

FROM THE EDITOR



Hi:

This month it is eighty-one years since the Society was founded in response to Commonwealth Government moves to ban the importation of foreign birds. Over the ensuing years the objectives of the Society have changed from that single issue to embrace, as our motto says: *The Study, Care, Breeding and Conservation of Birds*. The proposal put forward by Matthew Russell for a controlled breeding programme for those finch species rapidly declining in Australian aviaries deserved better support than it received. Unless we, the aviculturists of today, do something about this situation many once common foreign species will disappear from our aviaries forever.

Approval for the importation of foreign finches is unlikely to be forthcoming, and if, in the unlikely event, importation becomes a reality we will only be able to import species that are already here. Consequently, if we let a species die out now it will not be possible to import it in the future. After the fiasco of the Equine Flu outbreak the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service will not readily approve any new importation that could result in them once again covering their collective faces with egg.

Our founders fought for the right to import foreign species, and ultimately lost. But undaunted they maintained many foreign finches through a concentrated breeding effort that is to be applauded. That many of the species they established viable breeding populations of are now in danger of disappearing is shameful. We must get behind Matthew and support his breeding programme, so some, if not all, of the endangered species are preserved for future generations of Australian aviculturists to enjoy.

Let it not be said that we were the generation who nullified the efforts of aviculturists past.

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R.V.C.