

MEDIA RELEASE

25 July 2014

BIRD GROUPS AT WARRAGUL BREACH CODE OF PRACTICE

Gippsland Cage Bird Society Companion Bird Breeders, Traders, Exhibitors and Experts, breached the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) Victorian Bird Welfare & Code of Practice for the Housing of Caged Birds, at their Bird Sale at Warragul on 20 July 2014.

The website of the Gippsland Branch of the Society states: *'The club is dedicated to promoting Aviculture, Education, Environment and the well being of birds, both in captivity and in the wild'*- there was no indication of such welfare or education at the Warragul Bird Sale.

The Code of Practice for Bird Sales pamphlet provided at the Warragul Sale was not implemented and monitored by the organiser's stewards, who should have been in continuous attendance at the venue.

The event reflected the same welfare code breaches as the Mornington Peninsula Avicultural Society Bird Expo at Skye on 25 May 2014:

- There was no food or water available to some birds.
- The hygiene standard of many bird cages was very poor.
- Some of the boxes/cages were dirty and bird food was placed under perches, on the ground mixing with the bird's faeces.
- Birds were physically and emotionally distressed.
- Birds were cramped in corners due to fear.
- Some birds were housed in small boxes/ cages which fit the bird exactly- some of the larger birds could not walk comfortably or stretch their wings - flying was not an option for most birds.
- Some larger birds such as the Eclectus parrots, were unable to turn around comfortably in their small cage.
- The high decibel level from the public resulted in birds feeling distressed, unsafe and unable to rest as is required throughout the day.

'Birds are extremely intelligent with high level psychological and physical requirements. They must be treated respectfully and with empathy by their carers'.

Following formal complaints regarding the Mornington Peninsula Avicultural Society Bird Expo at Skye on the 25 May 2014:

- The Minister for Agriculture and Food Security is currently receiving advice from DEPI on the issues raised in the complaints.
- DEPI has stated that they have referred the complaint to the RSPCA Vic and the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security.
- No clarified response was received from DEPI/ Animal Welfare Advisory Committee following enquiries on bird sales permit processes.
- No response has been received from the Baw Baw Shire, following an email request on 7 July to the Shire Events Hiring Manager and all Councillors to cancel the 20 July bird sale held at Shire-hired premises.

Yet Bird Sales continue daily and weekly, exposing birds to low welfare standards.

'It seems that companion birds must suffer tragic lives before anything positive can be done for their welfare'.

CALL FOR URGENT ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT

1. Government Review of **Welfare Standards for Captive Caged Birds**
 2. Government Review of **Breeders' Welfare Standards for Private and Commercial Exhibition Shows and Sales**
 3. Government Review of **Breeder Permit Standards**
 4. **Ban Australian Birds Sales and Expos** until a formal monitoring process is in place by DEPI
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For further information contact:



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