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The Final Chirp!

If ever there was a year of challenges and triumphs, 2017 has been it!

I set out with some big plans, and a great sense of determination and motivation. Of course it was always going to be the case that not everyone would be behind me, at least not all in a supporting role.

During recent months, as many would be aware, I have had some serious criticism and accusations leveled against me, both publicly on Facebook and via the dissemination of defamatory emails that have been received by many. It has even been claimed that I am under Federal Investigation.

I guess you could say that this small group of people waved the proverbial red flag at me, to which I responded in the only way that I know how, "I grabbed the bull by the horns"!

Wind back the clock to 2015 and the first legal shipment of Glossy Black Cockatoos to leave Australia; of course as you all know, I played a part in making this incredible milestone happen. And having seen firsthand how this event transpired, I knew that we simply had to explore other options and to both my surprise and delight, it was discovered that things were not exactly as we had been led to believe.

We have all heard many times that it is only possible for an export of native birds to occur if it is a zoo-zoo transfer. Much to my surprise, I found out that it is in fact possible for any licensed breeder, who can prove the legal origins of their birds for a number of generations, to export, so long as the receiving facility overseas meets all of the criteria set by the Australian Government - including being a recognised zoological facility.

This has now been proven to be true, as I have now assisted in the export of native species from a number of Australian breeders, all of whom were more than happy to export their birds, and all of whom passed all of the necessary government requirements with flying colours.

The birds that were exported were all specimens that had been available on the open market, and in many cases they had been available for quite some time, even years in some cases. Many of these species have now seen a resurgence in popularity here in Australia due simply to the attention that the exports have brought them - I personally believe that this is great!

It has been said many times over the past 12 months, that I've personally exported many birds to Germany. When in actual fact, up until this month, I have only assisted other breeders in the export of their birds. Last week, despite the fictitious and elaborate stories going around in an effort to discredit me, I achieved my first export of native parrots from Australia to Germany. I legally exported 74 birds including cockatoos, lorikeets and parrots, all done with the complete backing of both the authorities in Australia and their counterparts in Germany. So, I guess if being under "Federal Investigation" ends in the issuing of export permits, then I welcome this to occur each and every time!

Through the course of 2017 I've personally endured a smear campaign mounted against me, that at times has been, in all honesty, hard on both myself and my family - but hey, as they say, jealousy is a curse!

In reality what has been achieved is nothing short of incredible; we've done what was once thought impossible - exported multiple species, including a number that have never before left Australia legally, with the full backing of governments at both ends. We've worked very closely and openly with both the Australian and German Authorities. We've answered the questions and accusations posed to the said authorities by our detractors, simply by presenting the truth, thereby proving any and all allegations against us to be baseless. And for anyone who may still be in doubt, if

the exports that took place this past week aren't proof enough that we have the backing of the authorities then I guess that nothing ever will be!

In facilitating these exports the history books have been rewritten with the opening of curtains that were thought to be permanently closed due to a perceived ironclad export ban on native species coming out of Australia that has been in place since the early 1960's. We've shown that what was once perceived impossible is in fact possible.

I'm always looking at the big picture, and I encourage you all to do the same. With each move being a positive step forward for parrot conservation and education. In doing what I do, of course there will always be detractors, but as the saying goes "those who live in glass houses, should never throw stones"!

I am extremely proud of what I have achieved so far. And through the close relationship that I have built up with ACTP I have also been able to facilitate the direct backing of parrot conservation within Australia. Firstly through the backing of the amazing work being carried out by Dee Patterson at 100% Blacks at Jamarri W.A. And with the amazing announcement made on the 15/12/17 by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) W.A. on their partnership with ACTP in the conservation of the highly endangered Western Ground Parrot being the second project that the German based conservation NGO has become involved with and the first direct partnership with an Australian government department.

To be able to make a difference in conservation in my own country is a dream come true and would not be possible without my partnership with ACTP.

In writing this I have addressed the concerns of those who have attacked me, and this is the last time that I will comment on the accusations leveled against me as I simply have no time for this any more. My magazine and conservation work is far more important than answering questions posed by those who have nothing better to do than to throw stones in my direction. Of course, as always, I am more than happy to do what I can to help those who are looking to make a positive contribution to aviculture and conservation, but I have no time for those who aren't.

I have never been more excited for the future - there is plenty more history waiting to be written and I'm more than looking forward to the challenge!

My focus has always been and will always remain on bird Conservation and Education!

From Germany to the world, I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

Stay tuned, as there is much, much more to come!