

9/10/2016

Animal Welfare Action Plan
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RE: IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS – DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2016-2021

The Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia (CCBFA) represents many hundreds of clubs nationally including well in excess of 100 clubs throughout Victoria. We support Animal Welfare initiatives in all jurisdictions and have represented aviculturists on a variety of government committees nationally. Aviculture has a proud animal welfare history in Australia largely via the clubs and their various governing and representative bodies.

We applaud the collaborative intent of the action plan, in particular Action area 2. Personification of animals is an area that requires care when developing animal welfare policy. Birds are not humans and hence their welfare needs differ significantly. Avian welfare is a hugely diverse area with a broad range of species and management practices to consider.

Action Area 1 comments

- A1.1. We support a single Act to cover all aspects of Animal Welfare developed as an amended version of the current POCTAA 1986.
- A1.2. The term “new contemporary legislation” (1.1(c)) is not defined and care is advised to ensure existing and well tested processes are only replaced based on sound evidence.
- A1.3. In 1.2, formal statutory processes for ongoing consultation with stakeholders regarding updates to regulations and codes of practice would assist.
- A1.4. There are no significant welfare issues in aviculture, therefore care is needed to avoid over regulation which is often counterproductive.

Action Area 2 comments

- A2.1. We full support the intent to collaborate and invest in activities that promote animal welfare. Such investment to be extended to clubs who are currently the major implementers of animal welfare education and training to their membership.
- A2.2. Avicultural organisations are engaged in the promotion of ethical care, we routinely run training and produce educational materials on best practice to our members. This expertise should be specifically encouraged as part of this review process.
- A2.3. Many avicultural clubs maintain and support aviaries in hospitals, nursing homes, dementia wards and other health care facilities. The positive effect of animals on human health care should be acknowledged in the Action plan. Promotion of animals as therapy encourages positive animal welfare outcomes.

Action Area 3 comments

- A3.1. Real support from stakeholders is the key to minimising the need for enforcement. To achieve such support requires a real commitment to consultation with stakeholder

representative groups who in turn must consult with their membership. This is not easy for government groups to achieve and hence deserves specific mention in the plan.

- A3.2. Material explaining welfare requirements to particular stakeholder groups is best developed by stakeholders in close consultation with government. This must be an ongoing process. A single education campaign after new legislation is passed is insufficient.

Listed below are areas highlighting the diversity of aviculture CCBFA represents within Australia.

1. Exhibitors who selectively breed domesticated species such as canaries, fancy pigeons, exhibition poultry, budgerigars and finches, to a standard.
2. Racing pigeons are selectively bred and trained much like thoroughbred horses. These are athletes whose nutrition, housing and welfare is crucial to their performance.
3. Aviary birds where the challenge is to develop husbandry to breed the birds successfully and such that the captive population is genetically sustainable.
4. Pet birds as companion animals. There are more birds kept as pets in Australia than dogs and cats. Most are kept as companion animals where they improve quality of life for their owners.
5. Threatened species work, including captive breeding recovery efforts. Often in parallel with the conservation and zoo communities. The close observation possible in an aviary environment has proven critical.

Given the diversity of avicultural interests, open communication and consultation will be a critical challenge if the deliverables are to be supported by the avicultural community. Based on experiences in other jurisdictions and to progress our comment on action areas 1, 2 and 3 we make the following recommendations.

1. Form a statutory Aviculture Advisory Panel with representatives from significant avicultural groups and stakeholders so ongoing consultation is ensured. Our comments for each Action Area above specify some of the likely roles for this panel.
2. Deliver regular and transparent updates on the progress of the Animal Welfare Review, including AWAC minutes, to all stakeholders.

Aviculture for our membership is a passion. A love, affinity and understanding of birds as individual beings with their own specific needs is the central theme. The knowledge and skills of Australian aviculturists is renowned world-wide. Legislation, policy and code of practices should aim to encourage aviculture rather than focus on compliance.

Experience tells us that cooperation and consultation is the answer to building a legislative framework that will be supported and thence achieve the desired welfare outcomes. We look forward to our involvement in this process.

Sincerely,



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