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To Caroline Zambrano
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Re: Article: Keeping Wildlife As Pets – Pet Industry News Vol 29 No.1

I'm contacting you regarding your article, 'Keeping Wildlife As Pets', as I found it to be of direct interest to several community organisations that I am a participating committee member.

Firstly I would like to point out that due diligence was not sufficiently executed with the reporting on reptiles and native mammals. There are representative organisations within NSW and interstate who promote the lawful and ethical keeping of these species, none of those appear to have been contacted.

With regards to mammals, in SA and VIC alone there are hundreds of privately owned pet sugar gliders, possums and small dasyurids - all of which are accepted as making excellent pets to the correct owners. NSW currently issues licenses to people who can show they are correctly trained and skilled to keep dangerously venomous snakes as pets, yet your article seems to be void of a balanced voice, with the notable exception of birds being kept as pets.

Unfortunately a lot of the perspectives in this article presented around the ownership of native mammals are ill-informed and seem to have been influenced by the rhetoric presented by the Wild4Life campaign. The submission put forward to expand the native mammal list in NSW is a nuanced document that has licensing and welfare requirements associated, that the campaign has chosen to ignore. In some cases, with certain specialist species, the NSW proposal includes requirements that are even more regulated with stricter conditions, than other states that already allow them to be kept as pets! The campaign paints a misleading picture with a bare basics approach with generalising statements making out there will be a kangaroo or wombat in every Sydney apartment. This of course is ridiculous, looking at other states where kangaroos are currently kept as pets this simply isn't the case!

The Mammal Society of NSW would welcome the opportunity to respond to your article and present a more accurate statement, with a scientific and factual look at keeping native mammals as pets.

Kind regards,

Michael Donnelly,
Public Officer, Mammal Society of NSW, and
Reptile Delegate, Animal Care Australia.

