



Animal Care Australia

The Animal Care Expert

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



Inside this edition:

- ⇒ Legislative change — devil is in the detail
- ⇒ Uniting for a common cause
- ⇒ Using Enrichment with captive animals
- ⇒ RSPCA Horse Welfare Seminar 2023 report





Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in the Animal Care Expert do not necessarily represent those of Animal Care Australia (ACA) Inc . No responsibility is accepted for the opinions, advice and statements contained herein. Readers should rely on their own enquiries/research in making decisions relating to their own interests.

Copyright: All articles in this newsletter are written by committee representative and members of ACA or reproduced from other sources with permission and appropriate acknowledgments. No material herein may be reproduced without the permission of the ACA Committee.



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

In This Issue:

- 4 HEADLINE ARTICLE: Legislative Change — the devil is in the detail
- 7 Submissions, news & correspondence
- 11 ACA in the Press: Uniting for a common cause
- 13 Looking back at 2022 — A bird’s view
- 17 How the captive animal industry meets the ‘wild and free ‘ needs of animals in it’s care
- 19 ACA attends RSPCA Horse Welfare Seminar 2023
- 21 President’s Roundup
- 22 ACA Committee
- 23 ACA Information



Watch out for our next issue in June 2023.

Click to read our [previous issues](#)



Headline Article: Legislative change: The devil is in the detail

By Kylie Gilbert — ACA Dog Representative

In 2016 the Victorian Government introduced the heralded “puppy farm and pet shops bill” this was introduced as the legislation to end puppy farming. While no one would argue that they didn’t want to see an end to dogs and cats bred in appalling conditions, it was clear and to this day remains clear this legislation was not going to stop these operations.

It is now apparent the overall intention was to reduce breeding outright. It was to restrict the ability of people to buy well bred family raised puppies and kittens, intended or not, to stop breeders keeping their older animals into retirement fertile or not. In the words of the then Chief Veterinary Officer, “breeders should just euthanise the older animals to make room for younger ones “. His response when he was questioned on how breeders would reduce their numbers in order to be able to continue breeding to maintain genetic diversity by keeping

younger dogs. This statement has certainly stuck with me since that meeting. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing and it became apparent that the legislation and motive was not about welfare or to improve welfare at all, was legislation to run the governments animals rights agenda.

The legislation went to a Parliamentary Inquiry which made 18 recommendations including:

- * That the government withdraw the current bill and immediately establish a stakeholder group of industry, municipal and community representatives to consult on the drafting of a new bill - this was not undertaken.
- * That the government exempt certain domestic animal hobby breeders from compliance with the proposed legislation - was not followed.
- * That the government abandon the 10

fertile female limits proposed in the Domestic Animals (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Amendment bill 2016 - was not followed.

Then with a second version of the legislation being released it appeared the government was trying to meet some of the recommendations of the Inquiry including breeders registered with applicable organisations were granted the ability to keep up to 10 fertile females without needing ministerial approval. This sounded fair and reasonable and would enable breeders to maintain their breeding programs, especially those that may have multiple breeds. The Government introduced the Pet Exchange Register, but this still made breeders register even though the Inquiry recommendations stated this was over reaching. Again we realised it was to enable

Cont’d next page...

tracing of breeders, despite the fact the breeding associations governing the breeders were already doing this. Although there were no big win's with this second version, breeders were happy with the concessions, but we still thought this would not go anywhere near improving welfare. People doing the wrong thing would continue to do so and it was only overregulating those already highly regulated registered breeders, and there are inconsistencies, for example, racing dogs being exempt in most cases which no one could explain.

This is where the devil in the detail enters. While breeders were celebrating the concessions given after the Inquiry the Victorian Government then went and did the unthinkable, they quietly decided to make changes to the planning laws that would reduce breeding and the peoples' ability to own animals. The change would allow for the 10 fertile females to be abolished by Local Councils and the changes were made under the disguise of a consultation labelled "2018 planning reforms for animal

industries" with the main heading in the consultation being "Low-risk planning permit process for low-density, mobile, outdoor pig and poultry farms." That shouldn't affect dog, cat or other animal breeders – right? Why would anyone breeding companion animals feel changes contained in the consultation would affect them?

Well these amendments completely changed the ball game. It became necessary to obtain a change of land use on the following overlays if you own more than two animals and you want to breed: "Low density residential, Mixed use, Township, Residential growth, General residential, and Neighbourhood residential". It is no longer, two fertile dogs or two fertile cats, plus other animals. It now states a maximum of 5 animals per property - not 5 cats and 5 dogs - 5 animals, total! For those people that had 5 dogs and let's say 2 cats before the changes, the law then provided for numbers to be broken down into individual species. Now, people are being forced to get rid of some animals, with

some Councils suggesting euthanising animals as suggested by the Victorian Chief Veterinary Officer all those years before.

What exactly does this mean? Let's work through the problems with these examples:

You have 2 dogs so you can breed them with no need to change your land use. Some could argue, the people with the two dogs are the ones the initial "puppy farm" legislation was heralded to regulate as they continuously breed with those 2 dogs to produce puppies to sell with likely little to no health testing. They are more likely to then move the dogs on, (abandon, re-home, surrender, etc) when they are no longer useful and they will start again.

Meanwhile, if you have over 2, and remember they don't have to be fertile to be included in the count, and you want to breed them, you have to apply for a planning permit to change your land use. Firstly this land use change comes with a large fee, and there have been several Councils that have refused the applications. When people have questioned the

difference between an application for a planning permit and an excess dog permit, there has been relative silence, even no answers from Animal Welfare Victoria, the Planning Department or the Local Councils now happily instituting and profiting from the change. Let me explain the difference: in order to apply for an excess animal permit you are required to provide all your personal details along with evidence to support your case, including things such as, feeding regimes and methods, housing, general welfare records including all veterinary work, the Council contact neighbours for any objections (and we all know how that goes) and the difference with that to a planning permit - a larger amount of revenue! This also forces breeders to build kennels instead of having their dogs in their houses. Gone are the days of that 2016 Bill's major slogan – "Puppies in the home."

We need to act now to ensure our rights to keep animals, and for our breeders to continue breeding healthy well-adjusted puppies and kittens. We need to stop Animal Rights being the voice that our



governments bend over to. Everything we do with animals should be welfare based not based on numbers, it is not a one fits all scenario.

The previous Victorian Planning ministers (yes plural) have been contacted on many occasions and refuse to meet with anyone, and this year Victorians will embark on yet another review of the Domestic Animals Act – which in my opinion holds some very scary prospects. Don't fall into the traps of the attractive politicians that now seem to be the faces of the AR parties. The ones that would make you believe they are just there to protect animals. It's not true. They are there as they want to see an end to animal ownership.

I am not sure I am ready for a life where animals don't play a huge part. Are you? Because it is certainly a very possible outcome with the current climate in this country.



Submissions, Correspondence & Meeting Reports



ACA responds to NSW Draft Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

ACA's comments are restricted to the recommendations within the "Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015" (Report) and related Sections of the Draft Bill of relevance to the keeping of animals within lots under strata schemes or community land schemes.

There were 6 recommendations relevant to keeping animals. ACA supports 4. The remaining 2 address fees & inconsistencies between the Act and model by-laws for keeping animals.

We recommended edits to both the Act and the model by-laws to close loopholes and reinforce a default ability to keep animals without need for approval or payment of fees.

ACA will continue to support pets in strata.

Our submission can be found here:



ACA responds to Standards & Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Horses in

Western Australia, Consultation Paper, 2022

ACA commends the Dept of Primary Industries & Regional Development (DPIRD) on its draft Standards & Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Horses in Western Australia. We are pleased and relieved to see that the draft is founded on a solid Animal Welfare base, without Animal Rights ideologies

ACA is pleased to see the results of recent scientific studies included in the Draft to

restrict overtightened nosebands, and other severe gadgets as well as limits on excess carrying weights.

ACA notes two glaring omissions, both relating to maturity and age of horses and makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

Definition of an "Aged Horse" should be raised from 16 years to 20 years of age

Recommendation 2:

Introduce an additional Guideline recognising the age of full skeletal maturity prior to horses and ponies being ridden or driven

Our submission can be found here:



ACA requests new Policy for rehoming reptiles in NSW

Animal Care Australia recently attended a meeting with NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service to raise our concerns with the delay in introducing an appropriate resolution to the

Cont'd next page...

issues raised by the rehabilitation organisations some four years ago and are still ongoing, resulting in reptiles taking too long to be rehomed and with many that are rehomed are received in poor health condition requiring additional veterinary care.

Under this proposal herpetological societies (and possibly Catch & Release license holders) would be approved by NPWS as a Licensed Care & Rehoming Provider to provide ongoing, temporary care and rehoming services for displaced native animal pets, in particular, reptiles.

ACA reminds the NPWS that animal welfare must take priority and internal policy requirements that delay the rehoming and result in poor health and welfare outcomes clearly require further intervention and review.



You can read our proposal here:



ACA responds to S.A. Biosecurity Act Review — Public Consultation

7th February 2023: ACA responds to Public Consultation Summary Feedback on Biosecurity Act Review

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation the majority of the drafted legislation remains outside of our direct purview, however, we provided the following feedback:

Animal welfare:

ACA supports the feedback provided within the Animal Welfare section that recommended the RSPCA be removed from Animal Welfare authorities and all other animal related matters. ACA is of the strong opinion that the RSPCA are inadequate in knowledge of individual species (including livestock, and pets) as well their ability to interact with animal's owners in a fair and educational manner.

Accreditation and certification

While ACA supports enacting third-party, non-government entities to be approved as

accreditation authorities stronger emphasis must be ensuring all parties are suitably externally trained, qualified, and assessed prior to accreditation being granted. ACA does not support charitable organisations acting as regulatory or compliance enforcement agencies.

Farm Trespass

ACA fully supports the increasing of penalties and inclusion of bio-offences for farm trespass. ACA recommends the Attorney General's Department include the ability to ensure political parties are not exempt from prosecution for inciting such acts of trespass

You can find our full response here:



ACA responds to NSW Statutory Review of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015

8th February 2023: ACA responds to NSW Statutory Review of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015

Cont'd next page...

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation the majority of the drafted legislation remains outside of our direct purview, however, we provided the following feedback:

Animal welfare:

ACA notes that the Primary and Other objects of this Act fail to include positive animal welfare outcomes.

On whether industry and the community understand what is meant by the general biosecurity duty and what it means for them to have a responsibility to uphold their general biosecurity duty:

ACA would like further confirmation as to who is responsible for biosecurity when the property owner feels powerless and are being intimidated and questioned by uniformed officers?

Additionally, how can we be discussing the responsibilities of stakeholders and our communities, when government agencies (and NGOs authorised by the Minister) cannot (or will not) comply themselves?

Government departments and organisations they oversee must lead by example and more

importantly be held accountable. They **MUST** face the same penalties as non-government organisations, businesses, or individuals, when they fail to do so. Until then, this Act is only half-effective and therefore fails while this inequality continues.

You can read our full response here:



ACA responds to SA Veterinary Services Bill

16th February 2023: ACA responds to the Draft Veterinary Services Bill

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation the majority of the drafted legislation remains outside of our direct purview, however, we provided the following feedback:

New definition of Veterinary Service:

A concerning amendment is the new definition of a Veterinary Service that now includes: 'the performance of an invasive or surgical procedure on an animal'.

ACA is concerned the change of terminology will have unintended consequences, negatively affecting the pet and companion animal keeping community. In its simplest form, invasive procedures include: administering hypodermic injections, non-surgical breeding procedures and anal penetrative procedures such as taking an animals temperature.

ACA supports the continued ability for individuals to be able to perform certain procedures including non-surgical AI, under veterinary supervision as prescribed by the proposed Exemptions (Section 95 of the Bill).

Reviewing and updating Regulations

Raising our levels of concern in relation to this re-wording includes the fact the Regulations may be changed without proper public consultation

Providing veterinarians with more options

ACA strongly recommends the government look to holding an Inquiry into ways to improve the veterinary industry and reduce the burdens on that industry.

You can read our full response here:



Cont'd next page...



ACA responds to NSW Protected animal specimens draft code of practice

16th February 2023: ACA responds to NSW Protected animal specimens draft code of practice (Code):

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation the majority of the drafted legislation remains outside of our direct purview, however, ACA is responding to call-out the sheer waste of time, money and implementation of enacting a Code of Practice (COP) that is:

* Stricter than and exceeds the current Licensing requirements – defeating its own purpose of implementation as a risk-based outcome. (Risk-based systems are meant to reduce workload and interaction – not increase it)

* Untenable as it is unlikely National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) could ensure compliance – given the vast majority of the public are already unaware they require a license to possess a taxidermied or preserved native animal.

* Requiring clearer definition and explanation of the intent and purpose.

* Overreaching based on any intended preservation or conservation of native wildlife.

ACA finds this Code and its attempted implementation to be a clear sign that the staff and department within the NPWS have clearly different ideological agendas if they can find justification for establishing:

* an ongoing register of dead animals

* profiteering off of dead animals by the department (in yearly license fees)

* providing further unjustifiable reasons to maintain knowledge of and the private details of people who keep dead animals

You can read our full response here:





ACA In The Press: Uniting for a common cause

Animal Care Australia’s (ACA) small team of unpaid volunteers are making headway in changing legislation and policies surrounding pet ownership around the country, explains Michael Donnelly, President, ACA.

THE GROWTH of Animal Care Australia (ACA), through the creation of new subcommittees and expansion of its membership base, is helping ACA receive recognition from governments.

Michael Donnelly, President of ACA, said this recognition is reflective of the challenging work they put into ensuring its members and supporters’ voices are heard, and while it is extremely time consuming for the team, which are all unpaid volunteers, it is worthwhile when you see the results.

“ACA is now having direct input into legislative changes, such as animal welfare acts and regulations, native wildlife licensing reviews, and of huge relevance at the moment, recognition of animals as victims in domestic violence and pets in strata legislation. To see our recommendations appearing in legislation is mind blowing for us.”

Over the coming year, ACA will be looking at the animal welfare policies for the different parties leading up to the elections in both Victoria and NSW.

“We will then be connecting with successful politicians in order to ensure they are aware of who Animal Care Australia is, and what our animal welfare policies entail and how we can provide them with a stronger,

“ACA is now having direct input into legislative changes, such as animal welfare acts and regulations, native wildlife licensing reviews, and of huge relevance at the moment, recognition of animals as victims in domestic violence and pets in strata legislation.”

– Michael Donnelly, President, ACA

sensible approach rather than listening to the advocates for animal rights. Most are unaware there is an enormous difference between animal welfare and animal rights until we approach them to set the record straight.”

As well as this, ACA will be focusing on legislative changes such as ensuring pets be allowed in strata.

“People must be able to keep their pets, especially in these economically challenging times. This one change will have such a

Cont’d next page...

massive knock-on effect, including fewer abandoned animals, greater mental health for the owners and of course the fact the animals benefit the most.”

Among the challenges that ACA faces, says Donnelly, are the animal rights policies that are hidden within animal welfare legislation which is happening across the country at all levels.

“Did you know one political party was updating its website daily during the lead-up to the Federal Election? Every time the true outcome of its policies was highlighted to the voters its website was updated.”

Regarding the much discussed Puppy Farming Bill, ACA would like to see an official definition of what a ‘puppy farm’ exactly is, as it currently has no legal definition and Donnelly claims that poses a huge problem.

“Ultimately ACA will continue to advocate that any breeder who does not place the welfare of their animals as a priority, and who intentionally ignores the legislated breeding standards should face the courts. We will also continue to support that improving animal welfare does not include restrictive caps or limited breeding.”

Donnelly believes that all animal owners should care about these issues, and that it is our voices that change the political playground and agenda as elected officials are accountable to us, but we need to engage with the issues to hold them to account.

“It would be great to see all the pet industry come together to fight common issues. Yes, I know it has been tried before, but at some point, we are going to find ourselves in the minority of social conscience and when we do – it will either be too late, or it will require a major pushback to overcome.”

Uniting for a common cause

Animal Care Australia's (ACA) small team of unpaid volunteers are making headway in changing legislation and policies surrounding pet ownership around the country, explains Michael Donnelly, President, ACA.
Words: Thomas Oakley-Newell



Michael Donnelly, President, Animal Care Australia



As well as this, ACA will be focusing on legislative changes such as ensuring pets be allowed in stores. "They must be able to keep their pets, especially in these economically challenging times. This one change will have such a massive lockdown effect, including fewer abandoned animals, greater mental health for the owners and of course the fact the animals benefit the most."

“ACA is now having direct input into legislative changes, such as animal welfare, native wildlife licensing reviews, and of huge relevance at the moment, recognition of animals as victims in domestic violence and pets in strata legislation.”
- Michael Donnelly, President, ACA

THE GROWTH of Animal Care Australia (ACA), through the creation of new subcommittees and expansion of its membership base, is helping ACA secure recognition from governments.
Michael Donnelly, President of ACA, said this recognition is reflective of the challenging work they put into meeting the needs and support of those who are faced, and while it is certainly true concerning the team, which are all unpaid volunteers, it is worthwhile when you see the results.
“ACA is now having direct input into legislative changes, such as animal welfare and regulations, native wildlife licensing reviews, and of huge relevance at the moment, recognition of animals as victims in domestic violence and pets in strata legislation. To see our recommendations regarding to legislation is vital blowing for us.”
Over the coming year, ACA will be looking at the animal welfare policies for the different parties looking up to the elections in both Victoria and NSW.
“We will then be coming with successful submissions in order to ensure that we ensure that Animal Care Australia is, and also our animal welfare policies are not how we can provide them with a strategic, sensible approach rather than focusing on the abstracts for animal rights. Most are aware there is an immense difference between animal welfare and animal rights and we approach them as the broadest approach.”

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.”

As well as this, ACA will be focusing on legislative changes such as ensuring pets be allowed in stores. "They must be able to keep their pets, especially in these economically challenging times. This one change will have such a massive lockdown effect, including fewer abandoned animals, greater mental health for the owners and of course the fact the animals benefit the most."
Among the challenges that ACA faces, says Donnelly, are the animal rights policies that are hidden within animal welfare legislation which is happening across the country at all levels.
“Did you know one political party was updating its website daily during the lead-up to the Federal Election? Every time the true outcome of its policies was highlighted to the voters its website was updated.”
Regarding the much discussed Puppy Farming Bill, ACA would like to see an official definition of what a ‘puppy farm’ exactly is, as it currently has no legal definition and Donnelly claims that poses a huge problem.
“Ultimately ACA will continue to advocate that any breeder who does not place the welfare of their animals as a priority, and who intentionally ignores the legislated breeding standards should face the courts. We will also continue to support that improving animal welfare does not include restrictive caps or limited breeding.”
Donnelly believes that all animal owners should care about these issues, and that it is our voices that change the political playground and agenda as elected officials are accountable to us, but we need to engage with the issues to hold them to account.

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.”

Words by: Thomas Oakley-Newell
Article: [Pet Industry News Nov-Jan 2022/2023](#)



Looking back at 2022— Birds View

By Sam Davis — ACA Bird Representative

2022 saw the return of many familiar bird club events as COVID restrictions were lifted. Sadly, 2022 has also been a year full of political issues in terms of animal welfare legislation, native bird licensing and import/export regulation. These are all areas of ongoing concern for CCBFA that threaten the credibility and viability of aviculture in Australia and internationally.

Bird club events

There is no doubt 2022 has been a challenging year for everyone involved in bird clubs internationally. We emerged out of the COVID-19 pandemic with restrictions slowly being lifted. Bird club members are on the whole of a more mature age than the general population, so understandably there was some reticence by many to return to meetings, shows, sales and other events. It is great to see that most such events are now back in action with attendance steadily increasing.

Conferences were one event type that were on hold during the COVID years, both within Australia and internationally. It was good to see these popular events returning. The Queensland Finch Society's fantastic 2022 conference, I think, was first scheduled for 2019. I note the Avicultural Society of Australia has a conference planned for April 28th – 30th, 2023. Their Goulburn Valley branch is hosting the event in Shepparton – looks to be a great line up of speakers – I hope to attend. Similarly, the Hunter



Avicultural Society's conference "Wings 2023" is scheduled for 18th - 20th of August. I'm sure there are many more.

Shows are also returning to normal for 2023. The ANBC (Australian National Budgerigar Council) 2023 national show and conference is hosted by the Budgerigar Council of Victoria. The ANBC national in 2022 was restricted in terms of attendance, so great to see the event in 2023 is back to normal held at what looks to be a terrific venue in Ballarat. Hundreds of other shows big and small returned during 2022 and we encourage all to support these events in 2023.

Cont'd next page..

There are also numerous country and city agricultural shows that progressively returned to normal during 2022. These events are a fantastic promotion of aviculture. Country shows are always popular local events, and the large city shows promote aviculture to an audience largely unfamiliar with animals. Both the Sydney Royal and the Brisbane EKKA now include fantastic displays of tame birds and aviaries, together with an increasingly competitive show. I encourage everyone to support agricultural shows in their area by volunteering to help or by entering birds.

Bird sales essentially shut down during the COVID years and began operating progressively throughout 2022. Numbers were certainly down in 2022 compared to pre-COVID conditions. Reports indicate numbers of both breeders/sellers and buyers were down at all sales,



which concurs with my personal experience at the few sales I attended in 2022. It appears there were less sellers relative to buyers, which meant clearance rates were high. For example, the annual specialist Finch Society of Australia sale saw almost all birds sold – pleasing for sellers but not so for a number of disappointed buyers. This situation seems counterintuitive as one would expect breeders to have excess birds to move given the lack of sales in the preceding year.

Talking to specialist bird retailers, it seems the COVID years have been a boom for bird keeping. This is terrific news for aviculture and for bird retailers were doing a roaring trade. Many retailers I know in the Sydney area could not buy enough birds from breeders to meet the demand. Given all these new bird keepers one would hope it leads to larger membership of clubs in 2023. Let's do what we can to keep them interested.

Animal welfare legislation

Animal welfare legislation has under review in a number of states during 2022. Many reviews were to be completed by now, but as often happens with such reviews they will continue in 2023. Animal welfare law is the area that has the greatest potential to affect and even destroy aviculture. This is where extreme animal rights organisations operate. The animal rights lobby now has members in both NSW and Victorian parliament and they are running candidates at all levels of government.

During 2022 the influence of animal rights extremists has become crystal clear at numerous parliamentary inquiries, meetings, and discussions I've been involved in. Many bird keepers I speak with have trouble believing

Cont'd next page...

the crazy discussions that are taking place at the highest levels of government. All of aviculture must wake up to this threat. Currently there are just a few organisations, operated by a handful of capable volunteers working on the issue. CCBFA is active and Animal Care Australia (ACA) is doing some amazing work, but we are just a few volunteers fighting a massive group of highly motivated animal rights activists whose aim is to shut down the keeping of all animals.

Native bird licensing

Great news in mid-2020 that Queensland had implemented its new native bird licensing updates. Queensland removed the need for licensing for most commonly kept species and added many softbill species available in other states to their list of available species. It is notable that NSW has had similar in train for many years, including many years prior to the Queensland review commencing. It seems Queensland, who was dragging the chain previously, is now leading.

Early in 2022 we were encouraged to learn that our lobbying to get NSW native bird licensing moving had been successful. This was largely due to a range of supportive members of parliament, in particular Mark Banasiak MLC from the Shooters Fishers Farmers Party.

A number of volunteers assisted CCBFA as we collected and analysed large data sets to determine the population, price, etc. of native species held in NSW aviculture and nationally. Many thanks to all



involved, in particular Murray Macpherson, Debbie Brincat and Simon Degenhard for numerous hours of work and meetings. Thanks also to those organisations that regularly compile price guides – these proved to be important data points during the negotiations. The National Finch and Softbill Association (NFSA) survey results were also invaluable – many thanks.

The process was progressing well with a risk assessment tool finalised and tested by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The tool recommending most commonly kept avicultural species should come off licence as occurred in Queensland. Then in October 2022 we were presented with a bombshell from NPWS staff. Keepers of species tagged to come off licence would be required to register with NPWS, to advise NPWS of any and every bird traded within 7 days, and there would be limits the number of birds traded, amongst other restrictions. A much more restrictive system than the current licensing scheme. CCBFA subsequently wrote to the Minister for the Environment detailing the strongly worded motion passed at the November 2022 CCBFA meeting. We await the Minister’s reply and meeting.

The letter to the NSW Minister for the Environment can be found on the CCBFA website under the documents tab – www.ccbfa.org.au.

Cont’d next page...

Import/export

Things once more dragged on regarding import and export during 2022. There were two significant areas that have required ongoing emails, meetings and discussions. Exports and the proposal to reintroduce national registration for all CITES listed birds – NEBRIS 2.0 style. The second is with regard to imports and the long-awaited finalisation and approval of the psittacine import risk assessment.

The first involves the release of the federally commissioned Thinkplace report which was looking at export protocols. You may recall details of numerous meetings and submissions with Wildlife Trade Assessment officials. The detail is all available on our website www.ccbfa.org.au - look under the documents tab or within the minutes in our CCBFA journal Feathered World.

CCBFA and all clubs strongly opposed any national registration scheme. Sadly, and shockingly, the Associated Birdkeepers of Australia (ABA) and Priam Psittaculture Centre (PPC) actively promoted a national registration scheme. CCBFA recommended a DNA parentage testing protocol to prove birds for export have been captive bred a far more effective solution. The final Thinkplace report was initially expected to be released late 2021 or early 2022. It was finally released publicly just prior to Christmas. CCBFA are still assessing the document. The good news is that the suite of recommendations clearly do NOT support a national registration scheme.

The report is available online at the following link - <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/wildlife-trade/publications>

The second federal matter regarding parrot imports remains a work in progress. CCBFA supported the draft psittacine import risk assessment released way back in July 2020. Discussions with senior officers in the federal Animal Biosecurity section of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have been ongoing ever since. Currently, we are advised, the remaining concerns are to do with biodiversity concerns should a pathogen make it through the proposed quarantine controls.

CCBFA was asked just prior to Christmas to provide two experts to the government panel tasked with assessing the risk to native biodiversity. We have now appointed an avian vet with international experience of quarantine protocols in a number of countries together with an Australian ecologist with avian expertise.

And so 2023 begins ...

I recall thinking the year 2000 was way off in the future, and now it is 2023. How time flies and how government issues drag on, year upon year. It is clear all the above issues and more will continue well into 2023 and beyond. If we are to protect aviculture, nurture its good name, ensure avian welfare and respond to animal rights extremists, we must all work together. For many this means supporting those working on your behalf. Join a club or two, become a supporter of Animal Care Australia (ACA), get involved.

All clubs are encouraged to join ACA. Visitors who feel they have skills and knowledge to contribute can also attend – just get in touch.



How the captive animal industry meets the ‘wild and free ‘ needs of animals in it’s care

By Tracey Dierikx— ACA Exhibited Animals Representative

Many animal rights proponents might be shocked to hear that those who work in the captive animal industry actually would prefer that animals ‘could be wild and free’ in their natural habitats. Unfortunately we don’t live in a perfect world, and must realise that natural habitat for many species is disappearing at a rate that is quite frankly unsustainable for those species to survive and/or thrive.

Captive animal facilities, such as zoos and wildlife parks, can and do play an important role to try to mitigate species extinction. Some do this through exhibiting certain endangered or threatened species and promoting the message regarding the plight of their ever-dwindling populations in the wild, while others may focus on breeding programs (where viable) of threatened species for release back into the wild to bolster those numbers and try to lessen the threat of extinction.

Of course, housing animals in a captive environment is not as simple as collecting a few examples and just displaying them. Care must be taken to do this responsibly, and with each individual animals’ needs catered for, effectively and sustainably. After all, animals generationally born and raised in a captive environment, while having many innate natural behaviours and instincts, are generally not suitable for or capable of surviving in their “natural habitats”.

So, how do zoos and other captive animal facilities manage their



resources to try to ensure that all of the animals in their care are maintained with the best welfare outcomes being paramount? Truth be told, there are still some facilities that aren’t up to par in that regard, but all are required to have welfare plans in place and strategies to continually improve those plans to ensure the best welfare outcomes for their animals.

Cont’d next page...

Obviously space is a big point of contention as most facilities have a finite amount of space that they can allocate to all of the facets involved with animal care, and that is not just for exhibit/enclosure space, there are many functions that happen behind the scenes too. But we'll stick to exhibit/enclosure space here, that is, the areas where the public can view the animals doing their thing.

Let's get one thing straight ... animals with large roaming ranges in the wild may not need as much space in captivity, as they do not have to roam long distances to find food, and definitely don't have to stalk/hunt. Captive animal diets are very well designed to maintain optimal health and wellbeing, and are delivered at regular intervals ensuring no animal goes hungry in a good facility. In fact, sometimes they may need a little less food, and a bit more exercise.

So, how do we make sure that captive animals get proper exercise and mental stimulation? We employ strategies and activities we call "Enrichment". Enrichment activities are designed to cover animal needs such as encouraging natural behaviours, reducing boredom, improving health, and enhancing learning. Activities could be as simple as scattering an animal's food over a wide area of the enclosure to encourage foraging behaviours, or much more complex, such as toys and structures that encourage an animal to think about how it will get to a tasty treat hidden inside. Sometimes you may see a large sturdy ball in a big cat enclosure that they may push around or pounce on, or

a hammock in a bear or monkey enclosure, climbing structures, pools, sandpits, etc. The variety of enrichment that can be added to an enclosure or daily routine is almost endless, and animal keepers are always thinking of new and novel ways to enrich the lives of the animals in their care.

All in all, enrichment is one of the main strategies that captive animal facilities rely on to encourage as many natural behaviours as possible, and to simulate as many "wild" experiences as possible for the animals in their care.





ACA attends RSPCA Horse Welfare Seminar 2023

By Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse & Livestock Representative

This year, the RSPCA's annual Animal Welfare Seminar focused on Horses. ACA's Horse & Livestock Representative attended talks by predominantly Equitation Science speakers over 2 days in February.

Following opening welcomes from the hosts at RSPCA, Prof Paul McGreevy of University of New England spoke about how the animal protection movement has failed to benefit horses, particularly in sport. With horses lagging behind the animal training advancements that other animals have enjoyed for decades, horses are still primarily trained using only negative reinforcement, and pressure based cues. Excessive use of aversives is also impacting the horse industry's Social Licence to Operate.

McGreevy then spoke about the formation of the International Society for Equitation Science, and how the organisation aims to

apply objective research to equestrian practices and improve horse welfare in sport and training. The association has published statements on restrictive nosebands and the misuse of

dominance concepts in horse training.

Dr Kat Littlewood from Massey University (NZ) outlined recent research into the cardiorespiratory systems of exercising horses. She explained how physiology, athletic performance and management factors (such as rein and bit use) impact and can cause equine breathlessness during exercise, and the welfare issues that need to be addressed by the industry as a whole.

Dr Cathrynne Henshall (PhD candidate) from Charles Sturt University presented research in cognitive and affective neuroscience research in humans and other animals, that could be applied to benefit horses in training. Research is lacking into how horses experience the world, their training, and how they learn. The addition of neuroscience to inform horse training and management techniques could provide a

mechanism to develop truly horse-centered training approaches that could improve welfare outcomes for horses and enhance human safety.

Ashleigh Brown is the Global Animal Welfare Advisor from Broke (UK) and spoke about working donkeys and mules in the developing world,

Cont'd next page...



and face multi-factorial challenges to effecting welfare improvement, be they socio-economic, cultural, educational or geo-political. Advances in animal behaviour and welfare science benefit horses in the first world, but are not reaching those that need it most. Brown talked about what action is being taken from international organisations and how welfare is being prioritised.

Julie Fielder (PhD candidate) from University of Melbourne spoke about Social Licence to Operate, and how important public trust is to the horse sport sector. Without acknowledging the changing societal expectations towards animal welfare, horse activities risk losing relevance, a real threat to long-term sustainability. Fielder presented the concept of "animal safeguarding" reflecting the standards of child safeguarding and the community wide responsibilities that go towards achieving this. Public trust is forward looking. It's not only what is said could be done, and to what standard, but the 'doing' of welfare that will maintain the horse sector's Social Licence to Operate.

Tom Reilly (CEO Thoroughbred Breeders Association) then spoke about the Thoroughbred Aftercare Welfare Working Group - an independent panel established by Thoroughbred Breeders Australia. Reilly outlined a report TAWWG published in 2021 on how to improve welfare of horses in breeding, racing and retiring from the industry.



Cristina Wilkins (author, Horses & People) then posed the question: Will Paris 2024 be a 'Games Changer' for Sport Horse Welfare? The Olympics are a highly visible demonstration of how horses are treated in equestrian sports, and public opinion is turned quickly when poor horsemanship and welfare is under the spotlight. Paris promises to prevent incidents of the past, highlighting "shortcomings in the current regulations" and proposing to raise the welfare standards of horses at the Olympics. The stakes are high, and potentially, the future of horse sports could depend upon it.

The final speaker was Dr Andrew McLean from Equitation Science International speaking about social licence to operate and what this means for ethical training of horses. As we look toward our future with horses, sustainability implies that horse management, training and horse sports need to rethink an equine-centric future: welfare from the horse's perspective. McLean presented the ways this can be achieved, and why it is necessary as well as urgent.

The conference then had a discussion panel with several of the speakers. The talks were short, but informative, and very interesting, with an underlying theme of animal welfare science. We couldn't help but wonder if the hosts required their own RSPCA inspectorate to attend? We certainly hope so.



President's Roundup

By Michael Donnelly

A new year and more challenges.

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

This year will see the continuation of reviews of animal welfare legislation in NSW, VIC, SA, QLD and TAS. With the latter two moving to the review of the Regulations associated with their Acts.

NSW will also be reviewing its Biodiversity Conservation Act which includes sections relating to the keeping of native wildlife as pets. Ironically the review and potential implementation of the recommendations from the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 is still ongoing with NO measures implemented to date. Yes — its 2023 and it has taken the department at least six years to implement NOTHING, at a cost of millions of dollars to the NSW taxpayer. Still on native wildlife licensing, the Victorian legislation will resume its review after a hiatus due to the recent election.

NSW will see the continuation of attempts to introduce the 'claytons' Puppy Farm Bill—you know—the Bill to stop puppy farms that doesn't define a puppy farm or have real measures to deal with puppy farms.

South Australia will be making some changes to it's Dog & Cat Management Act to tighten up breeding in that State.

Victoria will be commencing a review of it's Domestic Animals Act and NSW will be continuing it's long, ever-winding review of the Companion Animals Act. That's the one step forward—three steps back— dance that has also been ongoing for quite a few years now.

ACA will be again updating our Policies & Positions Statement to include recent topics such as allowing pets on transport, rehoming of greyhounds (and horses) from the racing industry, and those will be available soon, including a dedicated section on our website.

All of this comes at a price — not only to you as pet owners — but to the ACA volunteers (Committee) who dedicate much of their time

in responding to the ongoing calls for submissions and the never-ending attempts by Local Councils to please their newly infiltrated AR extremist members to totally inhibit the keeping of pets while appearing to be pet supportive.

ACA will continue to call BS on this and we hope we'll continue to have your support as we do.

If you haven't yet, please tell your friends to [JOIN us](#) or you can [DONATE](#) to assist us in our ongoing costs.

Hope you've enjoyed this edition.





Executive



Michael Donnelly
President



Sam Davis
Vice-President



Michelle Grayson
Secretary



Sue Kowalczyk
Public Officer/Treasurer

Species Representatives



BIRDS:
Sam Davis
birds@animalcareaustralia.org.au



CATS:
Michelle Grayson
cats@animalcareaustralia.org.au



DOGS:
Kylie Gilbert
dogs@animalcareaustralia.org.au



EXHIBITED:
Tracey Dierikx
exhibited@animalcareaustralia.org.au



FISH & AQUATIC:
Vacant position



HORSES & LIVESTOCK:
Karri Nadazdy
horses@animalcareaustralia.org.au



NATIVE MAMMALS:
Michael Donnelly
nativemammals@animalcareaustralia.org.au



REPTILE & AMPHIBIANS:
Joanne Payne
reptiles@animalcareaustralia.org.au



SMALL MAMMALS:
Rachel Sydenham
smmammals@animalcareaustralia.org.au



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 nation-wide 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.



Animal Care Australia Inc.

**PO Box 314 Macarthur Square Post Office
NSW 2560**

Website:

animalcareaustralia.org.au

Email: aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au

ABN 36 438 686 995

Tax File No 508 268 553

CFN: 25599

Clipart: Angelica Cabanas

Credits for images used in this newsletter:

Cover: kim_hester by Pixabay

Inside cover: Alexa by Pixabay

Page 3: pngimage.com

Page 6: ACA Member

Page 10: Fesus Robert

Page 14: Bhanuka Dilshan en Unsplash

Page 15: Garry Chapple by Pixabay

Page 18: Ariel White by Pixabay

Page 20: michaeljung

Page 23: fivespots

Back cover: Tracey Dierikx

