

# ASSOCIATED BIRDKEEPERS OF AUSTRALIA INC.

## SUBMISSION TO DISCUSSION PAPER TOWARDS A RISK BASED APPROACH TO WILDLIFE LICENCES

The Associated Birdkeepers of Australia in 1982 adopted a Policy Statement with the following Aims and Objectives.

*To be at all times a 'watchdog' over Government at all levels*  
*To be a united and effective lobby group on all matters pertaining to aviculture*  
*To respect the privilege of ownership on the keeping and breeding of birds*  
*To assist and promote the conservation of all birds, especially endangered species*  
*To oppose any form of illegal trafficking in birds*  
*To elevate and promote high standards of competency in the keeping and breeding of all birds*  
*To strive for self-regulation in order that the hobby of aviculture remains free of cumbersome restrictions*

# The Associated Birdkeepers of Australia agree with all native birds moving to a Code of Practice but there are some areas we feel need clarification. As determined by NSW Licensed Animal Keeper data from OEH all current B1 licence birds need to be moved to the Code of Practice as they have reached saturation point in aviculture. These species include Australian King Parrot, Eastern Regent Parrot, Red Winged Parrot, Gang Gang Cockatoo, Red Tailed Black Cockatoo and Major Mitchell Cockatoo. These species are some of the most commonly kept by licensed aviculturalists. This is reflected by the monetary value of these species being at an all time low.

Aviculturalists have become experts at breeding native bird species, especially cockatoos. In the past twenty years their skills and education on incubation and hand rearing has advanced greatly. To the point that there are reference books published on this subject produced by dedicated aviculturalists - such as *Guide to Black Cockatoos* by Neville and Enid Connors and *Australian Cockatoos* by Stan Sindel and Robert Lynn. The harvesting of eggs from aviary bred cockatoos and incubated can result in several clutches being laid in a single season. It is now commonplace for up to five clutches being recorded from aviculturalists nationally.

# The discussion Paper indicates some native species are endangered or threatened by illegal take and this may be the reason why all B1 birds have not been moved to a Code of Practice. The OEH Annual Reports confirm there has been no illegal take of B1 bird species. The report shows there has been no infringements or convictions against licenced birdkeepers. ABA's view is that the effect of rats, cats, foxes and habitat destruction is having the greatest effect on our native birds. As set out in its Policy Statement on Aims and Objectives the ABA promotes the conservation of all native birds, especially endangered species. Increased fines would discourage any potential future illegal take.

# Draft Code of Practice, Record keeping - Guidelines 4.2.2  
Clarification is required in this area in regard to microchipping as this is usually reserved for some high end species. This should be optional as birdkeepers generally use leg rings to identify birds.

# ABA opposes the requirement that organisers of native bird expos and sales should obtain a temporary dealer licence. Transactions at these events are between sellers and buyers, the organiser simply provides the venue. The ABA has an endorsed Code of Practice for bird sales which focusses on the welfare of all birds at these events.

# Draft Code of Practice Species schedule. All hybrid species need to be removed from this listing as it appears to promote hybridisation and should be discouraged.

# Licensing requirements for the five commercial operators need to be standardised for Code based species.

# The ABA recommends that the Native Animal Keepers Consultative Committee (NAKCC) or such committee be maintained as the line of communication between stakeholders and Government Departments. This Committee is vital for the ongoing management of the implementation of a risk based approach to wildlife licensing.