



**UPDATE
AUGUST 2018**

This month marks 19 years since I made a tree-change and left Sydney to live hands-on in a small country town in southern NSW with the rescued and unwanted. Originally, I was to stay for a year or two to help out some friends who had an animal sanctuary called Atchin Tan, as one of them got offered an overseas job but things just snowballed come January 2001 I was establishing a sanctuary of my own, A Poultry Place, on a five-acre paddock, two kilometres away, having realised the desperate need for such places to exist. Back then, even though I went in with eyes wide-open I was still pretty naïve about what a commitment I was actually undertaking, not to mention the toll it would take on me – physically, mentally and financially.

Today, I write this on a sunny winter afternoon on the terrace surrounded by the feathered, woolled, furred, clawed, hooped and pawed who now reside here. They are among the 3672 lives who have been directly affected by the existence of A Poultry Place and there would be a few hundred more who I've managed to find safe haven for with others. I'm there would be another few hundred who I assisted during my time at Atchin Tan as well.

I've sadly learnt first-hand a lot more about both the egg and chicken meat industries, as well as the duck and turkey industries, since I left Sydney on August 28 1999. Lots of stuff that I'd prefer not to have but once you gain such knowledge you can't forget it and you know you have to do your best to change it, which is why during the past 19 years I have done whatever I could to help campaigns focusing on these industries in particular.

You have to excuse my reflective mood. I could blame it on my fast approach birthday which sees me clock up half a century on this planet – it's not. It is more about how people, yes even animal lovers, some vegans and those involved in campaigns against animal cruelty still have a pecking order (pun intended) about those non-humans amongst us.

Twice in recent weeks I have been told by so-called vegans that A Poultry Place can't be suffering as much as others during the drought because it only has little animals (yeah let's just ignore the sheep and the goats who live here) I was told others are doing it much worse. It was hard not to fly into rage at these people but rather than type back in anger I walked away from the computer and went outside and did some chores to mull over a response. I think what I wrote in response was pretty polite: *".....the duck dam dried up in March; I have been handfeeding hay, which I need to source and purchase, to the sheep and goats since Easter as there is no feed in their three paddocks; all feed prices are increasing and supplies are*

getting harder to come by ie: for the past two months I have only been able to get half the usual monthly supply of feed for ducks and geese at a time; I have constant fears about sufficient water supply and finally I have to deal with the ever increasing daily requests received to take in new surrenders, and the inevitability of having to decline at this time due to circumstances and cope with the subsequent abuse I get as a result."

Thankfully, some are more compassionate, sympathetic or just more knowledgeable about the impacts the drought is having on sanctuaries across the country. There's been a new initiative started in this region, Hummingbird Events, which is running fundraisers to jointly benefit six of the sanctuaries in this region with the first event being the Save our Sanctuaries Drought Relief Gala on October 19 at the QT Hotel Ballroom in Canberra. All proceeds will be split equally between the sanctuaries - you can find out more about Hummingbird and the sanctuaries they support (including A Poultry Place) at <https://www.hummingbirdevents.org>

As mentioned there are increasing numbers of rehoming requests being received and having to deal with them takes a toll, especially in some cases because of the stupidity of the people who send them, the language they use etc Here are a selection of a few:

"...I need to find a good home for my old rooster who needs to retire. Would you be interested? We don't want to eat him but he isn't good at sharing the hens with another boy and we need fresh breeding stock"

"Putting my feelers out, thinking about rehoming some/all of my chooks. they're ex batteries, so nearly 2, I get anywhere from 3 to 10 eggs a day and give half to family who aren't vegan and half back to them. they're pretty friendly but don't like free ranging, they like their coop, so they'd need a big ass coop took me an hour of fighting to get the bloody idiots one by one out of their pen to free range and they all just sat by the door waiting to go back in. oh, and I got a black eye (getting them in however proved even harder than getting them out. but whatever.) they won't lay for much longer no rehoming fee but you'd have to prove to me they'd be in better hands than they are"

"I have chickens and a rooster, and when they go broody I let them sit on eggs. Obviously, I end up with more roosters. I have kept as many as I can, as we have the hens for eggs, not meat. But too many roosters are not good for the girls. I managed to re-home some for a while in a place that did eat them, but might have kept some, and I figured a 50-50 chance for a rooster is better than none. Last time I was there, all my roosters were gone, fair enough, but no longer the hopeful 50-50. So now I am reluctant to take any more there."

"Hello, my mum started out with 2 cute little hens and had a bright idea to get a rooster, she now has almost 50 chicken, no lawn and a growing bill to keep these chickens fed. We're all very unsure what to do about the situation. Just wondering if you could offer some advice and rehoming options please."

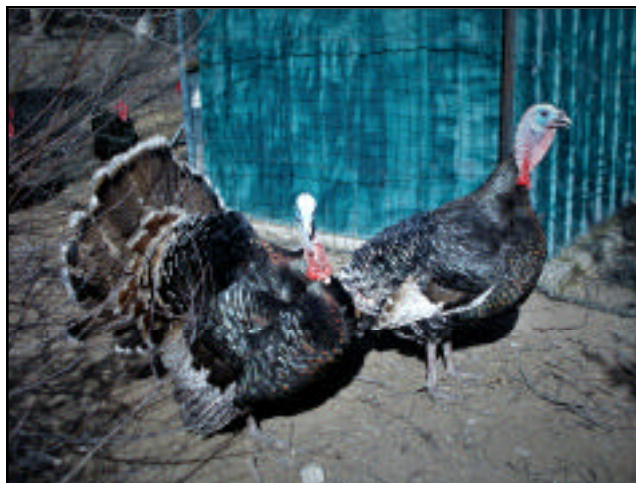
Thankfully I've also received some nice messages to counterbalance these.

"Hi, I just wanted to let you know that I have been reading your site for a couple of years and I just love the work you do for all the gorgeous girls & boys. Your writing style is witty and fun to read and I can only admire all the work you must be doing in your free time tending to the animals. I've sent you a donation of a \$100 to contribute in a small way. Thank you for what you do."

"This is truly the best site to look at any time of day. With the fiasco of the Lakesland hen debacle you offer a safe place for feathered friends and the humans too just to remind us there is still good out there. Thank you."

Despite the situation and the stupidity of many I encounter I have managed to be able to accommodate a few rooster rehoming requests as well as take in two gorgeous bronze turkey toms (the male of a turkey), some hatching project chicks and a couple of ducks but they are a fraction of the number of requests that have been received. Unfortunately for most it is the timing of when the request is received.

In between there's the ongoing stuff of running a sanctuary. I tested out my architect flair and created a rooster platform, which seems to have been a success and of course the fab people at Vegan ACT have been back for a working bee, and another is planned for mid-September



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