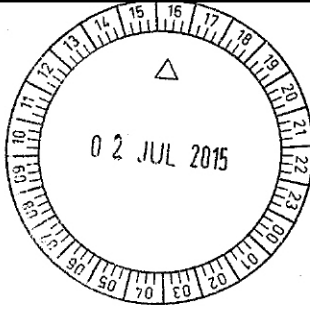


# **GRAEME CAMPBELL**



2/7/2015

## **Select Committee into the Operations of the RSPCA WA Inc**

Problems with the RSPCA are not new. During the last century Australia had a very profitable export industry selling Australian fauna. The industry was centred in Adelaide where "Ausfauna" controlled over 70% of the market. I worked for the company as an animal catcher. The company carried its own insurance and if the death rate on any shipment was over 1% the company became very annoyed.

The main fauna exported was various birds of which budgerigars and canaries were a big component, kangaroos and wallabies were a big part of the business as well but they were nowhere as large as the current export of kangaroos as pet meat. Camels, ostriches, snakes and lizards were also sold.

In 1958 a company in Sydney tried to get into what was quite a lucrative trade. They cut the price and got an order for some kangaroos. Ausfauna shipped all its animals in vet designed wooden crates; these crates had hessian roofs, covered with loose chicken wire. The Sydney company used boxes with solid ceilings; as a consequence most of the Kangaroos died of head injuries as kangaroos have very thin skulls.

The RSPCA used this incident to start their campaign to have a total ban on the export of all native fauna, although I suspect that their objections to the trade were always ideological. They achieved their objective on the first of January 1960 when a total ban on all exports was enforced except for very limited zoo to zoo basics.

Before the ban the industry was well controlled; certain species of birds were not allowed to be trapped an, with licenced trappers in the field, illegal operators were non-existent. Once the ban was imposed, the only trappers operating were the illegal ones and of course they targeted the protected species. Prior to the ban on exports, there were a number of reptiles that were completely protected; within the following decade, every one of these protected species could be obtained from the United States. With the exception of kangaroos and emus, the trade still goes on, birds and reptiles are still being sold but now they are subjected to very poor conditions and a very high mortality is accepted because of the high prices that are obtained.

The RSPCA undoubtedly got a warm inner glow from their misguided efforts but they have been entirely responsible for the countless suffering and death of untold numbers of our fauna over the last sixty years.

Graeme Campbell