



UPDATE FEBRUARY 2018

It's quickly how things can change I began writing this update before the weekend and on Saturday night the sky opened and during the next 36 hours the average monthly rainfall fell on A Poultry Place. While such an event caused flash flooding across the border in the ACT the ground here was so dry it just soaked it all up. It has brought some relief but we need some good follow up rain if it is to help.

The effect of last year's well below average rainfall is well and truly being felt with no real feed in the paddocks for the sheep and the duck dam drying up and now little more than a puddle. It's been a few years since things were this tough and I can only hope that we get some good early autumn rain to get some growth happening before it gets too cold. In the meantime, I'm hand feeding hay to the sheep to keep them happy. Things haven't been helped by the by the heat – we had two intensive heatwaves in January, including six days straight of 40 degree plus temperatures. Such conditions sucks the life out of you and for some of the residents present a huge struggle. Sadly, some didn't make it through including some of the old timers who have been here for years.



The heat hasn't stopped the usual influx of rooster rehoming requests. So far this year I've been asked to take in just over 30. None of whom sadly I have been able to accommodate given capacity at the moment – it's saddening and heartbreaking saying no but there's little else I can do. And the impact of saying no is made even worse when some of the requesters turn hostile and abusive as if I created their problem in the first place. In the Chinese zodiac 2017 was the Year of the Rooster, during which time I managed to help out 100 of these beings – probably about one quarter of the requests I received for the year. Roosters remain the most unwanted of all those beings, humans view as “farm animals”. Throughout the year I tried to continue to educate others about the plight of roosters and hopefully changed a few minds.

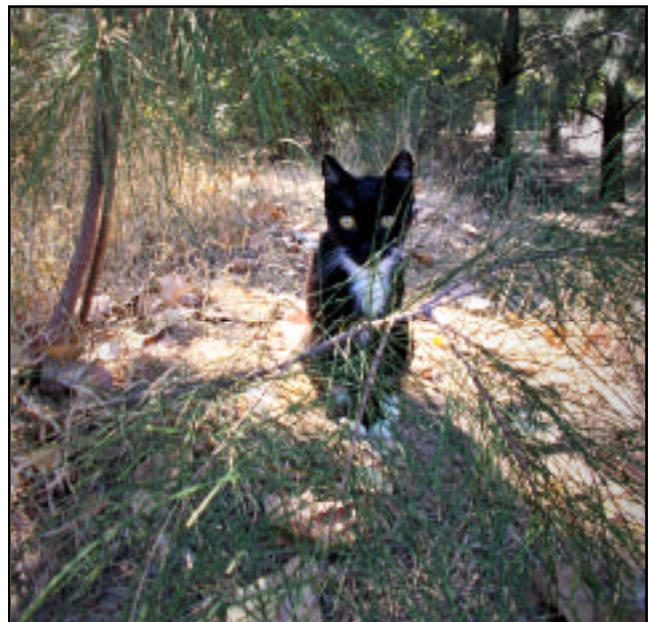
Towards the end of the year I took in three cockerels, due to the changing views of the family who had raised them since they were chicks, here's how:



“Dear Bede, we stuffed up and have a problem. We got young chicks about three months ago and thought we would return any roosters to them. They pass them on to a reptile zoo and we thought that would be acceptable but we have now changed our minds. Our eight-year-old, who convinced us all to go vegetarian a year ago is making a strong case that we are doing the wrong thing. I know it sounds ridiculous, she does have a strong moral compass, especially when it comes to animals, and we have just gotten on with doing what everyone else around us does without sufficient deep reflection. I realise you are unlikely to have the capacity to clean up after everyone’s problems (I can imagine many people only thinking about this once they have roosters they can’t keep in the back yard) but thought no harm in asking. Looks like we have two bantam australorp and perhaps one wynadotte roosters. If you can’t offer them a spot at this point, do you have any ideas?”

The year ended nicely with the arrival of some turkeys (pic left below), who were due to be slaughtered for Christmas, instead they spent Christmas day feasting on watermelons and getting to know their new family. New arrivals so far this year have been limited to two trios of hens – one from an elderly woman who was no longer able to look after her chickens properly and the second from a woman whose three “are not reliably laying eggs and were looking for a place that we can rehome them” (yes one of those).

Sox, the cat, (pic right below) who has been in residence since 2002, is at least 17-years-old herself and the matriarch of the sanctuary, had to have surgery in December to remove some teeth. Of course there was concern over her being put under due to her age but she came through it thankfully.



In January I celebrated seventeen years since I began the odyssey of being a sanctuarian. Given my hatred of summer – I still can’t believe I started when I did. Of course I was younger then and no doubt the enthusiasm I had for creating A Poultry Place protected me from the heat.

This morning I woke, as I usually do before dawn, it was still dark but yet some of the residents were

already stirring. I heard rooster crow, the peas and the guineas calling and the geese honking. I sat outside sipping coffee enjoying the coolness, trying to remember the bare paddock A Poultry Place was 17 years ago. In that time there have been 3318 residents. I'm older, wiser and more experienced now and wouldn't change a thing about the course my life has taken since I made a New Year's resolution at the start of 1994 to stop eating animals.

I was recently asked "What impact do you have". It came out of nowhere and made me think. I've been living hands-on with the rescued and unwanted since August 1999 when I moved to a friends' sanctuary, which means I have cared thousands of others either here at A Poultry Place and previously at Atchin Tan sanctuary, plus there are those we have managed to find other secure forever homes for. I recalled the various outreach experiences I have had:

- * being asked to speak at various rallies, conferences and festivals;
- * the various photographic displays at festivals;
- * the ongoing impact of the sanctuary's facebook page, for example last year's posts in May to mark International Respect for Chickens Month reached 49,632 people and were shared 306 times;
- * the campaigns the sanctuary has been directly involved in over the years which bring to public light the problems with the egg industry; the farming of chickens, ducks and turkeys for their meat;
- * increasing awareness of the problems with school hatching projects and getting some institutions to stop participating in them;
- * general awareness raising that poultry are sentient being capable of the same emotions as the family cat or dog by utilising opportunities like being asked to speak at TEDx and undertake media opportunities.

While it felt a bit like I was bragging my inquirer admitted she didn't realise how much could be done by an individual, which made me feel proud.

Finally, a supporter messaged me last week saying she had deposited \$11 into the bank account. She said she didn't have lots of money to give and she had raised the amount through the Return and Earn container deposit system recently launched in NSW. Return and Earn allows people to recycle empty drink containers and receive a payment for doing so. She said she felt happy that she was helping the environment and an animal sanctuary at the same time and she suggested I pass on her idea in the hope others might feel the same way inclined. So if you are keen to help you can find out more about Return and Earn via: <http://returnandearn.org.au/>

**TO VISIT A POULTRY PLACE EMAIL
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**DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED AND CAN BE SENT TO BEDE CARMODY
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