

BACKGROUND GUIDE

THE EMU WARS

Composed by Ben Landry



WMIDMUN-XXII

DIRECTORS LETTER



Dear Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to WMIDMUN XXII! My name is Ben Landry, and I have the pleasure of being your Director for our amazing committee, *The Emu War: Australia's Environment and Adversaries of 1932*. I am a freshman at William & Mary studying public policy and sustainable development. I grew up in Natick, Massachusetts (any New Englanders??) and have loved my time in Virginia so far. Outside of school, I play soccer, piano, and enjoy spending time outside. This is my second experience with Model UN; my first one was as a delegate at McGill MUN in Montréal this past January. Throughout high school, I drafted legislation on topics ranging from zoning reform to school safety and am excited to see how MUN can expand my knowledge in the policy field.

I have a nested interest (yes, I am going to make bird puns) in the Emu War because I spent the first half of this school year studying another similar conflict: the prevalence of feral hogs in Texas (quite an interesting issue, to say the least). Without getting into the details, I think that these peculiar circumstances raise important questions about the most effective responses to compounding social/environmental issues. The Emu War is interesting to me not only because it touches on issues of policy and development, but because I believe there is a lot of room to have engaging, genuine debate.

This committee will function as a specialized agency, meaning we will pass resolutions (like General Assembly) while also incorporating an overall crisis arc. This arc will come from WMIDMUN's Crisis Director, and, since we have no back room, there will be no crisis notes. You should be prepared to answer the questions provided and present unique solutions. Your research, writing, and speaking skills will be challenged in a safe, constructive environment that we will all contribute to upholding. Without feather ado, I give you the context to our very own *National Emu Council*.

Please read this background guide in its entirety so that you can be properly prepared.

Best wishes,

Ben Landry (he/him) (balandry@wm.edu)

HISTORY



Introduction:

The year is 1933... just last year, one of Australia's most brutal wars broke out, splitting two of the largest inhabitants of the continent - humans and emus - against each other. The war started primarily over crop and land disputes near the west coast, and has since ended with no clear winner. Now, a council has been assembled to discuss the future of the relationship between man and bird, hopefully bringing this dark chapter of Australian history to a close.

Part I: History of the Conflict

After WWI, the Australian government gave returning veterans land in the Wheat Belt region as a form of gratitude, allowing them to become farmers. However, poor economic conditions caused by the Australian Great Depression caused many countries to impose tariffs on imported crops. This hurt the farmers, who relied heavily on exporting wheat to make money.

On top of economic instability, growing emu populations made it more difficult to grow crops. In 1932, over 20,000 of these 100-pound birds migrated west: eating wheat, trampling fields, and breaking fences. This caused the farmers to grow angry, demanding military reinforcements from Defense Minister George Pearce. If the emus could not be controlled, Western Australia threatened to secede from the rest of the country.

In October of that year, Major G.P.W. Meredith of the 7th Royal Australian Artillery was deployed with a military truck, two soldiers operating Lewis (machine) guns, and 10,000 rounds of ammunition near the town of Champion. After failing for weeks to kill a significant number of emus, they temporarily withdrew on November 8th, and ended the operation on December 10th. The men reported a death-per-ammo ratio of less than 1-in-10. Major Meredith stated "if we had a military division with the bullet-carrying capacity of these birds, it would face any army in the world... they can face machine guns with the invulnerability of tanks."

Part II: History of the National Emu Council (NEC)

In the 1925-1926 Victorian bushfire season, a factory that was originally built to produce British and Australian chemical weapons during WWI caught fire. The chemical factory burned to the ground, releasing a virus that greatly increased the intelligence of birds. Over the next few years, affected emus started to organize with other emus into increasingly complex societies. Emus also started to interact with humans, raising questions about how to best represent them in government. Emus learned English and formed their own version of the language: Emish.

HISTORY



In 1930, the *Emu Recognition Act* passed, establishing emu reserves across the nation, and serving as a major first step in the integration of emus into human society. A year later, the 1931 *Emus in Government Organizations (EGO) Act* allowed for emus to directly serve in government, and granted the reservations limited autonomy.

However, emu-government relations fell apart in mid-1932 as Australia's Great Depression intensified. In response to critical famine and resource scarcity, thousands of emus raided wheat farms and were promptly arrested. These arrests, in addition to the military action, sparked the creation of the National Emu Council (NEC), which includes a separate emu-led Cabinet and high command within the Australian government. The NEC consists of emus as intelligent as their human counterparts, although the council faces growing controversy. This summit stands as a prime opportunity to repair the relationship between man and bird amid ongoing conflict.

Part III: Current situation

A group of federal government representatives and the NEC have agreed to meet at Hemsworth Farms, the site of one of the attacks. Both sides have agreed to a ceasefire until after the summit. Human and emu populations alike hope that peace can be achieved going forward.





Topic I: Negotiating a Lasting Truce

Although the farm raids temporarily relieved the emu famine, it led to major crop losses for farmers and is not a sustainable, long-term solution. The lack of a permanent ceasefire has human and emu citizens concerned about their futures. Going forward, in the new truce...

- How should the NEC and Australian government balance these conflicting issues of crop protection for farmers **and** famine relief for emus, especially with emus being a crucial swing vote in the upcoming federal election? Consider any effects the Great Depression may have on these ideas.

-What will these new solutions look like (e.g. property protection laws, food handouts)?

-What are quick, cost-effective ways to implement these solutions, and who is responsible?

-In the end, why can both sides be reassured that your solutions will translate into future peace?

Topic II: Emu Representation

Social movements, led by the newly-created political party NEST (Negotiate Emu Sovereignty Today), are pressuring leaders on both sides to reform current policies. The NEC is upset by Australia's veteran farmer's program and westward human expansion drawing resources away from local emu reservations. Subsequent emu relocation further south impedes human mining interests, with regions dense in steel, gold, and uranium being vital to the economy. Increasing emu integration has sparked increasing debate around emu rights and self-rule. Going forward...

- Who should rule the established reservations? Arguments have been raised ranging from direct Australian rule, to Federalism, to full emu independence. What decisions would the new ruler(s) make (e.g. health, economy, education), and with how much power?



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What special rights should emus be granted as citizens (if any)? For what purpose?

What changes should be made to emu representation in government (if any)? For what purpose?

Part IV: Dossiers

National Emu Council (Emus)

Ivan Emuonovich- Chief of Army: Ivan was born on Bondi Beach in New South Wales, Australia. He was raised by an ex-Russian soldier from WWI who was scarred from the Russian revolution. Ivan is a fan of classic Dostoevsky and Tchaikovsky, controls the emu army, and organizes raids on Australian farms. He plans to diversify and modernize the Emu military, wanting forces that “can start a land war in Russia”.

Limu Emu- Minister of Finance: Limu Emu was an emu raised on the streets of Melbourne. At an early age, he took a liking to the bustling Roaring Twenties economy and private insurance sector where he met his wife, Linda. However, tragedy struck when Linda was sadly killed in a vicious hit-and-run... and as an emu, Limu was unable to get insurance coverage for the damages. This tragic event has sparked hatred and revenge for Limu Emu as he strives for “liberty, liberty, liberty”: a fairer economy for emu civilization without the influence of humans.

Heinrich von Emurdorfer- Minister of Food: As a young chick, Heinrich was mistakenly shipped to Vienna, Austria, after someone misspelled Australia on a package. Luckily, a prominent Austrian pastry chef took Heinrich under his wing, teaching him to cook and bake. Later in life, Heinrich moved to Australia (his original destination, of course) and opened a bakery, but found it hard to sell his goods due to emu discrimination. Switching gears to the political world, he used his culinary knowledge to get a job in the emu cabinet as the Minister of Food and Agriculture. He now advocates for restraint in attacking farmers’ fields and wants to help emus enjoy the finer things in life, like strudel and historic architecture.

Barbie Mu- Minister of Culture: Because Barbie can be anything, emus can be anything. Barbie Mu remains optimistic about the future of Australia but know it will take a lot of work. She recently commented that living a “life of conflict” was not “what I was made for” and hopes that emu demands can be satisfied by greatly increasing their welfare programs, representation, and overall diversity in government.

Ernest Fledgling- Press Secretary: Ernest is an honest and no-nonsense bird. He has strived for transparency between man and bird for several years, garnering both respect and admiration. In the past, Fledgling has lead several successful social media campaigns on platforms such as “Twitter”, “Birdbook”, “Emustugram”, and “Chirpchat”, communicating efficiently with the public and the press on Australia’s most sensitive topics.

Emuson Rosenbird-King- Head Legislator: Emuson is a newly elected legislator following his graduation from the College of Quilliam & Canary. A member of the college’s social organization, “Young Hen-ocrats”, Emuson knew he was destined to lead from a young age. Emuson is passionate about volunteering and advocating for Emus less fortunate than himself.

Reginald Feathersworth III- Emu Minister of Infrastructure and Development: Reginald was born on a train and was soon brought to the house of Reginald Feathersworth II, a prominent train company owner. Reginald (human) got mad at his family and bequeathed his entire remote mansion to Reginald (emu). The emu cabinet is now based at this mansion, with Feathersworth controlling the rudimentary emu train system as well as the emerging aeronautical industry. Feathersworth advocates for increased modernization and expansion of the emu train system, potentially linking it to the human trains.

Dr. Emuthony Fauci- Emu Minister of Health: Ever since the emus learned how they gained consciousness, one emu has been particularly concerned with their health and well-being: Dr. Emuthony Fauci. He dedicates his time to developing cures to diseases such as bird flu, and believes the Australian government does not do enough to subsidize research. Emuthony pioneered social distancing policies among emus, where they must stand at least 6 wing lengths apart if sick.

Sandra Day O'Clawner- Minister of Justice: Being the first female to serve on the prestigious Supreme Court, Sandra Day O'Clawner takes a very law-based approach to reconciling issues. She recognizes how policies might have a disproportionate effect on some groups, especially through gender. Mrs. O'Clawner has been described as "a mediator" between man and bird.

Ned Kelly- Emu Minister of Agriculture: A large prison outside Melbourne is what Ned Kelly calls home. Ned learned the life of Australian prisons, gaining both human and emu contacts within. He was recruited by Ivan to be Minister of Agriculture, specializing in crop thievery and orchestration of attacks. Ned is against human cooperation or compromise. In his spare time, he finds inspiration reading stories from other prominent criminals such as Birdie and Clyde.

Justin Trudeau- Emu Minister of Education: Justin is a confused goose, and was kept as a pet by the Canadian Ambassador to Australia. He escaped after a freak snowstorm near the Canadian embassy, eventually finding the emu cabinet. Coming from a family of politically- connected birds, Justin gained extensive knowledge of the government inner workings. He carries himself with dignity, and loves maple syrup and curling. Justin is in charge of public education, both primary and secondary. His aim is for emus to have higher literacy rates than humans. Justin's family is known for taking bribes from time to time.

Emu- Concerned Emu Citizen: After the establishment of the new coalition government, many citizens of the emu republic engaged in democracy with fever. Known only as "Emu", this concerned citizen was elected to the emu cabinet after a series of grassroots movements. Emu's views represent the population at large, and they have been said to "work for everyone".

Emuly Fleming- Cassowary Intelligence Officer: Emuly Fleming was raised by a group of Ex-SAS officers in Australia, trained in the most advanced espionage techniques. Fleming is highly suspicious of humans, and is known for her cunning control of emu intelligence and spies. She has connections with cassowaries, kangaroos, dingoes, and other Australian wildlife- a side effect of her spy training.

Australian Government (Humans)

Major GPW Meredith- Commander of 7th Artillery: Gwynydd Purves Wynne-Aubrey Meredith is strongly opposed to the emu farm raids, and is quite controversial among the emu community for his history in engaging in violent conflict. Still bitter from his loss, Major Meredith generally does not support the expansion of emu land rights. Due to his status, he is a unifying figure among fellow anti-emu citizens and farmers alike.

George Pearce- Australian Defense Minister: It is too bad that George Pearce was unable to “pierce” a significant number of emus when he sent out Major GPW Meredith on his initial operation (1st Emu War). Negative media pressure has started the decline of George’s political career. As a result, he is increasingly at odds with Major Meredith in favor of emu rights. In his recent campaign for re-election, Sir Pearce said on the trail, “if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em”.

Dominic Serventy- Head Scientist: Dominic “The Bird Whisperer” Serventy has written several books on ornithology and conservation. He is staunch in his belief of protecting the planet, not just being habitable for humans, but a safe place for all plants and animals. Dominic lives in a greenhouse and grows all the food he eats on his own property.

James Cook- Mysterious Farmer: James is neighbors with the Hemsworth’s and is a simple man. He owns a livestock farm in Western Australia, where he devotes most of his time, energy, and resources toward emus. His father’s farm, the one which he inherited, served as a crop farm throughout James’ entire childhood; however, James was forced to switch to emus after his crops began to mysteriously disappear...

Bill Hemsworth- Wheat Farmer: To Bill’s dismay, his family farm neighbors James Cooks’. Bill believes that James’ emus are responsible for the destruction of his crops, harvest after harvest after harvest. Consequently, Bill does not like emus and speaks out adamantly against NEST. His wheat has been struggling for years and he might have to file for bankruptcy soon.

Kylie Hemsworth- Housewife: Kylie tends to the Hemsworth home: she cooks, cleans, and listens to rants about “the darn emus” every single day. As much as she loves her husband, she is growing annoyed. Perhaps it is time for Kylie to take action in the human-emu political sphere...

Timothée Chalamu- Celebrity Actor: Born in 1895, Timothée (a human) is a local star that rose to fame by shooting movie remakes that incorporate emu castings. Hit films like *Emustellar* and *Call Me by Your Emu*, which have been described as “ahead of their time”, increased emu representation in popular culture. He is at the point in his career where he has a large enough following to be an engine for social change, but is unsure of his beliefs or how to move forward.

Humphrey Woolwhistle- Cricket Fanatic: “Land should be used not for humans, not for emus, but for cricket!” Humphrey once said. A member of the extreme Australian bourgeoisie, he is not yet convinced that land should be used to develop additional infrastructure. Mr. Woolwhistle dreams of a land with sprawling cricket fields, where he can swing away to his heart’s content. He is known to make large contributions to political campaigns on a whim, contingent only on if they will play cricket with him .

Clawdeen Monet- Impressionist Painter: Clawdeen labels herself as “an advocate through art”. A big fan of natural landscapes and architecture, her opinions on land disputes relate to restoring natural beauty. She dreams of one day moving to France to “paint water lilies or other such plants”. Monet currently lives in a small shack, painting far from the noise of civilization.

Average Joe- Unimpressive Human Citizen: Joe is about as bland as a stalk of Australian wheat. Quite the “centrist” voter, Joe strives for mediocrity and lives a predictable life of medium value. Little can be done to excite or bother Joe. Joe goes with the flow. If someone can convince him that the effects of the Emu War matter, maybe he would be destined for politics.

Stephanie Irwin- Minister of Interior: Stephanie spends her days studying the behavior of local animals, ranging everything from emus to kangaroos to dingoes. She is well-versed in seven different martial arts and hopes to film educational wildlife documentaries when she is older. It must be mentioned that Stephanie does not trust Emuly Fleming and her “connections”.

Emma Elliot- Chief Ambassador: Emma Elliot is a well-traveled diplomat, advocating globally for peace between man and bird at charity banquets, conferences, and with foreign governments. Due to her expansive traveling, Elliot understands the breadth of the situation, and sees man versus bird equality/equity to be the most pressing issue of modern-day Australia.

Featherbeard- Minister of Commerce: Featherbeard is the first non-human member of the Australian cabinet, rising quickly up the ranks and joining the Australian government after getting an economics degree from Oxford and serving in the Royal Australian Navy. Featherbeard is known for his disciplined attitude and composure in the cabinet- it takes a lot to ruffle his feathers! He is determined to grow the economy and strengthen the military, but has always been reluctant toward radical change due to the prejudice he’s faced as the first non-human member of the Australian cabinet.

Thanks for reading to the end, here’s some wheat for you

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