



Meeting Summary

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

Thursday 9 March 2023

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel was formed under the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018*. The panel provides independent advice to NPWS on key matters relating to the implementation of the *Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan* (the plan). The current panel membership was appointed by the Minister for Environment and Heritage in December 2022.

The panel met at Tumut, and six of the seven members were in attendance. The meeting was preceded by a site visit to northern Kosciuszko National Park on 8 March, which was attended by 5 members.

Site visit

Members visited areas of wild horse cultural heritage, European cultural heritage sites, threatened ecological communities, riparian, bog and fen areas negatively impacted by wild horses, and riparian areas unimpacted by wild horses. Members also viewed activities associated with wild horse passive trapping.

At the meeting, members discussed outcomes from the site visit and welcomed the opportunity the visit provided for informal discussion about wild horse management issues.

As an outcome from the site visit, members agreed that some areas of the park are preferentially favoured by wild horses, leading to unacceptable negative impact in those areas. Other areas are less frequented by wild horses. Due to the lack of community consensus about the number of wild horses in the park, members discussed that there is a need to move discussion towards managing wild horse impact, rather than population size. To achieve this, an indicator that is easily understood by the community and responds rapidly to changes in wild horse numbers is needed.

Members also discussed:

- The use of non-quantitative (visual) indicators to help illustrate wild horse impacts to the community
- Carcass management and the social perception issues it creates.

Members will consider the need for a site visit to the southern end of the park.

Commonwealth Government senate inquiry

The panel has been invited by the Commonwealth Government to provide a submission to its inquiry into the impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps. The panel will consider the nature of its contribution to the inquiry.

Engaging with members of the public

The panel agreed to an email address which will be made available on the Department's website such that members of the public can directly engage with the panel about relevant wild horse management issues. The email address will be publicly launched once members agree on the text for the website on terms of engagement.

The scalability of wild horse control

Members discussed the extent of control required to achieve the management plan's population targets, the challenges in achieving the plan's population targets and the constraints to available control methods. Members considered priority areas for control and the timing of control.

Next meeting

The panel plans to next meet in July. Extraordinary meetings will be held virtually between scheduled meetings as requested by members.