

A reply to Reg Johnson (Letters, Bird Observer 868: 27)

With all due respect to a past president and life member of BOCA, obviously the current BOCA Directors and CEO think that the situation is 'broken' and does need fixing, otherwise why would BOCA have made the overture to Birds Australia to consider a merger? Therefore, despite the fears and scaremongering, it is not a takeover by Birds Australia if BOCA wants, and invited, the current round of discussion.

If social 'ticking' is one's level of bird interest, nothing need change in practical terms, as the current structure of local branches and regional groups will remain. The tiered structure of the new organisation will still cater for those who appreciate a personal management concerned with the personalities of its (local) members. Gone are the days when BOCA was just a Melbourne-centric social ticking club; BOCA is now a national organisation anyway, with its management structure reflecting that fact. We have to move with the times, not least if we still want birds to watch.

It was inappropriate to pre-empt the voting kit, and urge a 'no' vote before members have the necessary information to make an educated and intelligent decision. We should instead be considering the big picture, and what a stronger national organisation (combined membership ten thousand) might mean for the future of our birds.

Stephen Debus (BOCA member 30 years)