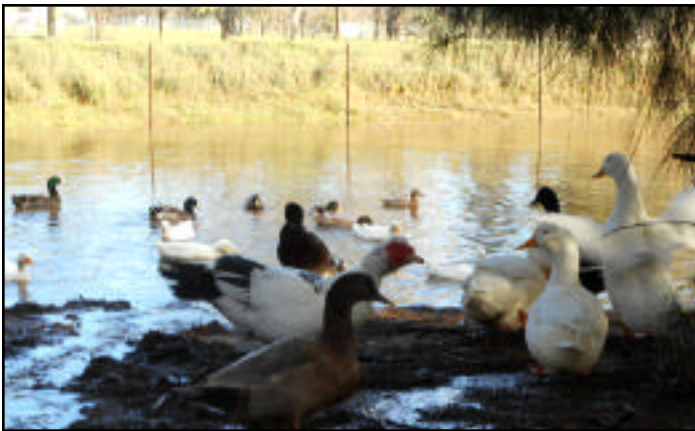


Wet (and now) subsequently muddy is the best description for the past few weeks. What's that old saying – "when it rains it pours". So far this year we've almost received an extra 250mm of rain compared to the long-term average for this time of the year and 300mm more than the same time last year! It has been years since this sort of rain has been around and a number of friends have for the first time seen the dam full, in fact it's been almost six years since it was at such a level and with each new downpour there is a stream of overflow into the neighbour's property and down their drive.

Of course the ducks and geese are loving it. Everyone else is coping, for example I have had to move the sheep out of their paddock because there is just so much water lying in puddles up there and they hate it. They are now in the paddock they had fully grazed and I'm hand feeding them hay daily until things dry out a little – thankfully I had the foresight to purchase some cheap hay in May in case of an emergency and that has proven invaluable. The ongoing rain and the fact that it is the coldest part of the year make things a little more challenging, especially cleaning out night shelters as few dry out during the day. Thankfully this has been helped by a couple of working bees undertaken by the crew from Vegan ACT, which is a great help – they are back again at the end of August to lend a hand.



As usual there has been a number of rehoming requests but few people have followed up my initial response. I have a basic principle that if you want me to help you out you have to speak verbally to me – you know have a discussion – I'm not going to say yes to someone who is just typing on a keyboard or texting me – seriously what has happened to people that they are scared to speak to others even when they supposedly want help? The few calls I did receive were mostly from breeders who wanted me to take their "excess" but have no intention of stopping their breeding programs – so they usually hang up when I'm halfway through giving them an earful – they can't see the problem they are causing.

Then there's the others who I have responded to and said they'd call me or get back to me and five or six weeks down the track I'm still waiting to hear from them – when I do contact them to find out what is happening they say – "oh yeah we sorted it"; I say "thanks for letting me know"; they say "well I'm busy" (I'm obviously not) so they get "well just letting you know that because I said yes to you I said no to three others as I wouldn't have the capacity and so no doubt they are probably all dead – have a good day" – they then get defensive like I'm the bad guy!

Newcomers did include two hens, a duck found on a suburban river and five roosters, who had been born during a school hatching project.



Thankfully I managed to keep my sanity having been invited to be part of some great events.

Earlier this month I spoke at the inaugural *Practical Advocacy Workshop* organised by Vegan ACT (pic left) and presented on one of my favourite topics – sustainable activism.

In June I spoke at *The March to Close All Slaughterhouses* in Sydney, organised by Animal Liberation NSW (pic below), which was memorable for a few reasons. Firstly, it was the second time I had been asked to speak at the event since it began

three years ago which I considered to be an honour. The fact that it was one of five similar rallies held across Australia as part of this global event illustrates the strengthening of our cause.

Secondly, despite what can only be described as appalling weather – hundreds still turned up and we proudly march up George Street on behalf of the voiceless, finishing up at the Sydney Town Hall minutes before the clouds burst again and saturated the city.

Thirdly, and personally most importantly, the march came the day after me and others present at the march had said goodbye to our friend and colleague Fiona Fox (who died after a battle with brain cancer) and I was able to channel her during my talk.



Indeed, Fiona's words are a fitting way to end this update on:

"I am driven by the absolute injustice of the way factory farmed animals are treated. They have no say, no voice and are forced into a life of slavery by, and for human beings and this is not okay. I will spend the rest of my days fighting for the rights and freedom of factory farmed animals," Fiona proudly said in an interview a few years ago with NSW Hen Rescue. Fiona said injustice is what drove her after having had her eyes opened to the inherent cruelty involved with animal agriculture. *"As people are becoming more aware of the cruelty involved in factory farming more are choosing to live a cruelty free and compassionate life by becoming Vegan,"* Fiona said. *"This means they don't eat animals or products taken from them, they don't wear them and they don't buy products that are tested on them."*

When asked what people can do to help Fiona said people need to educate themselves about modern agricultural practices and then start educating others about the cruelty involved and speak up for the animals.

I know Fiona's ambition lives on with many who had the pleasure of calling her friend.

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