

# The Australian scene

*Published on the AWEBSA webpage with the kind permission of the author: Robert Manvell.  
Please visit his page and view photos of his amazing budgies.*

A few exhibitors have had early successes with their imported English birds. Mainly because they were fortunate to have their Imports click or they had fat enough wallets to buy superior stock. However, now many do not have the knowledge to carry the birds forward or even maintain their quality. You only have to look in the young bird classes at shows to confirm this, seeing how quickly we have lost the quality.

Many of the major winners are two, three or even four year old birds and most of these are first generation imported blood. Some fanciers have been continuously importing birds into Australia since the opening of the quarantine station at Spotswood, Victoria - in an effort to maintain or improve their quality, mostly without success! Hanging off the coat tails of our European friends, is no substitute for ability. Accordingly many of the imported birds have been wasted by fanciers who thought you could buy instant success. You cannot buy experience or knowledge, and these are the main ingredients missing for continued success.

Australians, in the majority of cases, have only managed to import birds that were blood-line culls from the English breeders. Therefore, they need a lot of work put into them to get the best out. In spite of this some breeders have disposed of imported birds without giving them a chance to prove their worth. Meanwhile these same 'breeders'?? have the audacity to blame the UK suppliers for their results. In my opinion, these "Cowboys" who are thankfully in the minority, are giving the Australian fancy a credibility problem. Fortunately there are many talented breeders in this country who are prepared to put in the time and effort necessary, without expecting success to be handed to them on a silver platter.

Most importantly the English birds were a tremendous improvement on what we had and we should be grateful for the overall assistance we have received from the UK

fancy. Beyond question is the marvellous influence these birds, and not forgetting the UK breeders have had on our hobby.

Notwithstanding the above, having been in the position of an importation syndicate co-ordinator, I feel qualified to make the following assertion: With the current imports we are getting more of the same quality of bird coming into this country with very few exceptions. With all due respect, the UK quality in general is inconsistent — they have their own problems to address. For this reason the UK breeders cannot afford to part with the outstanding birds in their possession.

If we were realistic we would understand this is the situation and cease bringing more mediocre birds into this country. To continue on our present path is a complete waste of time and money. We need to test our own abilities by doing some work with our present imported stock. Rather than continuously "piggy backing" on the ability of our English friends.

#### **Comments by Johan Lucas:**

I am not in a position to contribute in respect of the quality of the birds. However, I believe the point made by Robert re testing one's abilities is a good one and worthy of further discussion.

We often hear about breeders buying and buying more birds with the aim to improve their birds - the big spenders. Would I be wrong to say that not many of these breeders last for many years and become a real fancier or hobbyist? And don't they only exhibit somebody else's birds in any event?

There is a good case for one to establish your own identity in the birds you breed, with the ideal in mind. Then carefully select an outcross from time to time to help improve a feature.

How often have you heard: "This is my "Koos van der Merwe" line, for example? Maybe there are breeders out there saying this is my "Larkwood Aviary" line.

As Robert wrote perhaps "We need to test our own abilities by doing some work with our present ... stock. Rather than continuously "piggy backing" on the ability of our ... friends."