



# *The Avicultural Society of New South Wales Inc. (ASNSW)*

*(Founded in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)*

## **Valediction**

### **Russell Kingston OAM (1945 - 2017)**

*ASNSW The Avicultural Review - July – August 2017)*

**By Graeme Phipps on behalf of the members of  
The Avicultural Society of New South Wales.**

To everyone's great shock we recently lost a great champion for birds in general and finches in particular, in the untimely and sudden death of Russell Kingston.

Russell was a favoured son of aviculture and an absolutely outstandingly gifted bird breeder. Russell was a wonderful communicator – lecturing extensively and writing in magazines, and producing books which resulted in huge welfare benefits for birds. 'The Complete Manual for the Keeping and Breeding of Finches' in 1994 was the first of two major works. It was a stunningly excellent work and I had the privilege and pleasure of writing the Foreword to it. But he went on and raised the bar again with 'The Keeping and Breeding of Finches and Seed-eaters'. Both successful. Then 'The Finch – a Breeder's Companion'.



Russell served on many community groups relating to aviculture. He was a founder of the Queensland Finch Society (QFS); served on the Avicultural Federation of Australia (AFA); National Finch and Softbill Association (NFSA) and the National Exotic Bird Registration Scheme (NEBRS) to name several. He served all with distinction, contributing that really down to earth and clever brain of his; plus his lovely personality and sense of humour that could disarm situations. One small example is while Chairing NEBRS I recall us in Canberra debating a point that wasn't getting far – producing a final list of species. There were arguments about fairness and justice, etc., and someone was seriously citing the need to consider interests of people such as a reclusive little old lady in the backblocks of Victoria who might have discovered that she had a notable new species – but didn't know about NEBRS – and Russell giggled, slapped his thighs and said 'Oh... THAT little old lady!' It was one of those circuit breakers that highlighted the absurdity of a situation. Russell had a low BS threshold.

Look – there are countless stories one could relate. But one thing we will all miss deeply is your sweet, kind and caring personality Russell. That will leave a very large gap. You will be missed. You ARE missed. He was recognised at the highest level with his Medal of the Order of Australia in 2010 for Services to Aviculture in Queensland. But I think his service went way beyond both aviculture and Queensland. He travelled extensively both overseas and in Australia observing birds in the wild and cared about them. In my copy of 'The Finch – A Breeder's Companion' I asked Russ to write a dedication that might encourage zoo keepers and others that I teach and he wrote, "I hope this tome serves to assist bird breeders and zoologists in their endeavours. The love of birds is a wonderful gift – Embrace it". The title of the book shows that he loved birds – it wasn't just that the book was a companion, but birds are companions to us and enrich our lives. He thought that their lives matter. The LOVE OF BIRDS is what he was on about. Dearly did he love them, and dearly do we all love you Russell and will miss you greatly.

May I note that Russell's books were published by [INDRUSS Productions](#) – which showed how much of his endeavours included his life partner Indra. What a wonderful life they have had together! It doesn't get any better than that does it? Indra, we share your grief but know that as with so many of the birds you both love, Russell has gone on a final migration so to speak. This time, he isn't coming back to us. But his great legacy will live on, that's for sure.

Russell just as you loved birds and loved us we love you. All of us were benefited by the fact that you lived and loved amongst us. Farewell brother.

**Russell Kingston OAM** *By Jackson Vernon |26 January 2010 9:19AM AEST (ABC Wide Bay)*

Russell Kingston from Torbanlea has been recognised with a medal 16/07/2017 of the Order of Australia for his work in breeding and conserving native Australian birds. "I've travelled all around the world giving lectures in different countries, so it's been a passion of mine since I've been a young boy."

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