

Accusations fly over bird sale

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MORE than feathers are being ruffled among bird breeders following allegations of mistreatment of birds offered for sale last month at Skye.

Paris Yves has complained to the RSPCA and Department of Environment and Primary Industries about the cruel treatment of parrots being displayed in small, inadequate boxes.

A long time campaigner against mistreatment of birds either kept as pets or for breeding, Ms Yves, of Mt Eliza, says she has been bullied since going public with her latest complaints.

The bird "sale and expo" at the Western Port Highway headquarters of Dogs Victoria was run by the Mornington Peninsula Avicultural Society on Sunday 25 May.

The society's president, David Renshaw, did not want to comment on the allegations by Ms Yves without first discussing it with the society's committee.

"I'm not prepared to give you a comment without prior notice," he said.

He said the matter had been placed in the hands of a solicitor.

Mr Renshaw said all bird sales were run under a code of practice, which was "scrutinised by scrutineers".

Photographs taken by Ms Yves at the bird sale show a large sign stating a code of practice administered by the Victorian Avicultural Council.

However, Ms Yves said it was unsatisfactory to have the VAC "policing themselves".



On show: Parrots for sale at the bird "sale and expo" run in May by Mornington Peninsula Avicultural Society and bird behaviourist and animal activist Paris Yves with her cockatiel Jazzi. Picture: Yanni



"The VAC failed terribly and has lost all credibility, which is why I am receiving bullying and rude emails."

Letters published in this month's edition of *Talking Birds* magazine appear to confirm Ms Yves's complaints.

An anonymous letter writer from South Australia admits the bird boxes "could have been a bit bigger" but goes on to say small boxes are safer for birds and that the birds "may be distressed, but from other noises and movement, not because they are ill".

"Yes, there are some who break the rules, which is then used against others because one bad apple corrupts the rest," the letter states.

A second letter by J Milosevic (via email) says there is no doubt about Ms Yves's good intentions and then refers to guidelines "which, unfortunately, were ignored in the case of the photos in her email".

"Guidelines and rules exist but are often ignored and I found it rather ironic that the sale where the women took the photos in her email had a large banner setting out the rules prominently displayed ... what is the point of words on that banner when the rules were not enforced at that event?"

"If that had been done she would have had no ammunition which could be used to attack sales, demanding that they be banned.

"Well, now it has happened and I hope that you keep track of what the state bodies do from now on about running sales properly, because it is obvious that at least one, the Victorian mob, has lost the plot."

"It is inexcusable that most birds - except the Gouldian finches in the lovely great aviary - were displayed in such an unethical way," she said.

"It was truly like walking through the back streets of an Indian market.

"I am amid a public campaign so that Australians can finally discover the truth about companion bird abuse and lack of welfare and lack of laws. There

is no going back now."

Ms Yves's emails to and discussions with breeders had come down to semantics, with some breeders claiming birds kept for breeding purposes were not companion birds. She says the law does not differentiate between the terms.

A cockatoo breeder, "who also admitted that there are welfare problems at

bird sales", referred to birds at the sale as aviary birds and not pet birds.

"There is legally no difference. The DEPI welfare codes clearly includes all captive/caged birds," Ms Yves said.

"I don't think you will get a response from the market organisers - they are in damage control. As they have breached all codes there is nothing positive they can say, the damage is done.

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