



UPDATE
JANUARY 2019

It's anniversary time. January is always a big month for me and I'm not just talking about coping with the heat. We are beginning a third week of 35-plus degree days, last week we had four consecutive days of 40-plus heat, it is the second heatwave we have experienced since mid-December. We are all struggling and sadly despite best efforts some have passed. When you have intense heat day after day with little respite overnight – Saturday night was the first night when it dipped below 20 degrees – it takes a toll. Of course if humans didn't bred beings the way they do for meat and eggs they could probably whether such events but their oversized bodies cause them respiratory and heart problems which only makes dealing with the heat that much harder.

Today, January 22, 2019 marks 18 years since I began A Poultry Place. What was once a cleared country paddock I purchased is now a sanctuary devoted to caring for the most exploited species those beings us humans refer to as “animals” – poultry. With a lot of blood, sweat and tears (literally) it morphed into a little land of make believe, where beings are allowed to live out their lives as naturally as possible without being exploited by humans. I have no regrets I made my mind up to start this amazing life journey because it has contributed to the person I am today. I take pride in the fact that because this place has existed refuge has been provided throughout the years to 3755 other beings giving them a new beginning and a life that they would not have otherwise experienced.



In recent weeks I've been reminded how much impact this place has had – not just on those who have been rescued or surrendered but also to those who live wild. While a lot of native birds like the galahs, cockatoos and magpies are almost permanent residents this year there's been more corellas visiting than usual. Smaller than a cockatoo and more shy, the Corellas usually hang around for a few weeks in the various trees before disappearing but this year they have stayed longer – no doubt an effect of the ongoing drought. The other night as I was finishing up around 9:30pm one of the possums approached me and I gave them some apple – I hadn't seen them for a while and it was nice to know they are still about. And also that there's a wild duck flock in residence. There are 10-12 ducklings and their mum hanging around in the duck paddock and it's nice to see how maternal she is – on numerous nights they have taken shelter in one of the houses and I have to then convince all the others that it is okay and that they are having house guests for the night. When I started this place I wanted to create a habitat where some of the locals would feel welcomed and I think I can tick that box.

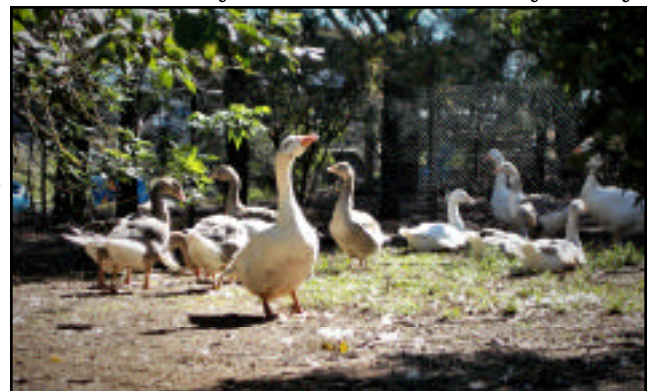
The year started off with me celebrating another anniversary as January 1 meant I had spent a quarter of a century living without cruelty. On January 1, 1994 I made a New Year's resolution to stop eating other beings. An animal lover since I was a little boy - I had dreams of being a vet, or living in Africa caring for wildlife like the Adamson's of Born Free fame - however, it took me a quarter of a century living on this planet before I realised the hypocrisy of what I claimed as a core belief and what was actually on my plate..... My awareness of their plight was increased in my early-20s through reading about how animals are farmed for food and the various animal-related stories I wrote as a working journalist (This was back in the day before the internet/social media/google/wikipedia etc - so to come by information you had to really find it yourself). The following month I attended my first Animal Liberation meeting in Surry Hills Sydney, which signified the start of my journey to becoming a social change activist and planted the seed which saw me create A Poultry Place. And this is where it led me to.

Despite the ongoing drought and the current heatwave there was a little bit of weather relief when we got some storms in late November and early December - so much so that the duck dam began to refill - it was lovely to let everyone out one morning mid-December and see some of the ducks head straight to the dam, where they actually found water - sadly it's looks as though it's short lived as the current heatwave is just sucking the water out of it.



Apart from weather there is of course ongoing rehoming requests to deal with. Already this year I have been asked to take in 31 roosters. Sadly I'm not in a position to take on any more roosters at the moment, which comes with the knowing of what will then become of them. One person asked me "how would they go if I just released them in the bush". Another wanted me to take in two of her four roosters - she wanted to keep the other two as she likes to breed a few every year - I "politely" told her the sanctuary wasn't set up to be a dumping ground for people like her. I took in two silkie roosters just before Christmas, whose family wanted to go somewhere safe where they "wouldn't be eaten", yet they had still called them nugget and drumstick.....

A family of geese from a nearby town have taken up residence here after their humans realised they were in over their heads and that they should never had allowed mum to sit on eggs, Mum, dad and their eight offspring are currently sharing the duck paddock with some others - I am waiting till the cooler weather to introduce them to the rest of the goose gaggle in residence.



A hen called Pip also joined us after wandering into a suburban Sydney backyard. The hen, who has been debeaked, is possibly an escapee from a nearby battery farm. Thankfully the granddaughter of the woman whose home the hen wandered into took charge of the situation and brought Pip here where she can live out the rest of her life without any fear.

Two ducks, Goldie and Sooty, have also arrived after a caring person stepped in to solve a neighbour's dilemma. The neighbours had impulsively bought two three-day-old ducklings at Flemington Markets because their children thought they were cute. They had not thought about the ducks' welfare, in fact,

the father said “They’ll probably die with over handling, the rabbit did”. The neighbour asked if they could be rehomed here where they would have other duck friends and I said yes. A third duck, a Muscovy drake named Donald, yeap there are a few of them in residence who arrive with that name, was also taken in after being dumped at a property where the owners are selling up and didn’t want to leave him abandoned.



In mid-December I was fortunate enough to be in a workshop with some other sanctuarians run by US social change activist patrice jones, who is a hero of mine. patrice authored the book, *Aftershock. Confronting Trauma in a Violent World: A Guide for Activists and Their Allies*, which I discovered shortly after I quit my job with a human rights organisation back in 2007 due to burnout, a text which has since become my “bible” and in my opinion should be mandatory reading for all social change activists.

patrice, who is one of the founders of VINE Sanctuary in the USA, also pioneered a way of getting former fighting cocks (cock fighting is still legal in some US jurisdictions!) – the techniques are the ones I’ve adopted at A Poultry Place to get roosters to live in harmony together.

I had a great day in her company.



Finally after 11 years of trying last week I got to get a photo of Norman and his ball pillow. Norman arrived at A Poultry Place with his “brother” Virgil in October 2007.

Soon after a friend gave me a basketball for them to play with – they weren’t interested but Norman decided it made a great pillow. Ever since he has used it as such but I’ve never been able to get a photo of him with it until the Sunday before last.

Hopefully by the time I get around to writing another update it will be much cooler and hopefully wetter – we can but hope.

**TO VISIT A POULTRY PLACE EMAIL
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