



NEWS UPDATE FEBRUARY 2017

The long hot summer has officially ended and I can't say I, or any other of the residents will miss it – it was most unpleasant, in fact January 2017 is the hottest one on record apparently. And there's been hardly any rain. While we have an average of 120mm by this time of the year so far in 2017 we've received just 33mm. Contrast that to this time last year when we had received 175mm! Of course 2016 was an exceptionally wet year, which saw almost double the yearly average drop on us. That meant at least the dam maintained a decent amount of water for the ducks throughout this summer, though the level is falling (pic below left).

Of course such conditions can bring wild quick thunderstorms like the one that hit here in mid-February which resulted in a watertank being blown over which somehow flipped and smashed the BBQ and a wheelbarrow (pic below right). As soon as I saw this level of destruction the next morning I quick did a rekkie of the rest of the property to see what other damage there was. Thankfully just a few tree branches had broken off - all the night houses and their occupants were safe. In addition I was relieved it happened after, not before, the 16th birthday celebration of the sanctuary on January 22!



In between the weather-associated dramas I've been busy playing mother again to some ducklings from a school hatching project and some chicks that were dumped in front of a pet shop. The bubs arrived a few days before Christmas and took up temporary residence in the spare room, also known as the nursery, (pic below). All have now all graduated to living outside.



The ducklings were saved by a family of vegans who took them in knowing the fate they faced otherwise but realising they did not have enough space to permanently care for them all they sought out my help. The parent had a chat with the director of the preschool about no longer running these projects and while the director “didn’t seem to care too much, to be honest I made such a fuss that I don’t think she is going to do it next year just so she doesn’t have to deal with me again. She did say that the kids weren’t that interested so she will rethink the program”.

The chicks were among 20 dumped outside a central coast pet shop overnight. They were left in an open box without food or water until someone found them and contacted NSW Hen Rescue. All the chicks were dehydrated and emaciated and they were temporarily cared for by a Hen Rescue volunteer before they were transport down here. Sadly some did not survive their ordeal but as those who did (15) grew (pic right) it became obvious they are broiler chickens (those bred specifically for their meat), which means they will suffer problems as they grow as their small skeletons will struggle with their unnatural growth but at the moment the survivors are enjoying a life they would not have had if no one took action to help them.



And speaking of hatching projects – here’s a happy story about two recently arrived residents

One morning I received this: *“I’m sure you guys get many emails asking to rehome rooster and chickens but I hope you can consider my pets that I have had for a very long time that unfortunately due to moving into a small suburb I can’t keep them. Five years ago the childcare centre that I worked at had the typical hatching program but I was interested and a little concerned about what happens to the chicks once the ‘process’ has ended at the centre, researching information I was appalled on what happens to the chicks (which I then informed management about and was able to stop the purchasing of anymore hatching programs at the centre because unfortunately a lot of childcare centres have no idea what happens to the chickens which is horrible), so I then decided that I would adopt two of the chicks which then grew up to be a rooster and hen, she laid for a couple of years but now both spend their days adventuring through the one acre of land, finding dirt to lay in and bugs to eat.”* The Queen and The Boss, as they are known, took up residence at A Poultry Place earlier this month.

I’ve also managed to get a number of the new arrivals from late last year to happily live together, which has resulted in a flock of all-sorts (pic left). While they are all still in their adolescence I will probably have to separate the boys from the girls eventually. The hens will move in with the main hen flock leaving the boys to be a bachelor flock.



This year, 2017, is designated the Year of the Rooster in the Chinese zodiac, though it seems every year for the past 16 it has been year of the rooster here. Already in just two months I have received requests to take in more than 50 roosters.

Their stories are the usual, here's just a few examples of such requests:

"Found a rooster in the parkland no one seems to want to take him."

"My daughter has three chickens which her children brought home after following a 'Cycle of Life' series of lessons at school. Unfortunately, two, possibly all three are roosters. They are beginning to be quite aggressive and the family can't keep them. Can you assist."

"Hello. Would you take a rooster? Whereabouts are you located? I am in nth Brisbane"

"Do you accept roosters hatched from incubated eggs?"

"Hello. I was wondering where you are located? And if you might be willing to take five roosters that a friend of mine can no longer care for"

"Good afternoon I have an unwanted rooster of which I been left with, is there anywhere in Gosford area that I can take him to?"

"Hi guys - a friend put me onto you - I've just discovered I have a rooster instead of a hen - child pet - I'm in inner city Brisbane and can't keep him - is this something you can help me with?"

"Hi. I have two roosters I need to rehome and hoping to keep them alive? Can you please help me?"

Of course sadly you can't say yes to everyone. Whether a rooster/s gets here depends on capacity at the time of the request. Some of these requests and others received are now resident here, others are not. As for those the requests that have come from interstate I've tried to recommend alternatives for them.

Hopefully, the Year of the Rooster may get some people to reconsider their attitude towards these lovely beings and get over their prejudices towards them of being 'noisy', 'aggressive' and 'useless' (because they don't lay eggs). I have a few things planned throughout the year to hopefully contribute to this, for example each month I am posting new cover photo on the A Poultry Place facebook page highlighting some of the 750 boys who have called the sanctuary home during the past 16 years and how they came to be here – you can assist by following the page and sharing each of these stories as they appear on your own page.

I mentioned earlier about the sanctuary celebrating it's Sweet 16th in late January. We celebrated with a vegan BBQ attended by more than 50 human friends. Sox, the matriarchy of the sanctuary (pic right) who, having arrived here in 2002 is the longest existing resident apart from me, played the purrfect role of hostess making sure a good time was had by all.



TO VISIT A POULTRY PLACE EMAIL freechook@bigpond.com

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