to NSW Protected Animal Species Draft Code of Practice
- * Responded to Federal Government's Inspector General of Animal Welfare Consultation
- * Supported the call for Parliamentary Inquiries into NSW NPWS and

the

RSPCA/AWL

- * Highlighted differences Animal Rights and Animal Welfare for the NSW & Victorian elections
- * Lobbied State & Territory Animal Welfare Ministers to provide assistance to pet owners during the current cost of living crisis
- * Responded to South Australian Animal Welfare Act Review
- * Responded to Moreton Bay and Hume City Council's Animal Management Plan Reviews
- * Responded to NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act Review

Our work is not done which means neither is yours. We will need your ongoing support to keep animal welfare in the forefront of the politicians minds and legislation.

Please remember, ACA is not government funded, we rely solely on your membership fees to continue to speak up for you. No one at ACA holds a paid position – we are a 100% volunteer run organisation, and we need you to help us, so that we can support you at all levels of government.

If you would like to make an additional donation, our website has a donation button for you to donate via credit card or Paypal.

If you joined on or after the 1st March 2023, then your membership has been extended to expire 30th June 2024, so no need to renew this time.

We look forward to your continued support over the next 12 months.

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Grayson Secretary – Animal Care Australia — secretary@animalcareaustralia.org.au



National Horse Traceability Update

By Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse & Livestock Representative



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On 15th May, 2023 State Agriculture ministers met and, among other things, accepted the recommendations of the National Horse Traceability Working Group. The next step is to establish a National Horse Traceability Implementation Taskforce to oversee the implementation of a national horse traceability system.

Back in October 2022, the Working Group released its Final Report: a 143 page document that outlined the four possible approaches to a National Traceability Register, and the pros and cons of each, and the recommendations of the option most likely to succeed.

These options were:

1. doing nothing
2. improving the current PIC system
3. PIC improvements plus a compulsory national microchip registry and
4. a highly regulated approach including tracking of all horse movements in real time.

Option 1 was never seriously considered. Option 2 has been chosen as the most practical and reasonable place to start, option 3 was considered but would be difficult to implement as a national microchip register doesn't yet exist, and option 4 was deemed unattainable at this time as the implementation would be difficult, expensive and unlikely to be followed by horse owners.

ACA is supportive of the decision to adopt Option 2 and start where we are at as an industry. Initially closing the gaps in the current systems already in use and establishing a national standard is achievable in a short time. Most horse owners are already familiar with the PIC system and it's not overly intrusive, or time consuming to manage. The Working Group recommended an independent review in 5 years after implementation to consider adding additional traceability to the system – with the goal of eventually adopting the Option 4 model. ACA approves of this approach to not commit to a system



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right now that may be outdated by the time it is introduced. We have always had concerns with a system that is dependent on microchips alone, and this opens the door for better technologies to be developed and adopted in that time, such as facial recognition – which currently in development in agriculture, and more suitable for use with horses that are unhandled.

Some horse owners have criticised the recommendations as not going far enough, and not meeting the Working Group’s Terms of Reference. It seems sensible to us to move forward with one step at a time, rather than rushing in a multitude of new systems with lots of flaws. The two biggest risks to the implementation of the National register is leaving gaps and having certain groups of horses excluded (such as brumbies, newborn foals, or senior horses) or making it too complicated and having it not be accepted by the broad majority of horse owners. Adding a new layer once the foundations are complete makes sense, and is achievable under the circumstances. The horse industry in Australia is very broad, not all with easy access to digital technologies (yet) and we must remember that horses are classified as livestock – not companion animals. ACA would have liked to see this changed with this opportunity, but our recommendations were not implemented. The Working Group’s approach was to initially insert horses into existing national livestock biosecurity systems, rather than invent a new independent one, and under these circumstances, we have to agree that this is the best approach to get a register underway, with minimal additional cost to horse owners.

The recommended commencement of the National Horse Traceability Register is no later than 1st January 2025. 5 years later, a review will be conducted by an independent consultant to advise on the next stage of development. We will continue to follow this issue closely.



ACA supports call for NSW Inquiries into NPWS and RSPCA/AWL

The NSW Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party (SFFP) has stated they will seek Parliamentary Inquiries once Parliament returns.

Mark Banasiak, NSW Upper House Member for the Shooters, Fishers & Farmers Party has told ACA, he will seek the continuance of an annual Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Mr Banasiak will also seek an Inquiry into the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service following a series of outcries from the public and stakeholders into the NPWS’s obstructionist behaviour.

As an organisation representing a number of stakeholders who have experienced obstructionist and non-transparent actions by the NPWS, and who believe both the NPWS and RSPCA/AWL need to be held accountable ACA supports the SFFP call.





Meet the Members — NSW Fancy Rodent Society

By Rachel Sydenham — ACA Small Mammals Representative



New South Wales Fancy Rodent Society Inc.

Website: www.nfrs.com.au Email: info@nfrs.com.au

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Covid lockdowns hit many small animal clubs hard and the NSW Fancy Rodent Society Inc. was no exception. With the decline of shows, members, events, activities and the Community Hall in Box Hill that they called home for many years being sold by council to developers and set for demolition, the club struggled to get back in the swing once society was allowed to resume. With perseverance from its passionate members, the NSWFRS is now back with shows, major events and much more to come.

The NSWFRS is a very family orientated and inclusive environment where people with a love for rats and mice can come together and socialise, network enjoy activities and learn. The club is all about education and supporting one another whether you are a pet owner, breeder or just have an interest in learning about keeping and caring for rats and mice as pets. You do not have to be a financial member to take part in our events, the club welcomes everyone.

The club also hold regular education workshops for its members and guests, and endeavour to create awareness and educate the general public at pet displays on best practice animal welfare and how to source healthy friendly pets through reputable experienced breeders.

One of the clubs recent events was at the Hawkesbury Agricultural Show, where they held a display and show event. The pavilion was full of show goers keen to meet the rodents and be surprised at how misunderstood rats and mice truly are. Exhibitors love introducing and talking about their rodents at events and there was an interactive display with rats in a play pen for everyone to meet and watch their mischievous antics.

The NSW Fancy Rodent Society has been a proud member and supporter of Animal Care Australia since 2018.





Reptile Heating

By Joanne Payne — ACA Reptile & Amphibian Representative



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With it coming into winter, we are hit with reminders from our fire services to be careful with candles and heaters during the cooler weather, but what about the heating that you use for your reptile? With recent house fires being caused by reptile heating equipment, it may be a great time to go through your tanks and make sure that everything is safe.

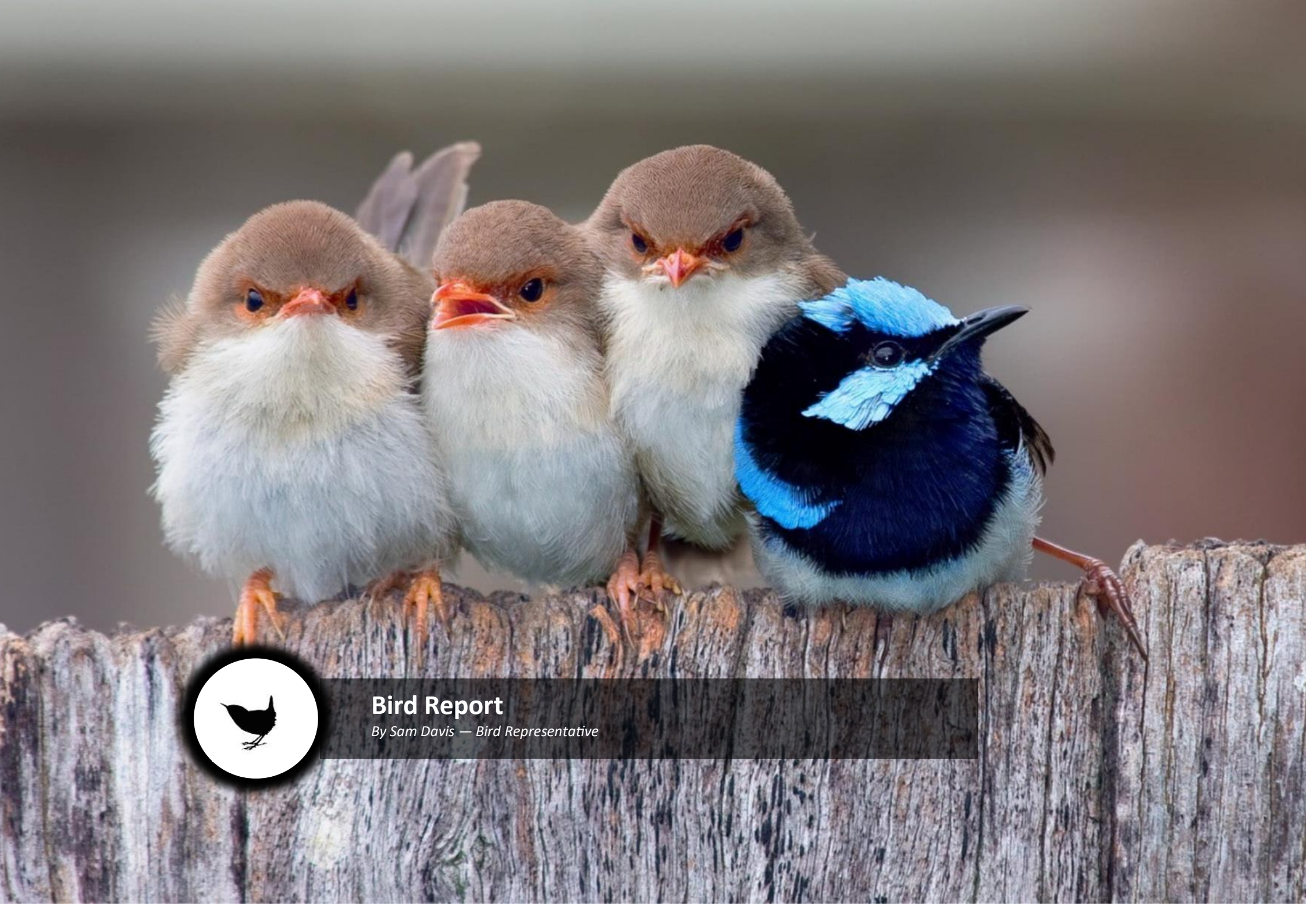
Any heating device should be correctly installed, checked regularly for damage and always be connected to a thermostat. Some heating devices may cause more issue than others. Heat mats, for instance, can be a hazard to both your reptile and your home. Kinked cords, water or incorrect airflow can cause the mats to short out and can cause a fire. The mats must be installed outside of a tank with airflow around the mat. A better option may be a heat cord which can be installed inside of the tank but must have something fire safe keeping it away from the reptile, ceramic tiles are easy to get hold of and ideal for this. Ceramic heat emitters are if you are looking into overhead heat but you must make sure that your reptile can not touch the heater. If you choose to have a heating device on top of the cage, make sure that no flammable materials are able to touch the heating element.



With any heating, always double check the temperature that it is getting to with a reliable thermometer. Multiple businesses sell the hand held laser thermometers. Check the temperatures at multiple times of the day and at night if you are night heating.

Remember, most safety boards with a circuit breaker, will not shut the power off if the heating element starts a fire and you will not know until it is too late.

So with winter just around the corner, do a check of all your heating for your reptiles and make sure it is safe for both them and you.



Bird Report

By Sam Davis — Bird Representative

Animal welfare is animal care.

We're well into 2023 already – can you believe it?

You'll be pleased to know this time around I'll try to be a little lighter, largely avoiding legislative issues, suffice to say the NSW election is over and it appears we have a sensible parliament installed, with a range of good independent MPs. Smaller parties and independents have been our real supporters over the years. And the Animal Justice Party (AJP) was unsuccessful, so has just one MP remaining.

Sales, shows, club meetings and events are well underway now with really positive numbers present at all the events I've attended to date. Here's my recent experiences at Orange Bird Sale, the February meeting of the Avicultural Society of NSW and a trip to Taralga Wildlife Park organised by the Finch Society of Australia.

Orange Bird Sale

The first weekend in March is the Orange bird sale, an annual pilgrimage for many, including myself. The town, or city, of Orange is approximately 250km west of Sydney – approximately 3 hour drive. I'd say it is now the largest bird sale in Australia.

This year numbers were almost back to pre-COVID times. I understand some 4500 birds were benched with the enormous basketball court venue looking great as usual. It really is a great venue, even with the number of sellers, birds and buyers there is still ample space for wide aisles. There's no issue stopping for a yakety-yak at this venue – still plenty of room for patrons to get around you. And I can assure there is plenty of chatter and a few tall tales told!

The organisers of the Orange sale are to be congratulated, along with all



the volunteers who assist with setup, pack up and during the event itself. It runs like clockwork and is much appreciated. As a fincho myself, it is the effort of Tony Ford behind the scenes that is of particular merit. Tony's stature in the local community is perhaps the reason such a terrific venue continues to be available. Some time ago I spent many hours emailing, phoning, annoying a range of similar basketball style facilities in and around Sydney – they are simply booked out by sporting groups every single weekend all year around. I believe Tony remains influential ensuring their first weekend in March booking is secured now and into the future.

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Apart from local celebrity Tony Ford, there's also Phil Donato the local, now independent, State MP. I've run into Phil a number of times at NSW Parliament House and there is no doubt he is a strong supporter of aviculture. Phil, along with Roy Butler (member for Barwon) and Mark Banasiak (NSW upper house member) have been a fantastic support for both CCBFA matters and more broadly taking up matters in parliament on behalf of Animal Care Australia. So great to have a chat to Phil at the sale.

It's become a ritual for numerous finch enthusiasts from around the country to relocate after the sale to Tony Ford's incredible walk in aviary. I've been complying for about 10 years – could be longer.

Photo: Phil Donato (Independent MP) with Sam Davis.



We generally buy a case or two or more and have a few cool ales. This year there were finch breeders from Western Australia, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, in addition to the NSW contingent. It's always a rush to get a seat on the lounge located within the aviary, and once seated people are difficult to move. Sadly some notables who have attended are no longer with us, including Russell Kingston – I regret not giving up my seat to Russ.

Many arrive on Friday and quite a number stay over on the Saturday evening as well. You'd be wise to book early as motels in Orange are full of bird keepers. I've never heard a complaint from motel owners, surprising given the number of birds in carry boxes held within their rooms. A tip is to stack your carry boxes in the shower – keeps the seed husks in one spot and easy swept up prior to departure.

Saturday night is when all the stories really come out, some I suspect, may even be true! For many years the Orange Bird Society organised a large dinner with speakers. These were terrific events with some amazing raffles and prizes, but not simple to organise. In recent years different groups have organised their own dinners in a range of locations around Orange. The last two years I've booked the Canobolas Hotel in the centre of town. Some 40 finch breeders from all over the country were present this year. A really good chance to catch up with old friends and make new friends. All are welcome so please don't hesitate to make contact if you're heading to Orange sale next year. We'll even welcome parrot breeders, but I understand they have their own event, I think was at the RSL this year.

The Canobolas Hotel is close to most people's accommodation plus the

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food is terrific – I had the rib eye this year – medium rare of course. I don't like to speak ill of others but some people, I'm told on good authority, ordered their steaks well done, hard to believe isn't it? I recommend the Canobolas Hotel if you're ever in Orange.

Orange is now more of a small city than a rural town. There's a wide range of other terrific venues, including some really good coffee shops with great breakfast menus. My mob ate breakfast on Sunday, just prior to departing, at Factory Espresso, an old car service centre building, so has an industrial feel – they also have standup comedy on weekends, I understand. We had a few amateur comedians, led by Ben Lloyd with Gerry Portelli in a supporting role, none I'd pay to see, mind you!

Terrific weekend - I recommend everyone tries to attend the Orange sale at least once.

Avicultural Society of NSW February meeting

I could relay all the meeting agenda items – minutes of the previous

meeting, treasurer, secretary and president reports – all very exciting stuff, but space restraints by the editor mean I'll instead concentrate on

the guest speaker for the evening, Debbie Brincat of Andrew's Pet and Bird Palace fame.

Deb is an unbelievably passionate advocate for aviculture in particular clubs. She's also hand raised hundreds, likely thousands of parrots composed of countless species. From tiny parrotlets to large macaws, she's done it all.

Deb is also the wife of Andrew Brincat, bird breeder and dealer extraordinaire. If you are ever in Sydney you must include a visit to their Fairfield specialist bird shop in your itinerary. They also have about a dozen children, many of whom are also dedicated and capable aviculturists. Deb's life is a busy one – just looking after Andrew would be a full time job for most mere mortals!



Photo: Brian Reed (Avi Society President) thanking Deb Brincat

Deb brought along an assortment of species to the meeting. An amazon, macaw, peach face, eclectic and others. These were free flying through-

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-out the hall. Landing on members arms, heads, shoulders. Soliciting kisses from everyone and generally stealing the show from Deb!

Sharing her experiences with the members was the focus of Deb's presentation. She demonstrated preparation of the hand raising formula, in particular consistency and temperature, together with a range of methods for feeding, including spoons, syringes and tubes for crop feeding when required.

One item that I and others present hadn't seen before were dental utility syringes. These syringes have a soft curved and tapered end on them. I suspect they are used with saline by dentists to irrigate or flush out after they use the dreaded drill on their victims, I mean patients. Anyway, these syringes look to be very useful tools when

feeding smaller birds or those just hatched.

This is an example of the types of experiences only possible in person at bird club meetings. If you're not a member of a bird club then I encourage you to find one close to your home and get along. The presentations are terrific, however it is meeting and socialising with those who share our common interest that is the most rewarding.



Taralga Wildlife Park organised by the Finch Society of Australia

On Saturday 18th February a bunch of finch breeders set off from Sydney and surrounds to travel down to Taralga Wildlife Park. Taralga is about a 3 hour drive south west of Sydney via Goulburn.

The park was, and I'm sure still is, the dream of John Stafford who owns and operates the popular facility. I say "I'm sure still is" because a visit makes clear to me the amount of work involved, So many animals, enclosures, plus café, staffing, feed, landscaping, and so on- it truly requires amazing dedication and perseverance to plan, create and operate, and John loves it all.

Many bird breeders will know John, particularly those of us involved with softbills. John was a member of the Native Pigeon and Softbill Association in its heyday prior to the passing of Harry Carr. Many of the aviaries installed around the park were once owned by the club's members.

The wildlife park is just a few kilometres out of town and is spread over numerous acres. Although it does include a range of native and exotic mammals, it is the collection of birds that is certainly the feature. Although John's pet Dingo and Wombat were both endearing and definitely the quietest I've ever encountered. They followed us around like puppies.

We arrived mid-morning just in time for a round of coffee and carrot cake in the café before venturing into the park. The location is on a rise high above much of the surrounding countryside with some wind turbines rotating on the hills behind.

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The collection includes a range of native and foreign species including many of our popular avicultural species. Numerous finch species – some natives I recall include Plum-headed, Double-barred, Diamond Firetails, and Gouldians. A range of pigeon and dove species were in the largely planted aviaries. Parrots including macaws, cockatoos including some black species, turquoises, ringnecks and many more.

There was also a good range of waterfowl and some ground dwellers – rails and quails, and some pheasants. Softbills definitely feature. There were many honeyeater species, including White-naped, New Holland and White-cheeked Honeyeaters.

There were two standout species in my view. Firstly, the Channel-billed Cuckoo which is the world's largest parasitic bird. These birds lay their eggs in Pied Currawong or Australian Magpie nests, although other species are known hosts. The raucous "awrk awrk awrk" communication calls are highly distinctive, and highly annoying. They migrate, after breeding in Australia to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. How incredible would it be to breed such a species in captivity. Now that would be an accomplishment.

Second is the park's Wedge-tailed Eagle. This bloke was a rescue bird with a broken wing which was unable to be repaired. It was thought he was unable to fly at all so was maintained in an open roofed enclosure. Well not so long ago there were some decent winds and you guessed it, he managed to get out into the paddocks adjoining the park. It took some days to locate him. John's tells the story of how he was on a hilltop with a stiff breeze blowing. The eagle again rose from the ground some metres into the air before being coaxed



Photo: Aviaries at Taralga Wildlife Park

down with some food. Suffice to say he now has a roof over his enclosure. Amazing birds to view up close.

Taralga is a charming country town with the usual few pubs and shops. At lunch time on the day both pubs in town were busy, there was a wedding that evening and the guests had filled both hotels. Nevertheless, the staff at the historic (Established 1876) Taralga Hotel willingly opened up a further room with comfy lounges and fireplaces, together with keeping the kitchen open to serve us. The food was delicious, and more important the local Taralga lager is a decent brew which was popular, cold and went down well.

If you're not a member of a club you miss out on such events which are always terrific to do with like-minded friends. I recommend clubs in particular, but individuals as well, consider organising a trip to Taralga Wildlife Park. Highly recommended.

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President's Roundup

By Michael Donnelly

It's already one of those years!

2023 is proving to be another big year for animal welfare, and for ensuring we can still keep our pets and companion animals.

As you may have read on page 14 this past few months has been quite a busy time: We:

- ◆ Responded to South Australian Draft Veterinary Services Bill
- ◆ Responded to South Australian Biosecurity Act Review
- ◆ Responded to NSW Protected Animal Species Draft Code of Practice
- ◆ Responded to Federal Government's Inspector General of Animal Welfare Consultation
- ◆ Supported the call for Parliamentary Inquiries into NSW NPWS and the RSPCA/AWL
- ◆ Highlighted the differences between Animal

Rights and Animal Welfare for the NSW Election

- ◆ Lobbied State & Territory Animal Welfare Ministers to provide assistance to pet owners during the current cost of living crisis
- ◆ Responded to South Australian Animal Welfare Act Review
- ◆ Responded to Moreton Bay and Hume City Council's Animal Management Plan Reviews
- ◆ Responded to NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act Review, and;
- ◆ I participated in the Leaders Forum for the Pet Industry News

ACA reps have already consulted on a variety of pet related strategies, including:

- ◇ Victoria's Pet Census
- ◇ Victoria's next 10 year Cat Management Strategy

◇ NSW Pet Registry re-design team

ACA has had meetings with, the NSW Greens; Shooters, Fishers & Farmers; NSW Labor and the NSW Agriculture Minister; all in the lead up to the NSW Election.

We met with South Australia's Department of Environment & Water and their Dog & Cat Management Team, as well as several meeting with the Shadow Minister to discuss the SA Animal Welfare Act Review, the SA Veterinary Act Review and any potential introduction of 'puppy farming' legislation.

Post NSW Election, we have met twice with Emma Hurst of the Animal Justice Party and the Shooters, Fishers & Farmers Party. We also have scheduled meetings with the new NSW Agriculture Minister.

In Victoria, June & July will see us meet with the Ministers for Planning and for Agriculture as well as their Shadow Minister counterparts.

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We will continue our current discussions with the Shooters, Fishers & Farmers Party to pursue Inquiries into the RSPCA Vic and the Planning Law restrictions on animal keeping.

Currently we are responding to two NSW Local Council Animal Policies that have quite restrictive limits on animal numbers. This will be vital to stop as should these two be successful in restricting pet numbers other NSW Councils will follow suit.

We have also been dealing with Logan Shire Council in QLD that have introduced a mandatory membership of a dog breeding association to all of their dog keeping residents. If their dogs breed, they must join or else Council will seize and desex the dogs. This is frightening!

Over the next few months we will need to respond to:

- * Further Victorian Animal Welfare Act consultation
- * Further Victorian Pet Census consultation
- * Further Victorian Cat Management Strategy consultation

- * Review of the Victorian Domestic Animals Act
- * NSW 'puppy farm' legislation from the Animal Justice Party, and/or, the NSW Greens, and/or the Labor Government. AJP have tabled their Bill.
- * Animal Sentience Bill from the NSW Greens
- * Office of Animal Protection/Welfare from the AJP and/or NSW Greens (tabled) and/or the Labor Government



Those are just the things we know will be coming. The AJP and Greens have a number of other issues they intend to push in both NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

Tasmania goes to an election before the year ends so we will need to watch out for any election promises.

The recent resignation of the Western Australian Premier will hopefully see a change of the landscape there over the coming year.

Did I say it was going to be an important year?

Hope you've enjoyed this edition.

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MISSION STATEMENT

“Animal Care Australia (ACA) is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pet and companion animals in Australia”.

ACA encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care. To encourage responsible pet ownership, and the respectful treatment of all animals in our community ACA continues to promote welfare education over regulation



OBJECTIVES

- To represent Animal Care Groups as the peak animal welfare body
- To engage and advise Government and legislators on welfare issues relating to pets and companion animals.
- To protect the rights of ethical hobbyists & animal keepers to breed and keep pets and companion animals.
- To clarify the difference between animal rights and animal welfare
- To promote higher animal welfare outcomes



ACA GENERAL MEETINGS 2023

7.30 to 8.30pm

MARCH 13th

MAY 8th

JULY 10th

SEPTEMBER 11th

NOVEMBER 13th — AGM

Meetings in 2023 will continue via Zoom to ensure members nationwide can attend..

Any member wishing to join a meeting will need to RSVP by no later than 5pm on that Monday via email: aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au with your details. A link for the meeting will be emailed to you.



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