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To: All Australian Exotic Bird Aviculturists
From: Peter Gowland
Date: 27 March 2006
Re: **A Position Statement regarding my membership of the
Exotic Bird Industry Advisory Group**

On March 6, 2006 Peter Komidar, the Interim Chair of the Exotic Bird Industry Advisory Group to represent Australian aviculturalists on the Exotic Bird Industry Advisory Group (EBIAG), formally accepted me. One of my roles as a member of this Group is to represent "...the industry as a whole.." and to take to this group "...a range of issues and views" that are representative of the everyone involved with the aviculture industry.

Establishment of the EBIAG gives the industry a chance to participate in the formulation of government policy development which would best encourage a strong, viable exotic bird industry for all interested parties. It provides the industry with an opportunity to advise the government on how best we want the government to play a role in our future. We are now at a critical crossroad. We must not lose this opportunity to have a say in the future direction we want to take our industry. If we fail to take advantage of this opportunity, we will be at the mercy of government policy direction, which will most probably have very little input from aviculturists.

I am therefore going to summarise here a brief outline of my career as it relates to exotic bird aviculture, and my experiences that may be of an advantage to my position on the EBIAG. I will also give you a position stance regarding the goals that I will try to achieve while I am a member of EBIAG. Finally, I am actively calling for submissions from people in the industry to provide me with issues and views that they want represented on the EBIAG, preferably in some form of written word (email, letter or fax).

This communication and future communications will be attached to our company's web site and will be added to, revised and updated as required.

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My Background

I achieved a BSc (Hons) from the Australian National University in 1973. I then worked for 4 years as a Wildlife Ecologist with the Woodland Ecology Group in the Division of Land Use Research part of the CSIRO. After this my family and I moved to Kununurra where I worked for 4 years as a Bird Biologist in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. There I worked under contract to the WA Public Service Board, researching the ecology of parrots and waterbirds and how they interacted with irrigated agriculture in the Ord River Irrigation area.

In 1982, I left the Public Service and my wife and I started a business trading in game meats to the food service industry across Australia. Now, nearly 25 years later, our company, Priam Australia Pty Ltd, has four major activities:

- Wholesaling traditional meats, game meats, frozen berries, frozen seafood and Australian bush foods to the hospitality industry across the ACT and south-east NSW
- Providing a refrigerated courier service business across the ACT and south-east NSW

Then through its arm, Priam Psittaculture Centre, we:

- Supply a range of specialist aviculturist products such as incubators, brooders and foods, to aviculture, pet shops and zoos. These include such brand names as AB Incubators, Buddy, Brinsea, Nekton, Pretty Bird Products, Harrison bird foods and more.
- Have a bird breeding facility at Bungendore, NSW where we currently keep and research the aviculture of 7 species of macaws, 11 species of amazons, 6 species of African parrots, 10 species of cockatoos and other parrot species. The facility encompasses 18 hectares, and about 150 aviaries. The foundation stock for our exotic parrot collection came from an importation program with the UK in 1995

My wife Val and I have 4 adult children, two of which (Kynan & Daniel) are now working fulltime with Val and myself in our business. Our other two children are pursuing careers in environmental and biological industries.

Over my career, I have been actively involved in a number of animal industries including aviculture, animal quarantine with AQIS, deer industry, goat industry, crocodile industry, camel industry, ostrich industry, emu industry, water buffalo industry and industries based on the utilisation of Australian native wildlife. My roles have included consultancy to the industries, as an industry group member and/or aiding in the development of commercial viability of the industries.

My Views on How the Australian Exotic Bird Industry Should be Developed

I strongly believe that, as an industry, we should be trying to develop a **credible and accountable** industry. I believe that only this will serve the needs best of the hobbyists, the commercial operators, the government and the demands of the general public.

The **draft terms of reference for the advisory group** have been published on the DEH web site and can be found at the following link:

<http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/exoticbirds/index.html>

The role and priorities of the EBIAG have been listed officially by DEH as the following:

- 1. provide an industry focussed forum to discuss and develop industry guidance, approaches and mechanisms that support the legal keeping, breeding and trading in exotic birds;*
- 2. enhance the development of the exotic bird industry by facilitating research and development which will support practical resolution of key issues affecting the long term viability of the industry in Australia;*
- 3. provide advice to the Department of the Environment and Heritage on options for practical and effective ways for industry to meet requirements of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999; and*
- 4. develop and implement communication strategies that facilitate and improve information flow on important matters affecting the industry.*

The **priority issues listed by DEH** on their web site that need to be address are listed below:

- 1. development of industry codes of practice, guidance and supporting tools for record keeping to demonstrate legal possession of exotic birds within the industry;*
- 2. development of industry codes of practice and guidance for appropriate identification mechanisms for exotic birds (such as micro-chipping, leg banding and DNA testing) and facilitate relevant research necessary to support these mechanisms;*
- 3. research and development of approaches to resolve sub-species identification issues, which may have caused problems for linking individual birds back to the National Exotic Bird Registration Scheme;*
- 4. development of practical mechanisms for resolving issues about the lack of documentation that has arisen since the closure of the National Exotic Bird Registration Scheme, noting that this is complicated by the large volume of birds that have been bred domestically since the closure of that Scheme; and*
- 5. development of options for registration schemes or other mechanisms to assist industry to demonstrate the legality of exotic bird holdings.*

The EBIAG needs to address the issues listed above which were first highlighted in the minutes of the DEH industry workshop held on December 9, 2005, which were released to aviculture around December 22, 2005. As a participant at this workshop, aviculturists should be aware that the workshop participants have not yet ratified the published minutes and my personal view is that there are errors and omissions with them, which I intend to raise at our first meeting. In my opinion, there are other vital issues that need to be discussed by the EBIAG as well.

A call for Submissions from Australian Aviculturists with Comments on i. Proposed issues and ii. Not previously listed issues, which should be addressed by the EBIAG

- I am inviting written submissions from Australian aviculturists documenting their comments on the proposed priority issues or issues that have not been listed that they would like me to take to the EBIAG meetings to address.

- I am seeking thoughts and comments on how the group can be funded in the long term, as the funding offered by DEH is currently only short term.
- I am seeking comments on the long-term direction that the group should be steered towards e.g. maintaining just a government advisory role or perhaps aim to be an independent industry council etc.

My email and contact details are listed below. The proposed first meeting of the group is in the first week of April 2006 and it is to be held in Canberra.