

2/3/2018

**RE: NSW UNWANTED, ESCAPED AND SEIZED NATIVE ANIMAL PETS, OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia Inc. (CCBFA) represents approximately 100 bird clubs operating throughout NSW with hundreds more Australia wide. Our network of clubs continues to take responsibility for found pet birds, including both native and exotic species. In general, we attempt to locate owners and when this fails we rehome to a club member or via our network of specialist bird retailers. The same rehoming system extends to surrendered birds, such as an elderly bird keeper moving into care. This simple system requires no financial imposition on government and has been in operation forever – at least 100 years! We do not maintain statistics on numbers, however conservatively we reunite and rehome many hundreds of birds annually.

It is a trivial matter for us to rehome the extra 30-50 per annum native pet birds currently surrendered to NSW wildlife rehabilitation organisations. We would like to assist as a community service, however we will not take on this responsibility if the system involves, what we regard as, unnecessary red tape.

Comments that follow relate to bird species only.

**Recommendation 1. OEH develop a community education program on responsible native animal pet ownership in consultation with stakeholders.**

Strongly agree. Our network of affiliate bird clubs, together with industry magazines and publications are always willing to assist with community education programs – it is what we do.

**Recommendation 2. Licensed wildlife rehabilitation groups retain primary responsibility for receiving and temporarily housing abandoned, escaped and seized native animal pets.**

Disagree. We recommend birds, once determined to be pets, are transferred as soon as possible to a local bird group. CCBFA is able to provide suitable contacts in most areas throughout NSW, and indeed Australia wide. Individual wildlife carers are not specialists in the large range of avian species in captivity – our membership includes specialists for most species and is well equipped to care for such animals.

**Recommendation 3. OEH consult Office of Local Government about the feasibility of allowing licensed native animal keepers to voluntarily participate in the microchipping scheme and registry for companion animals.**

Agree as a voluntary option only for some high value, larger avian species. Larger parrots are often microchipped, and some registers already allow birds within their database, for example the Australasian Animal Registry (AAR) operated by RAS NSW allows for birds. Note we strongly disagree with mandatory microchipping of birds for a range of reasons.

**Recommendations 4. OEH inform licensed keepers of the role of wildlife rehabilitation groups in managing escaped and abandoned native animal pets, and advise them to contact local rehabilitation groups if they are looking for lost or escaped native animal pets.**

Disagree. Pet birds, whether native or not, are better reunited and rehomed via bird clubs as detailed in the introduction to this submission. Under the current system rehabilitation groups are not managing significant numbers of birds so lost pet bird enquiries to such groups are unwise. Enquiries are best made to online sites, such as <https://lostpetfinders.com.au> which are monitored by our clubs as required.

**Recommendation 5. OEH revise clause 12 of the licence conditions for wildlife rehabilitation groups and clause 29 of the Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy as follows:**

*“If there is evidence that a protected animal is an escaped pet (e.g. it was found well outside of its natural range), the rehabilitator must:*

*a) notify NPWS so that the animal may be rehomed through a ballot or other method,*

*b) in the event the owner of the animal contacts the rehabilitator before the rehoming placement is finalised, the rehabilitator should notify NPWS to determine if the animal should be returned to the owner.*

Disagree. Pet birds, whether native or not, are better rehomed via bird clubs as detailed in the introduction to this submission. There is nothing to be gained by complex systems utilising OEH resources unnecessarily. Wildlife rehabilitation groups should be required to hand birds to specialist bird groups who can better cater for their needs and rehoming.

**Recommendation 6. In circumstances where seized native animal pets may not be disposed until court proceedings are finalised, they should not be referred to volunteer-based wildlife rehabilitation groups.**

Agree. A government funded organisation should be used in such situations.

**Recommendation 7. OEH convene an expert working group to review and update OEH hygiene protocols for controlling disease in captive reptiles and frogs, and consider development of a similar protocol for captive native birds or identify suitable existing guidance material.**

Disagree. Unnecessary for birds. All competent aviculturists have systems for quarantining birds into their flock and have heated hospital cages, basic medications, etc. to deal with emergency situations. Avian vets are available either directly or via phone to assist with critical cases.

**Recommendation 8. OEH work with the Australian Veterinary Association and wildlife rehabilitation groups to compile a directory of vets with expertise in native animal pets.**

Not necessary for birds. A directory of avian qualified vets is readily available via the Association of Avian Veterinarians Australasian Committee website - <http://www.aavac.com.au>. Many (or most) routinely provide phone-based consultations for aviculturists where distance prevents travel or movement of the bird is considered too stressful.

**Recommendation 9. OEH develop a proposal to establish an online “adopt-a pet” website for native animal pets for consideration by stakeholders.**

Disagree. The website <https://lostpetfinders.com.au> or similar is far better equipped to extend their site to include such functionality. Tony Ryder, the owner of Lost Pet Finders is interested to assist, he is based in New Zealand and can be contacted on +64 27 554 4164.

As a community service CCBFA continues to accept responsibility for escaped pet birds.

Sincerely,



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