

Recognition of Country

We the members of the Community Advisory Panel acknowledge Kosciuszko National Park exists on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and we show our respect to elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to ensure Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically in our considerations.

Statement of Strategic Intent

The Community Advisory Panel (CAP) has prepared this report with the following strategic intent.

It has based much of its report on the advice of the Scientific Advisory Panel and endorses the strategies and studies as outlined in the Draft Scientific Advisory Panel Report.

The Heritage of the Kosciuszko Brumbies has been recognised by the assent of the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018.

The CAP believes that Brumbies will remain part of the Snowy Mountains and Kosciuszko National Park. The substance within this report aims to meet the spirit and intent of the Legislation within the defined scope.

The overarching strategies that inform the report are:

- To reduce any adverse impacts by the horse population on the natural and indigenous cultural heritage values of Kosciuszko National Park by managing the populations of horses using a range of effective and humane measures.
- Using science and scientific measurement tools and community participation to iteratively and actively measure the impacts and then implement mitigation measures to reduce or remove those adverse impacts. Some areas may need the removal of horses and some areas may see other measures as appropriate.
- To use this next phase to build trust by recommending a management and implementation structure that actively involve the Community and NPWS in a transparent manner using tools that can make the Brumby Heritage and Management process more viable.
- Designing different population groups of wild horses that can be sustainably managed within identified heritage areas of KNP and to manage these populations in areas where they have the least adverse impacts. Any population should be of a size that continues to be genetically viable and is unlikely to become extinct or die due to natural disasters or insufficient numbers. Noting that there are different horse groups in different zones within KNP that should co-exist with other needs
- Recognising the need for continuous scientific research and scientific population counts to inform KNP management.
- That a transitional target population size of approximately 3,000-4000 horses is sustainably achieved whilst impacts are assessed across the whole KNP heritage zones, however as populations increase beyond this level the CAP recognised that the rate of population growth makes management increasingly difficult. The CAP was divided on whether adopting a set number is required even if it is only a reference point (not a fixed number) whilst impacts are assessed and is to be revised as ongoing data becomes available.

Any plan needs to be subject to ongoing review and evaluation to retain its validity against these strategic principles.

The Committee also recognised that

- Recognising that the indigenous people maintained presence across the high country for tens of thousands of years before the current settlement by European and other peoples. Indigenous people today hold strong cultural and spiritual connections to the land and feel strongly about reconnection to their land.
- An acceptance that the community values the park for different reasons and in different ways and there are those that value wild horses as an integral part of their park experience.
- To recognise, acknowledge and respect that some families and individuals with long and enduring connections to the Snowy Mountains still want to retain their connections to the places and landscapes that form a major part of their own established history of which brumbies are still a large part of.
- To manage the identified heritage horses in their locations where wild horses have historically inhabited in sustainable and viable populations. This will recognise and protect not only their heritage value but equally also ensuring the protection of all natural and Indigenous cultural heritage values as required under NPWS Act 1974 and the KWHH Act 2018.
- Indigenous cultural heritage as a landscape and country value is also recognised as a heritage value that also needs protection from adverse impacts of wild horses and that there are opportunities in some cases for these to be convergent.
- To engage with community to accept the *'cultural significance of many places and activities that is not readily apparent and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and engagement, and be culturally appropriate'* (Australia ICOMOS 2013: Article 25) (Context Report 2015).

The whole community of NSW cherishes and all our grandchildren have a right to learn from, experience and appreciate Australia's only Alpine and Sub alpine ecosystem national park established to protect unique ecosystems, endangered flora and fauna and our indigenous 'snow people's' heritage places, objects and features of significance to Aboriginal people, and places of social and cultural value to the people of New South Wales (as per NPWS Act 1974).

- The National Parks and Wildlife Act, Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management are the existing binding arrangements for the National Parks and Wildlife Services management decisions for Kosciuszko National Park.
- Clean and reliable water supplies support the nation's largest river system flows and they originate in the alpine and sub alpine region.

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Scope of the Report

Limitations of this report

The scope of this report responds to the requirements and intent of the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act of 2018 (the Act or KWHHB) and the Hansard pursuant to the Act, NPWS may make additional requests of the panel and did so on 18 October 2019.

The Community Advisory Panel (CAP) is limited in its scope as noted below and has responded accordingly. It has not reported on *out of scope* issues, nor has it sought to make recommendations beyond this scope.

Scope

The object of this report is to comply with the requirements and intent of the Act. In addition NPWS have sought advice from the Committee to specific issues listed below.

Legislation

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Bill 2018 [NSW] - Part 2 Wild horse heritage management plan at Section 5

5 Preparation of draft wild horse heritage management plan

(1) The Chief Executive is to cause a draft wild horse heritage management plan to be prepared for Kosciuszko National Park (the draft plan).

(2) The draft plan is to:

- a) identify the heritage value of sustainable wild horse populations within identified parts of the park, and*
- b) set out how that heritage value will be protected while ensuring other environmental values of the park (including values identified in the plan of management for the park) are also maintained, and*
- c) take into account the object of this Act, and*
- d) take into account the objects of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and the matters that are required (by section 72AA of that Act) to be taken into consideration in the preparation of a plan of management, and*
- e) include any other matter prescribed by the regulations.*

(3) The Chief Executive is to seek the advice of the Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel constituted under Schedule 1 in the preparation of the draft plan.

Schedule 1

4 Functions of Panel

The functions of the Panel are:

- (a) to provide advice to the Minister or the Chief Executive (if requested to do so) on any matter relating to the identification of the heritage value of, and the management of, sustainable wild horse populations within Kosciuszko National Park, and
- (b) to provide advice to the Chief Executive on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan under Part 2 of this Act.

Functions of the Committee

From the Act

1. Provide advice to the Minister on identifying the heritage value of and the management of sustained wild horse populations within KNP; and
2. Advice on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan.

From the Hansard – this can only give definition to the meaning of terms within the Act

3. From the Hansard the CAP is to address
 - Research and Monitoring Program for the Brumby population
 - An accurate population count of the wild horses
 - Rules on how the Brumby populations are maintained and how they are managed
 - Note that the Hansard record expressly seeks to avoid Aerial Culling where possible and to shift away from lethal control.
 - Advise on strategies and implementation plans to deliver a sustainable heritage horse population.
 - Advise on direct involvement in shaping the management of brumbies within the national park
 - An increased support from Government for rehoming of wild horses.
 - Identify zones within the park where sustainable wild horse populations will be retained.

Other Matters raised by NPWS

4. Further requests from NPWS on 18 October

.....there are a few key points where advice is being sought from the CAP and Scientific Advisory Panel in development of a new wild horse heritage management plan.....

Largely a result of public submissions from the 2016 draft wild horse management plan and meeting the objectives of the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act, the following points are deemed by National Parks and Wildlife Service needing resolution in the new plan:

- *Acceptable control methods*
- *Defining a 'sustainable' population*
- *Progression of fertility control*
- *Community support and involvement in ongoing management*
- *Mechanisms to maximise rehoming*
- *Ongoing monitoring and research*

Provision of advice on NPWS internal policy and procedure related to control and management

5. Further requests from NPWS

Post January 2020 NPWS also sought guidance from the CAP on post-fire control of horses.

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Recommendations

The committee recommended that

- The CAP endorses the Draft SAP report as sighted and recommends that it should be a cornerstone to preparing a Horse Management Plan.
- The Scientific Advisory Panel Draft Report has informed the Community Advisory Panel and should be used to inform the Minister alongside this Committee's report.
- Any approved Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan should be regularly reviewed to incorporate learnings and adapt to new information.
- It is acknowledged that the 2008 Wild Horse management plan is the current operational management plan until the new plan is adopted.
- The CAP considered that much of the existing Draft 2016 Wild Horse Management Plan, as amended or amplified by those recommendations and changes as suggested by the CAP, should form part of a future plan.
 - It be noted that there is significant divergence in the committee about the acceptability that the population reduction to 600 and the use of shooting as a control method arising in the 2016 Wild Horse Management.
- The identification of the heritage value of wild horses is confirmed via the National Estate, existing legislation and Management Plans as well as by local oral histories. It is recommended that further assessments and Oral Histories, including those herein, from the region be formally recorded to support same.

Impacts as opposed to numbers

- The CAP resolved in accordance with the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) Report that the horses should be managed by their adverse impacts rather than by a strict number of animals.
- Until the scientific studies recommended in the SAP report have been completed a transitional *Sustainable Population* may be achieved by adopting an interim population of 3,000-4000 horses (as a reference number). The CAP recognised that as populations increase above this level it becomes increasingly difficult to control population growth.¹
- This number is only adopted so a sustainable population can be determined against impacts while rigorous scientific evaluation can be undertaken. A sustainable population may then be better determined in accordance with the Act. The population and its impacts should then be continually monitored and managed thereafter.
- Drone and other relevant technology should be continuously used to survey Horse populations to better understand and communicate real time information to the community to improve transparency and management. The Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) also recommended that drones may also be used to monitor specific horse impacts.

¹ The CAP was divided whether adopting a population number was required. It is only a reference point (not a fixed number) whilst impacts are assessed and can be revised as ongoing data becomes available

Locations

- Any management program needs to focus on the desired outcome of reducing adverse natural and cultural impacts. The measurable impacts will guide the advice on measures of success (ITRG Final Report 2016).
- The CAP has recommended exclusion zones as well as areas where horse populations should be actively managed aiming to achieve a zero population. The CAP has noted the advice from the Scientific Advisory Panel that horses can be managed and controlled via natural features in the landscape and this approach should be adopted in setting zones

The CAP recommends removing horses as far a practical from:

- Above the tree line in alpine areas and the Main Range from Thredbo to Mt Selwyn excluding a small area at Snowy Plains.
- The western side of Snowy Mountains Highway north of Bullocks Hill
- All areas east of the Pockets Saddle Rd including the Nungar Plain area
- All areas south of the Snowy Mountains Highway from Providence Portal to Kiandra.
- All areas south of the Kiandra to Cabramurra Road extending all the way to Thredbo excepting a portion of Snowy Plain (largely privately held).
- Areas north of the Alpine Way all the way north of the Jagungal Wilderness.
- Areas south of the Alpine Way to the south to Cascade Hut In a line north of Cascades Hut to Dead Horse Gap, Big Boggy area and north to Thredbo
- The Cooleman and Harris Plain karst areas to the extent that it is feasible.

The committee recommended zones to retain sustainable populations at:

- From Peppercorn to Long Plain, Seventeen Flat and Currango Plain south to Rocky Plain and bounded to the West by the Snowy Mountains Highway.
- Snowy Plain
- Eastern side of Snowy Mountains Highway in the northern end of the park
- The western side of Snowy Mountains Highway south of Bullocks Hill including Kiandra Plain
- The area south of an east-west transect at Cascade Hut including the Pilot and Byadbo Region (although there were two CAP members that felt strongly that horses should be excluded from this area)

The CAP recognised other heritage values in some of these areas. Some CAP members also noted the need to protect specific indigenous heritage in these areas.

- The CAP advises that in preparing a Heritage Management Plan it is important to retain populations in the historical areas of each typology of horse, including:
 - Kiandra Greys Arab bred descendants from the Franklin & Day families. The McDonald horses were army remounts also known as the Peppercorn or Franklin Taffy horses descendants of chestnut Suffolk Punch breed
 - The Currango and Long Plain Roans & Bays descendants from War God (by Carbine-1894)

- Byadbo & Pilot areas have one of the longest history in the mountains of fine horses with solid colours being descendants of the O'Rourke's Steeltrap (1815) breed.
- The CAP noted the advice from the Scientific Advisory Panel that horses can be managed and controlled via natural features in the landscape and this approach should be adopted in setting zones and adopting management tools to establish sustainable populations.
- The risk of a car accident or a person being injured by a wild horse should be mitigated on major roads (per SAP advice on methodologies).
- The NPWS and those involved in horse management learn from and be given the opportunity to observe the practices and learn from the Kiamanawa Muster in New Zealand. These learnings may be observed and incorporated in developing a KNP Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan

Horse Reduction Methodology

- It is recommended that in accordance with the statements in the Hansard that the Community Based Organisation (CBO) assists in the design and reviews the Rules on how the Wild horse populations are maintained and how they are managed and how the recommended plans implemented in accordance with this report.
- An implementation strategy be adopted that supports and assists NPWS manage the Heritage Horse Resource.
- The CAP recommends a broad-based strategy that explores using a multi-tiered approach encompassing:
 - Trials of new approaches such as population controls and management as tabled in meetings by some members
 - Fertility controls as outlined and attached in this report
 - Community assistance undertaking a large population muster in specific population locations in order to reduce adverse impacts e.g Currango Plain, Long Plain, Cascades, Tin Mines and Kiandra Plain. This may involve more extensive resources per below.
 - A CBO and NPWS working together to facilitate smaller expert groups to conduct smaller supplementary mustering and passive trapping into portable yards where control is needed but access is limited.
 - The committee noted that there is a very wide range of tools available to manage horses. Shooting was discussed the CAP was divided on its use.

The CAP also recognised the need to operate within animal ethics guidelines

Improving Trust and Transparency

- Establishing a Community Based Organisation that provides advisory support to NPWS on wild horse management and program design comprised of representatives of relevant stakeholder groups. This will permit the community to contribute to managing the horse populations and their heritage with NPWS. This could be a similar relationship to the Kosciusko Huts Association who are caretaker volunteers of most mountain huts.
- This body may assist with recording and collecting wild horse related information such as for DNA testing and could also assist in any further monitoring and studies. Local horse riders in the past have acted as search and rescue parties, monitoring or trails and guides for scientists including supplying riding horses.

- To build trust between NPWS and the Horse Riding Community in KNP, Horse Management Plans should continue to have community involvement and that consideration should also be given that this issue has a significant heritage dimension to this involvement.
- That the Community be consulted on the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Plan.

Other

- It is recommended that the Oral Histories be collected and recorded. This could be done via local historical societies or similar and kept with a structured Community Organisation to hold same.
- The CAP recommends that an ongoing scientific monitoring program be implemented to assist monitor and manage horse impacts and numbers.
- The CAP further recommends that a program of DNA testing be undertaken as part of any management plan in order that the typologies and histories are better understood for future management.
- It is recommended this report's recommendations informs the Wild Horse Management Plan in conjunction with the SAP Report.
- That NPWS explore other mitigation measures and land management tools to protect areas. This may be similar to past indigenous and agricultural land management as well as considering new management approaches.

Critical Success Factors

The CAP also considered that in addition to its recommendations that a number of other factors are critical to the success of implementing a Heritage Management Plan and ongoing management.

- That the evidence based approach adopted by the Scientific Advisory Panel form a cornerstone to the ongoing approach to the Heritage and Management Plans.
- Ownership and responsibility for issues via community participation and in some cases leadership is fundamental to successful horse management and control. This change reflects a significant shift in transparency and in NPWS's relationship with its community.

Issues that may arise in forming a plan may include for example;

- Market research on opportunities and barriers for rehoming brumbies.
- Obstacles to participation in assisting NPWS with activities should be reviewed to support community involvement, examples include but are not limited to;
 - NPWS assisting or providing insurance coverage or alternately imposing a risk waiver from any participant volunteers in horse removal activities.
 - NPWS can approve CBO members (or delegates) to take part in NPWS sanctioned horse management activities such as enter wilderness to manage, assess, monitor and count wild horses;
 - Removing obstacles (such as fines) for removing wild horses from the park if done in accordance with NPWS/CBO requirements. This may also require improving existing horse holding facilities and erect suitable round yards at horse campsites to support horse removal.
- Passive trapping techniques may lead to Sand Colic which is cruel and in effect extermination by stealth. It is recommended that leaching be managed to protect soils and animal welfare.
- The use of Helicopters, operated by experienced muster pilots, to muster in conjunction with other mustering activities is an opportunity to ensure that as many horses as possible are identified for counting and assessment.
- The implementation of any plan will require funding and procurement of key infrastructure, such as yards, resources and planning capacity, to ensure success.
- Some of the infrastructure in KNP is an inhibitor to any future plan as well as current NPWS Horse Management Activities. For example; access over the Murrumbidgee River at Long Plain for large vehicles is unsafe and may limit horse removal programs. In the same manner a procurement plan should consider issues in terms of the equipment needed to transport yards and infrastructure into areas.
- Permitting the CBO to organise volunteers to repair and manage horse trails in order that capture and remove of horses can be better facilitated.
- A CBO might also monitor other situations such as feral animal locations and noxious plants mapping. It may be said that if the people are given ownership and responsibility, they will protect the asset even more as a CBO's own members are likely to hold them to account.
- Removal or culling of brumbies from the landscape is likely be accepted by the community where a CBO has input to those decisions as opposed to perceived arbitrary decision making by government.

Background to this report

The Committee Comprised:

On 2 September 2019, the Minister for Energy and Environment appointed members to the Community Advisory Panel.

The panel met formally four times on:

- 1 November 2019
- 9 December 2019
- 14 February 2020
- 7 August 2020

The panel also formally met with the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel three times on:

- 14 February 2020
- 3 March 2020
- 12 June 2020

The Committee discussed:

- The requirements of the Committee under the Act
- The NPWS KNP 2006 Plan of Management
- The Australian Alps Horse Surveys
- Horse locations and activity within KNP
- Horse populations within KNP
- Other vectors impacting the environment within KNP including drought, pig, deer and rabbit impacts.
- Historical issues and practices with horses and grazing in the park
- Past and present relationship issues and how to address same.

The Committee members had varying views and were not always unanimous in their deliberations

The Committee noted that:

A minority of CAP members requested that their objection to the ongoing existence of horses in the national park be noted.

They also requested that to the extent that any of this report speaks to Aboriginal Heritage or other heritage they disagree with Indigenous heritage including wild horses.

Background to the Strategy and Recommendations

The heritage value of the Kosciuszko horses

The committee noted that wild horses have a heritage value that is recognised in the National Estate where it is noted that;

From the National Estate

Wild brumbies (horses) have been part of the NSW High Country for over 180 years and they are recognised as part of its cultural fabric and heritage.

The relationship between humans and horses is long-standing and horses continue to be held in high regard as domesticated animals that support human endeavours. While this value may be primarily connected to domesticated horses and other evidence of their important role, the history of KNP demonstrates that the releasing, re-capturing and harvesting of wild horses formed a part of pastoral activity in the High Country.

However, KNP (along with the adjoining conservation reserves in Victoria and the ACT) appears to offer the strongest evidence of specific narratives and values associated with High Country pastoral activities and transhumance, as well as with brumby running and brumbies in Australian mountain and alpine landscapes.(Context)

By the mid 1800s, Aboriginal people had become an important part of the region's pastoral industry, working as stockmen, station hands, house servants, and 'black trackers'. Many oral histories recollect stories of mustering brumbies from the Alps to be transported to the south coast then shipped to be used as cavalry horses; sometimes Aboriginal people would also trade horses for food (Wesson 1994).

The pastoral theme as expressed in Australia's highest mountains has strong social value, demonstrated in the very active continuation of and celebration of its traditions and the respect for its physical remains including its pastoral landscapes, wild horses, and stock routes. The Man from Snowy River is known in many households around Australia. In this sense the social value of the theme is of national importance. The most celebrated wild horses in the Australian pastoral tradition are those associated with Kosciuszko, which have to some extent become a national icon, along with their riders and musterers, as demonstrated in literature, film and the Man from Snowy River sequence which opened the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. (Jane Lennon 2002 Australian Heritage Commissioner)

The Minister's assessment (NHL 2005:17) noted that bush skills and horsemanship of the High Country community remain valued despite the absence of pastoral practices in the KNP. The Minister suggests that the continuation of social value is derived from the long history of pastoralism rather than the presence or absence of contemporary pastoral practices. The activity of 'brumby running' is a pastoral practice still valued by today's High Country community and associated with the KNP wild horse population; it is regarded by some as a desirable way to remove wild horses from KNP (Walter 2002).

Oral History of Snowy Mountain horses

During the period of the CAP, members spoke to local families and current and historical users of the Mountain that have ridden horses in the region and other stakeholders about the history of various horse types. In particular it was noted that there are numerous origins of the brumbies:

- Horses were bred for a type rather than bloodline however the criteria for working horses was that they were bred for “Blood, Bone and Constitution”. Blood being a reference to a Thoroughbred’s speed, Bone for stature and Constitution being for intelligence, utility of use and stamina in the mountains.
- Many of the horses in the northern part of the KNP were bred for remounts and the McDonald family introduced many mares that were joined from a thoroughbred stallion named “War God” who out of the famous New Zealand and Australian racehorse called *Carbine* (1885-1914). The McDonalds bred remounts for the army (Indian and Australian).
- The distinctive silver (or taffy) manes and tails found on many horses are a result of introduced bloodlines for working horses. This was a result of the Mc Donald’s subsequently introducing a Suffolk Punch Stallion after *War God* that introduced this distinctive colouring and heavy solid build. The McDonalds ran a variety of coloured horse including Blacks, Bays and others.
- The origin of the Kiandra Grey Brumbies is inexact but it is known that the Almac Cob Stud was established in 1899 by Frank D Brown and located near Kiandra township. It is known that by this time the area was already known for its wild horses during the Gold Rush in 1860. Some of the iconic Kiandra Greys continue to have Cob traits in confirmation.
- The Franklin family (of Miles Franklin fame via Brindabella) also ran livestock in the area and tended to have grey horses whose bloodlines were further mixed with a grey Arab Stallion owned by the Day family when they had interests at Kiandra.
- The grey bloodlines were also notable with other families and people recall the Brownlee family from Yarrangobilly (1880) introduced a grey stallion as well as Ruby Cochran and Bung Harris having grey horses some years later with Percheron blood running at Coolamine as well.
- There are numerous sources of the original Southern Brumbies. Some were released near the Victorian border at the death of their owner Davey O’Rourke in 1855. 70 assorted mares were set free with a black thoroughbred stallion called Peacock and a grey called Gander both sired by renowned (studbook) chestnut stallion of the time ‘Steeltrap’ 1815.
- Another source of the Southern horses in can be said to also originate from possibly hundreds of horses that were originally owned by Ben Boyd including a “Persian” (Arab) stallion. In 1849 Boyd left Australia and it is said that his horses were never mustered.
- The horses of Snowy Plains were also bred & released in the area for army remounts in the Boer War to WW1. The Grey Mare range nearby was named for a wild Grey Mare that could not be caught.

It is recommended that the Oral Histories be collected and recorded and verified. This may be done via local historical societies or similar and kept with a structured Community Organisation to hold same.

The CAP further recommends that a program of DNA testing be undertaken as part of any management plan in order that the typologies and histories are better understood for future management and this data be kept as part of a management database.

Management of Sustained Wild Horse Populations within KNP

The committee members recommend that the Management of wild horses within KNP should be managed via a comprehensive strategy that is actively managed and with Community involvement that works with NPWS.

A more comprehensive implementation plan is recommended for future development.

The CAP noted the SAP advise that horses prefer specific locations and tend to remain close to pads where they were born. This information has informed the CAP's recommendations.

Sustainable Population

- The Committee resolved that whilst the horses should be managed by their impacts rather than by a number of animals and a transitional *Sustainable Population* should be set at a reference number of not less than 3,000-4000 horses across KNP being split between north and south. This is an estimate of what the wild horse population was prior to the 2003 fires and before any Wild Horse plan of management was warranted for the entire park. This number is only so that a sustainable population can be determined whilst being measured against impacts whilst more rigorous scientific evaluation is being undertaken.
- The CAP noted the advice from the Scientific Advisory Panel that horses can be managed and controlled via natural features in the landscape and this approach should be adopted in setting zones and adopting management tools to establish sustainable populations.

The CAP recommends removing or reducing horses as far a practical from:

- Above the tree line and all Main Range alpine areas.
- The Big Boggy and areas north of Cascade Hut in the Pilot Wilderness.
- The western side of Snowy Mountains Highway north of Bullocks Hill
- Areas where horses are new incursions namely the area bounded in the west by Pockets Saddle Rd, in the North by the Murrumbidgee River, and the Snowy Mountains Highway to the south.
- All Areas North of the Alpine Way to south of the Kiandra to Khancoban Link Road and west of the Snowy Mountains Highway, excepting Snowy Plain.
- Reduce density of horses in the Coleman and Harris Plain karst areas to the extent that it is feasible.

The committee recommended zones to retain horses at:

- From Peppercorn to Long Plain, Seventeen Flat and Currango Plain south to Rocky Plain and bounded to the West by the Snowy Mountains Highway
- Snowy Plain
- Eastern side of Snowy Mountains Highway in the northern end of the park.
- The western side of Snowy Mountains Highway south of Bullocks Hill including Kiandra Plain
- The Pilot and Byadbo area south of the Cascades and the southern part of the park (although there were two CAP members that felt strongly that horses should be excluded from this area).

The CAP recognised other heritage values in some of these areas. Some CAP members also noted the need to protect specific indigenous heritage in these areas.

The committee advises that in preparing a Heritage Management Plan it is important to retain representative populations of each typology of horse including:

- Kiandra Greys
- The McDonald Silver and Taffy horses.
- The Currango and Long Plain Roans & Bays
- The Cascade Brumbies
- Byadbo & Pilot fine horses mountains of solid colour descended from Steeltrap.

The committee was also advised that a particularly unusual horse that is rarely seen in KNP is a “Franklin Pony” that is found west of Long Plain in very small numbers. The horse is fine boned and rises to around 12.2 HH



Horses on Long Plain

Conflicting Vectors and NPWS

The CAP requested that NPWS supply an overlay map of critical protected species locations in order to better understand impacts and zones of conflict in making recommendations. This was not supplied. NPWS relied on supplying the CAP with the 2016 Draft Wild Horse Management Plan. Without specific information on competing vectors it was difficult to prioritise other competing issues such as critically endangered species.

Population Management

Two of the CAP members requested that their objection to the ongoing existence of horses in the national park be noted.

Background

The CAP recommended that the most productive way to proceed is to use this next phase to build trust by recommending a management and implementation structure that actively involves the Community and NPWS in a transparent manner using tools that can make the Brumby Heritage and Management process more viable.

The intergenerational memory of families that were graziers, stockmen, gold fossickers and drovers that lived and worked in the High Country remains. One of the unintended outcome of more recent management practices is that many families of the Snowy River have a deep feeling of exclusion and feel the threat of loss over land that they feel deeply connected to and hence a deep distrust has developed over time.

Numbers

The horse population in 2014 was generally accepted as around 6,000.

- The population numbers divert attention to the number rather than to delivering solutions to reduce impacts.
- The 2020 Bushfires have impacted a significant portion of the KNP and will have impacted horse numbers. Approximately 25% of the horse habitat is thought to have been impacted but the exact impact is not known.
- The 2020 fires removed significant canopy meaning any horse population count should have a higher degree of confidence.
- It has divided the Community and, regardless of the current number, all panel members noted that the overall pre-fire population needs to be managed in the northern part of KNP. Post fires there is a need for a measured analysis and testing the solutions proposed in this and other reports.
- Many stakeholders that use these parts of the park have noted that the heavy regrowth in timbered areas are inaccessible to humans and horses due to density of the bush. This makes unseen horse density to be less likely.

Survey and ongoing management

The NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer advises that there are better drone and real-time based digital tools now available to the NSW Government than were available two years ago. This means that a better evidence base can be established as a means of progressing in a more transparent manner.



Regardless of the number the CAP noted that the need for increased management and balance is evident to horse riders and park visitors and trust needs to be built and this very high number has created further conflict and created a difficult nexus to break.

The Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) noted that the use of drones in surveys is valuable but may also be extended so that drones might also be used to monitor specific horse impacts.

Management of horse populations - Building trust with the community

The CAP spent considerable time on building trust issue and how to resolve it. The CAP agreed with NPWS that greater transparency can only be resolved via community involvement at all levels of the Wild Horse Management issue and particularly with those groups that have a longstanding interest in their cultural heritage associated with horses and grazing as well as working with the other relevant advisory groups.

The CAP agreed that a foundation issue is trust and transparency and proper coordination and liaison via a community based organisation (CBO) that is responsible for advising NPWS on wild horse management in KNP and works with NPWS to address the horse populations and their heritage should be considered.

It is recommended that in accordance with the requirement in the Hansard that this Community Organisation works with NPWS on design and reviews on how the wild horse populations are maintained and how they are managed and how the recommended plans implemented in accordance with this report.

This group could be named for the horse's heritage.

This body may also be responsible for advising on recording and collecting Wild Horse related information and for managing any off-park horse rehoming solutions.

Given the need to build trust and transparency, the CAP recommends that Horse Management Plans should continue to have this community involvement and given that this issue has a significant heritage dimension that this involvement be representative of those involved with horses in this region.

The recommendation above does not seek to diminish the role of NPWS in the management of KNP, rather to use existing and highly specialised skills available in the community to the benefit of the park and to reduce pressure on NPWS staff in a specific area. This allows NPWS to access skills from a specialised group that can work with NPWS to resolve and address issues.

Management of horse populations – operational issues

Horse Population Management is not simple. Greater evidence-based research and analysis is required and it is recommended both in terms of horse population surveys and DNA analysis of the stock.

The CAP recommends that coordinated community participation and in some cases leadership of solutions is fundamental to successful horse control.

Control Methods

The committee agreed that the following are an acceptable suite of control methods. This group felt that smaller horse musters combined with passive trapping, capture, and removal could be used as part of a wider set of control methods once the population was adequately managed through mustering.

The committee was divided on the use of:

- Brumby Running and Roping
- Lethal Control by aerial and ground shooting

The CAP noted that a large muster (draft) using the full spectrum of resources may prove effective where large interventions are needed. By way of example.

- The NZ style use of helicopters for pushing horses out of heavy timber onto open country is an excellent and safe way of bringing out horse populations to an area that they can be mustered. This may be particularly effective in remote or difficult to access areas such as steep country.
- The use of horse based teams then acting as drovers to direct large numbers of wild horses to yards
- The use of large stock yards that can be moved to hold, implement fertility controls and draft off horses for retention in the park as well as for removal.
- The use of Dart Guns in the field may be tested to administer similar controls.

This same principal can be replicated at smaller scales across KNP.

The CAP recognises that such activities require active planning to manage any program and to report on wild horse numbers.

Issues with control methods

Issues	Proposed solution
Some horse rehoming associations will not accept roped horses.	No change recommended.
Trapping concentrates horses into a specific location and remnant salt can cause sand colic when horses continue to ingest soils seeking traces of salt. Salted yards cause impacts from all animal use chasing salt.	Better ground preparation and alternate salt capture processes on trap sites. Salt placed on hanging plates off the ground. Move to new site annually to lessen impact.
A large muster requires many people and coordination with a subsequently large number of horses to rehome.	Any initial muster should focus on removing bachelor mobs to reduce large numbers and impacts may be most effective.

	<p>Holding facility required out of KNP to allow time to rehome horses.</p> <p>Muster participants may be permitted to take home horses.</p>
Fertility Controls	<p>The issue of control may be administered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a crush in yards where horses can be safely dosed. • Via a dart gun in the field
General uncertainty with population growth and controls	<p>Rigorous regular population surveys via Drone technology and community population surveys.</p> <p>Via a more structured muster, bachelor mobs can be removed and the family mobs (with mares and foals) can be released after being made infertile. This allows Bachelor Mobs to be aggressively removed as a priority.</p>

The CAP also considered fertility controls and thought that it could be part of a solution. The issue of safe administration was discussed. It was suggested that it could be used in the field or be incorporated into a mustering program to assist reduced horse population growth even while populations are being assessed

The CAP also noted that any plan should consider control methods within a reasonable risk framework.

It should be noted that areas of the high country are subject to volatile winds and Helicopter Mustering whilst dangerous, should be viewed through a lens of opportunity, animal ethics and safety. In specific areas where other risks arise such as Power Lines on Long Plain further safe work methods will need development.

Other risks when considering controls also exist such as old fence lines on the plains and in timbered areas. When Mustering, pre-operations reconnaissance will be required to find wire and remove same where possible.

The CAP recommends that NPWS and any CBO learn from and be given the opportunity to observe the practices in the Kiamanawa Muster in New Zealand

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3o4edlh71k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDxAH3cfiDI>

This above links to video that appear to indicate that an integrated use of horse riders with the helicopter may have a quieter and more humane result.

Horse Management and Human Interaction Risks

A further issue is that horses on the Snowy Mountains Highway and the Khancoban – Kiandra Link Road are becoming a higher risk. Horses are walking onto the road seeking salt from the winter snow management. A further factor is that humans are increasingly interacting with horses grazing near the roads.

The risk of a car accident or a person being injured by a stallion should be mitigated.

The CAP recommends that a number of passive and active solutions be explored by NPWS including;

- Using a “Virtual Fence” that repels animals at night (cost unknown). An example is <https://www.wildlifesafetysolutions.com.au/site-locations-mobile>
- A trial of a simple 3 strand fence placed a short distance back from the road in high risk areas along the eastern side of Snowy Mountains Highway to discourage horses from moving on to the highway and to the western side.
- By placing salt blocks at 200 metre centres to trees east and west of the Highway approximately 1500 metres from the road horses would be drawn away from the area. To the west this can be achieved along the Wallace Creek Fire Trail. This may result in some trees being rubbed but should prevent pigs from accessing salt. To the east is more open country and ridge lines can be followed. (est cost is less than \$10,000 per year based on 2 x 10 kg salt blocks at 200m centres placed by volunteers)
- Other land management methods be considered to reduce impacts such as placing a watering hole/dam on a hardened site rather than allowing horses using creeks. Dams have been previously installed for fire fighting purposes
- Hardening known creek crossing sites with local gravel or rock.
- Interpretive signage to discourage the public from feeding or getting too close to brumbies.

Advice on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan

The Committee discussed Wild Horse Management and noted that;

- Any plan to succeed it will need significant community involvement in all facets of any Brumby Management Plan.
- Management tools such as Drones that provide “species recognition” style counting of animals should be used to capture data on horses in real time and relay same to the community.
- There is a need to build trust between NPWS and community members. Transparency and participation are critical to future successful horse management. The use of real time data can assist with this.
- In managing wild horses there is a need to build a database of information to assist heritage horse understanding as well as management.
- Further research into oral histories is required as these people are now of an age where their knowledge is being lost.
- Horse groupings should be DNA tested and monitored to better understand heritage horse groups.
- The typologies and histories need to be better understood for future management.
- A Register and Bloodstock Plan should be prepared. These records should be kept as part of a reference database and a Breed Management Plan kept by the Community Based Organisation (CBO).
- The committee was divided on lethal control measures, particularly aerial shooting.
- All management tools and resources mentioned above should be considered in a comprehensive management and implementation plan.
- Any muster, trapping or capture activity should result in a balanced and sustainable population.
- Horses that are removed from the park should be rehomed to the fullest extent possible with government assistance noting the negative outcomes with the Bureau of Land Management in the USA.
- The advice from the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) was that the scope of drone usage may extend to monitor populations and specific horse impacts or travel.

The CAP noted that the BLM in the USA retains horses for extended periods and this model is uneconomic.

In preparing a Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan the CAP recommends

Many of the issues required in this section are addressed in preceding sections and are therefore not repeated. The CAP recommends that any Management Plan capture those aforementioned issues.

Any plan will need significant community involvement. Therefore the CBO as the liaison and advisory body for Wild Horse Management in the Kosciuszko National Park should work with NPWS on this issue.

As part of any muster, trapping or capture activity, the activity should result in a balanced and sustainable population. Mustered and captured horses might:

- i. Be released because of good genetics and conformation;
- ii. Receive fertility treatment when this is available and be released;
- iii. Be transported to an off-park holding facility for subsequent rehoming.

It is recommended that the NSW Government fund a marketing and rehoming program for horses so that they can be moved on. Such horses should be given to suitable persons who should be properly equipped and qualified to handle and re-home such horses.

There needs to be oversight on ethical issues and good animal husbandry protocols.

The adoption of a Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan (as recommended herein) should assist to define the structure and operating parameters for any Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plans in future. The CAP considered that much of the existing 2016 Wild Horse Management Plan as a thorough working document. The committee was divided on some areas of the 2016 plan. Two major objections within parts of the CAP and equally in public submissions was the population reduction to 600 and the use of ground shooting suggested in that plan.

The use of large structured musters that are supplemented by ad-hoc mustering, passive trapping, and capture and removal should form a cornerstone of any horse management plan.

Control of Wild Horse Heritage Management could be via a community group, working with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), in order to increase transparency.

A series of trials are recommended as part of any implementation plan.

The use of a muster with passive trapping, capture, and removal should remain as part of a wider set of control methods once the population was adequately managed.

Operational Issues as part of any Plan

The CAP recommends that as part of any strategy, the following may need to be addressed as part of a comprehensive long term solution.

- Management of any participants including but not limited to identity, safety, experience and skill of same. A community organisation may be better able to address this issue.
- The logistics required to move large numbers of horses from any given point will require planning and financial support.
- The best ways to mitigate environmental impacts of any horse control activity whilst still completing the horse management task.
- The challenges of rehoming large numbers of horses in a short period of time. This may require some form of off-park facility to allow time to manage horse populations and marketing.
- Ensuring the transparency of any process
- Supporting any program with public education and marketing of rehoming
- Holding facility retention times and resourcing of same
- Animal welfare during the process.
- The involvement of NPWS and an effective community based group to support the program's delivery.

Given the historical relationship with NPWS some parties may feel more comfortable working via a Community Organisation of their peers.

Mechanisms to maximise rehoming

A separate Brumby rehoming and marketing program should be developed separate to this report.

There are a small number of effective Brumby Rehoming organisations that are prepared to take horses and actively rehome them. The issue of rehoming horses should seek to complement and use this network. These groups seek to handle and train wild horses for rehoming and therefore form an integral part of the Brumby rehoming process.

At present there are limited off-park holding facilities for horses meaning that rehoming needs to occur in very short periods of time rather than a more gradual sale period. While the USA-BLM situation must be avoided at all costs, a more measured release timetable is important in being able to re-home horses over a more measured period of time.

The CAP therefore recommends that no funds from sale of horses be sought but instead to seek a government grant as an annuity to manage the issue and that wild horses be offered to Rehoming Groups that do the training and comply with Animal Ethics standards.

Where capture or muster participants seek to take a horse from the park then the CAP views this as one less impact to KNP at zero cost for rehoming and therefore recommends that NPWS adopt a similar approach.

Subject to advice, marketing of Snowy Brumbies can be implemented via a CBO and normal marketing used. This may be via a distinct brand or micro-chip. The CAP recognises that private sector marketing is more effective in this field and recommends that Brumby Rehoming groups be supported.

The monies received from Horse sales are less significant than other opportunities such as setting up a Snowy Brumby Register or working in with existing platforms to assist marketing.



Funding

The current cost of removing horses from KNP is high and intensive. A CAP discussion paper on a Wild Horse Heritage Management Strategy is an Attachment to this report.

Any funding components looking to the future should include:

- KNP based infrastructure for horse capture
- Holding horses outside of the KNP to allow time for horse to be disbursed over a calendar year
- Community Organisation and capture equipment including PPE
- Annual Operating Costs including marketing and rehoming
- A budget and marketing system that better supports re-homing of wild horses

A procurement plan and schedule of equipment and budgets for same should be prepared separately to confirm its veracity.

Definitions

Where **Brumbies, Heritage Horses, Wild Horses and Feral Horses** are referred to in this report or attachments, the words are to have the same meaning.

the Act means the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage; Act 24 of 2018

the Community or **community** means those persons considered to be a relevant stakeholders with a connection to KNP and who seek to achieve the sustainable management of Brumby populations within the KNP as is envisaged by this Act.

A **CBO** means a Community Based Organisation that is a body that is associated with wild horses and horse riding that is charged with working with NPWS on wild horse management in KNP. This body can work with NPWS to actively manage the horse populations, advise on population management tools and recommend plans to manage the heritage horses.

Traditional Snowy Mountains families is a generic term and means representatives of and family members who are or have lived in the Snowy Mountains region (or their nominees) and current and historical users of the Snowy Mountain's who have a connection with the area and/or have ridden horses in the region over an extended period of time and have demonstrated an interest in the preservation of the heritage of wild horses in the Kosciuszko National Park.

Impacts is a term that can mean positive or negative changes in an environment. It is also recognised that many factors or vectors may cause change. In this context it can also encompass changes or desired targets for landscape wide ecological assets, water quality, and reliability of flows together as well as impacts or changes to indigenous cultural heritage assets condition and trends in condition (same, better, worse condition) for different zones across Kosciuszko National Park.

Sustainable Population means designing populations that can be sustainably and viably managed within identified zones of KNP and that these populations can be controlled within these areas. It also means that any population should be of a size that it continues to be genetically viable and is unlikely to become extinct or die due to natural disasters or insufficient numbers.

Removing horses means that the removal or reduction of horses should be done to the extent that it is practical and feasible in order to mitigate impacts. Therefore a strict removal of horses or a reduction in numbers at all times aims first to mitigate impacts rather than being interpreted as an absolute direction.

Terminology as a means of avoiding future conflict and the deliberate provocation of emotional responses from the Community, NPWS remove the use of the word Feral Horses from future literature and refer to same as Heritage Horses, Wild Horses OR Brumbies. Equally the Community

will need to accept that whilst these horses are Brumbies as distinct from Mustangs and it is disrespectful of many peoples' cultural heritage, it remains a compromise.

Attachments

This includes information, submissions and recommendations made by CAP members

Attachment 1 – Community Consultation Framework discussion draft i.e. not endorsed.

The attached was prepared as a wide ranging discussion template to discuss how a Community Consultation may be structured. It is not intended as a specific recommendation.

Proposed Approach to Wild Horse Management for Community Consultation

The purpose of this document is to propose an approach to wild horse management in the Kosciuszko and to seek early feedback from the broad community and relevant stakeholders. This approach has been developed from the deliberations of the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel. It focuses on three key issues – horse numbers, horse locations, and horse removal methods. It also acknowledges that the issue wild horse management has been divisive in the community and recognises the historically poor engagement with this community.

Deliberations of the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel have held extensive discussions on the 2016 draft *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan*. These discussions aimed to understand, from a broad community perspective, the main issues and shortcomings in this Plan. Panel members agreed that there were three key shortcomings in the 2016 draft Plan:

1. **Horse Numbers:** There was near unanimous agreement that the horse population in the Park was unsustainably large. This is especially true in light of the recently announced 2019 survey. However, the magnitude of the required reduction in horse numbers was not clear and there was general agreement that the target in the 2016 draft plan is too drastic. After much discussion, an approach to reducing numbers was proposed. This has two elements: First, is to use environmental impact, rather than horse numbers, as an objective for population management. Second is to agree a rate of reduction in horse numbers over a time period (say, 3-5 years), rather than focusing on a fixed end-state population. Over this period, continuous monitoring of both impact and horse numbers would be conducted, building an understanding of horse population impact, and iteratively guiding future rates of population reduction.
2. **Horse Location:** It was generally agreed that there were parts of the park which should be considered horse heritage areas and others where the environment should be

horse-free and conserved as national park. The areas identified in the 2016 draft plan were generally considered to be valid, but it was recommended that these should be revisited and consulted with the community.

3. **Horse Reduction Methods:** There was considerable opposition on the panel to lethal population control measures, particularly aerial shooting. There were broad ranging discussions about other control methods and their efficacy. Broadly two key points were agreed. First that a range of measures need to be used to reduce population levels – there is no one answer – and all should be considered. This is especially true given the results of the 2019 survey that suggest there has been a considerable growth in the number of horses over the past five years. Second, that reduction in horse numbers should, as far as possible, be community led.

Many other key issues have been raised: The role of other wild species (deer for example) in habitat destruction; the physical state of horses – especially given the current drought and bush fires; the danger some horses bring when in close proximity to human habitation; and the time needed for the environment to recover from impacts of a too-large population. The Advisory Panel are also well aware of the urgent need to agree a plan and set achievable objectives to address the overall issue of wild horse management. This is the purpose of this proposal and consultation.

Proposed Approach to Wild Horse Management

The proposed approach has four main elements, the three described above – horse numbers, horse location and population reduction methods, alongside a proposal to better engage the community in on-going wild horse management.

1. Horse Numbers

It is clear to the Advisory Panel that the numbers of horses in the Kosciuszko National Park has reached unsustainable levels. Figure 1 below plots all horse surveys since 2001.

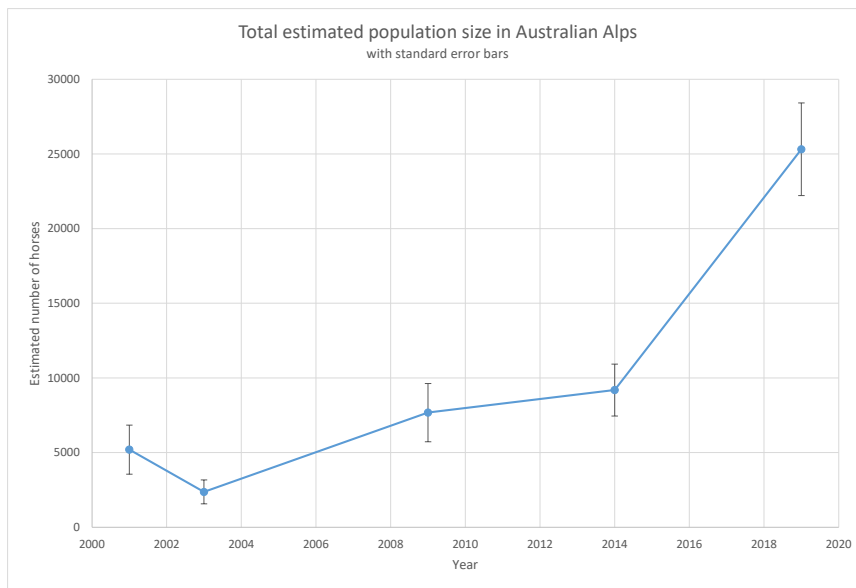


Figure 1: Summary of all past horse survey results. Important Note – the 2014 and 2019 surveys were conducted using similar methodology. The 2001, 2003 and 2009 surveys were conducted using different methods and so are not directly comparable.

However, it is recognised that there is no consensus in the community on what is a manageable and sustainable horse population for the Kosciuszko. We therefore do not propose to fix a number for the final population. Rather, we propose to determine a rate of decrease of the horse population over some time period. The resulting reduction in horse population and the impact this has on the environment will be continuously monitored. The rate of decrease of horse population will be adjusted as needed in consultation with the community – rather than fixing a final population number. Figure 2 illustrates this proposal.

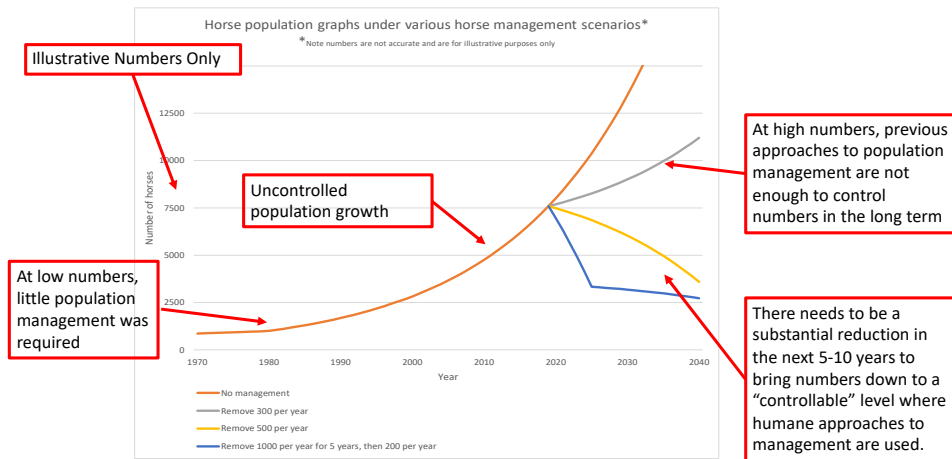


Figure 2: Illustration of the approach taken to determining rate of reduction in wild horse numbers. Note, numbers are illustrative only.

In more detail:

1. An initial rate of decrease in horse population will be determined. Based on the most recent 2019 survey results this will need to be between 2,000-3,000 per year. This rate will be determined in consultation with the community and the Science Advisory Panel. It will be reviewed annually based on the results of 2 and 3 below.
2. Measures of environmental impact will be developed. Impact statements and management objectives need to be developed for each management area. The current environmental condition needs to be recorded and addressed as part of any baseline. It is recognised that it will take time for reduction in horse numbers to be felt in environmental impacts and so some forward-looking measures will be required.
3. A methodology for continuous monitoring of horse numbers will be developed. This is likely to use drones and automatic counting methods rather than manned helicopters and human counters (Figure 3). The same methodology could be used to count other invasive species (deer, for example) and to provide data for assessing impact. There is an opportunity for providing this data in near real-time to the community.

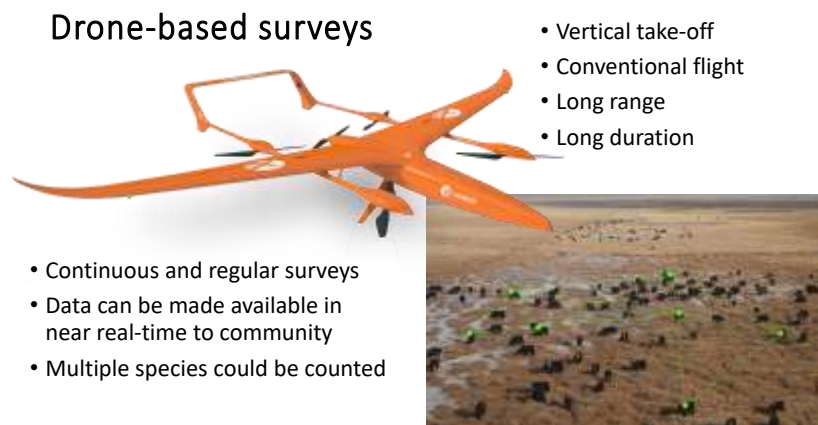


Figure 3: Illustration of potential drone survey system.

2. Horse Locations

There is a need to identify parts of the park which should be considered horse heritage areas and others where the environment should be horse-free and conserved as national park. The areas identified in the 2016 draft plan were generally considered to be valid (Figure 4), but we are consulting with the community to help identify heritage areas where populations of horses can be retained.

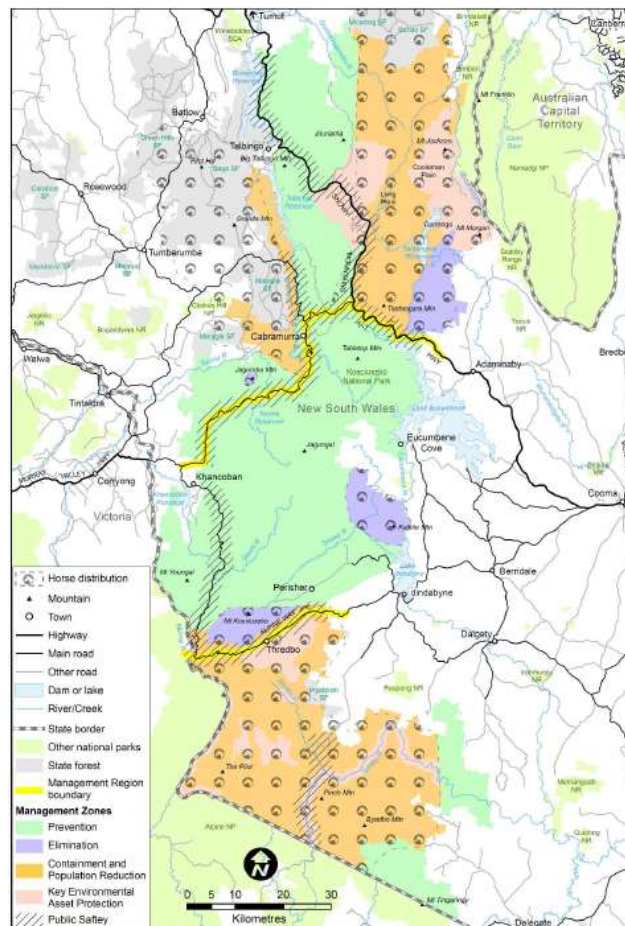


Figure 4: Wild Horse Management Zones – From 2016 Draft Wild Horse Management Plan

The panel generally noted that there were a number of areas where horses were not previously present. The panel discussed removing horses from:

- Above the tree line in alpine areas.
- Big Boggy
- Cooleman Plain karst areas
- Western side of Snowy Mountains Highway in the northern end of the park
- Areas of new incursions, including Nungar Plain and south of the dam on the Murrumbidgee River

The panel noted suggestions to retain horses at:

- Long Plain and Currango Plain
- Snowy Plain

- Eastern side of Snowy Mountains Highway in the northern end of the park
- Kiandra
- Pilot / Cascades and the southern part of the park
- Old pastoral leases and historical stock routes.

NPWS noted that the areas for retention and elimination generally reflect the 2016 draft plan management areas. NPWS stated there may be issues with retaining horses in the Snowy Plains area, given it is a feeder area into the Jagungal wilderness, which is currently horse-free.

3. Horse Reduction Methods:

There was considerable opposition on the panel to lethal population control measures, particularly aerial shooting and a number of other control methods proposed in the 2016 draft horse management plan. The Advisory Panel held broad ranging discussions about other control methods and their efficacy based on the 2016 plan and on supporting published scientific evidence.

It was agreed that a range of measures need to be used to reduce population levels – there is no one answer – and all should be considered. This is especially true given the results of the 2019 survey that suggest there has been a considerable growth in the number of horses over the past five years – regardless of the actual total number. It was also agreed that reduction in horse numbers should, as far as possible, be community led.

The proposed solution tabled here is that there would be a periodic muster, undertaken by the community in partnership with NPWS, to remove an agreed number of horses from protected areas. The muster would occur two to three times per year by a structured group from the community. This operation would need to remove approximately 1,000 horses at each time (2,000-3,000 annually). These removals would need to be complemented by incorporating a range of horse control methodologies to be determined. Mustered horses might:

- a. receive fertility treatment and released; or
- b. be transported to an offpark holding facility for subsequent rehoming. The facility would be initially funded by the NSW Government. Such a facility could hold horses for a few months off-park until they can be moved on.

The use of a large structured muster could be supplemented by ad-hoc mustering, passive trapping, and some brumby running and removal. Control could be coordinated to a community group, working with NPWS, in order to increase transparency. A trial muster is proposed for April 2020. To quote from the 2016 draft management report: “In time, once the wild horse population has been sufficiently reduced, it is hoped that fertility control or small number removals for domestication will be the primary population control methods. Fertility control will only be effective once the existing population size and density is significantly reduced. Once overall horse populations are reduced within the park, the overall numbers required to be removed each year will better match domestication demand and capacity.”

The Advisory Panel intends to consult with the community on this proposed solution to horse management and removal – including numbers and methods of management and removal.

Advisory Panel members discussed how, as part of a comprehensive long-term solution the following may need to be addressed.

- Management of any participants including but not limited to OH&S and safety, experience and skills.
- The involvement and role of NPWS to support an effective community-based group to deliver the mustering program.
- The logistics required to move large numbers of horses from any given point
- The best ways to mitigate environmental impacts of any horse control activity whilst still completing the task.
- The challenges of rehoming large numbers of horses in a short period of time and alternative approach that might be required.
- Ensuring transparency of any process and supporting any program with public education and marketing of rehoming
- Resourcing the holding facility retention times, especially to avoid creating situations similar to the BLM in the United States.
- Understanding a fair balance between animal welfare and respect for the environment.

4. Improving Trust and Transparency:

The poor track record of building trust and engagement with the community was discussed at length by the Advisory Panel. There is a need to build a partnership with the broader community and stakeholder group which encourages transparency of data, clarity of purpose and partnership in problem solving:

- The proposal aims to provide much more transparency of data and decisions to the community. This will start by using improved ways to keep the community up-to-date and informed. This will include the use of regular drone surveys of regional horse numbers being made available (possibly through a mobile phone application) in near real time.
- The proposal aims to actively engage the community in decision making. In particular, around the rate of reduction of the horse population; methods of impact assessment; the geographic areas that are to be considered horse heritage areas and other areas where the environment should be horse-free and conserved as national park; and the methods to be applied to removing horses from management zones in the national park/
- Finally, the proposal aims to build a partnership between the community and NPWS in reducing and managing horse numbers.

The Community Advisory Panel would welcome additional suggestions from the broader community on building trust and transparency.

Attachment 2 – Meeting Summaries



NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Meeting Summary

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

Friday 1 November 2019

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel was formed under the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 to provide advice on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan.

The panel met at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) office in Queanbeyan for its inaugural meeting.

NPWS led a discussion on the governance of the panel in accordance with the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 (the Act) and member's responsibilities under NPWS codes of conduct.

A new wild horse heritage management plan

The panel reviewed the requirements for a new plan under the Act. The Minister for Energy and Environment requires that the final plan is to be completed by 1 May 2020. To provide enough time for consultation, this means the draft plan will need to be completed by February 2020. The panel will consider at its next meeting whether this timeframe is achievable for a new draft plan.

Horse distribution and abundance

The methodology and results of the 2014 Australian Alps wild horse aerial survey were discussed. The panel requested the results of the 2019 version of the survey from NPWS to help inform population growth trends and therefore the extent of control required over the next five years. The panel discussed their general observations of increasing population distribution and abundance and the possible causes for this change including lack of effective control.

Member's shared their initial thoughts on several issues including:

Defining a sustainable population of wild horses in the park

Content of a new management plan

Management techniques to limit the spread of horses throughout the park.

The 2016 draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan

NPWS provided information on the 2016 draft plan's content, recommendations and supporting documents. The panel decided to review the 2016 draft plan and assess its perceived limitations. The panel will then determine whether the 2016 draft plan's deficiencies can be adequately rectified to create a new wild horse heritage management plan from it.

Relationship with the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel

The panel are keen to meet with the Scientific Advisory Panel and will work on questions for the Scientific Advisory Panel to consider. The panel has asked the following questions of the Scientific Advisory Panel:

- What methodology can be used for measuring the environmental impact of horses?
- Consider the use of fencing, including virtual fencing, as a management technique
- Can drones be utilised in population monitoring or mustering?

The panel will consider the requirement for a site visit at its next meeting.

Next meeting

10 am – 2 pm Monday 9 December 2019 at Queanbeyan.

Meeting Summary

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

Monday 9 December 2019

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel was formed under the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* to provide advice on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan.

The panel met at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) office in Queanbeyan for its second meeting.

2019 Australian Alps wild horse aerial survey

At the time of the meeting, the survey results were still undergoing a review by external experts. Therefore, the results were not yet available from the Australian Alps National Parks Cooperative Management Program (AANP).

The panel discussed the use of drones in population monitoring. The technology may enable more regular monitoring and make results available to the community in real-time. If the methodology of the AANP survey was retained, results may be comparable over time.

The 2016 draft *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan*

The panel discussed improvements to the 2016 draft *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan*. The panel generally agreed that there were four key areas that warranted revision:

1. The extent of population control should be based on impacts to the environment, not population numbers.

An outcomes statement would need to define the environmental state that was trying to be achieved as a result of wild horse management. This would then define the level of control required. The outcome statement would be specific to each management area and so the level of population control needed in each area would also differ. The level of control required may be best expressed as a level of acceptable environmental impact (that may involve a population reduction), rather than a specific number, and would be regularly revised against management outcomes. An environmental monitoring program that correlates the impact of horse numbers to that management area would be required.

2. Need to identify heritage areas where populations of horses can be retained.

The panel agreed that there are conservation and heritage reasons for reducing or eliminating horses in some areas of the park. There was general support for the management areas defined in the 2016 draft plan, with some minor modifications. The panel

generally agreed that horses should be removed from areas west of the Snowy Mountains Highway in the northern end of the park; alpine areas above the tree line; the Cooleman Plain karst area and, areas of recent colonisation eg. Nungar Plain. The panel suggested retaining horses in areas where there was a historical presence eg. Cascades to Pilot and the southern parts of the park and Snowy Plain.

3. Methodology for reducing the population.

Most of the panel did not support lethal control measures, particularly aerial shooting. The panel discussed a proposal for the community to work with NPWS to improve the transparency of management. A 'high country muster', undertaken by traditional families, was discussed. The muster may occur two to three times per year and may remove significant horse numbers each year. Mustered horses could either receive fertility control and be released; or be transported to an offpark holding facility. The muster could be supplemented by a variety of control methods including ad-hoc mustering, passive trapping; and some brumby running and removal. A trial muster was recommended before any implementation.

As part of the discussion the panel discussed how a combination of methodologies (mustering and trapping), with supplemental interventions such as fertility control, as well as continual population monitoring, could be combined to deliver major immediate reductions and then deliver a more measured population reduction. The panel discussed the need for a variety management controls not limited to risk, safety and veterinary oversight.

4. Improving trust and transparency amongst the community.

Ongoing engagement and involvement of the community in management and control is required. This includes keeping the community up-to-date with information. The successful implementation of points 1 to 3 above will be part of demonstrating transparency, improving trust and promoting respectful and productive conversations amongst the community on wild horse management.

Questions were directed to the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel on the four key areas of improvement of the 2016 draft plan.

Next meeting

Monday 13 January 2020 at Queanbeyan. This includes a joint meeting with Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel.

MEETING SUMMARY

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

Friday 14 February 2020

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel was formed under the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* to provide advice on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan.

The panel met at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) office in Queanbeyan for its third meeting.

Revised timeframe for a new wild horse heritage management plan

The Minister for Energy and Environment has granted an additional month for completion of the new wild horse heritage management plan. Given there may be only one more meeting remaining until a draft plan is produced, the panel will work on drafting their final recommendations to the Minister prior to their next meeting.

Combined meeting with the Scientific Advisory Panel

The panel met the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) earlier in the day for a joint meeting. All members were positive about the proceedings of the meeting and requested additional combined meetings of the panels.

Post-fire emergency response

The panel discussed the combined Community Advisory Panel (CAP) and SAP meeting. The SAP had presented their post-fire recovery advice that targeted removal of wild horses in three management areas around Nungar, Kiandra and Coleman Plains. As the newest horse population, only Nungar Plain was recommended by the SAP for removal of all horses from the area. The SAP recommended population reduction in the other two management areas. It was discussed how a target number of horses for removal should be based on post-fire population surveys and environmental impact monitoring over time.

NPWS informed the panel that approximately 25 % of the known wild horse distribution area was impacted during the summer 2019/20 bushfires. The panel generally supported the main elements of the three priority management areas proposed by the SAP and acknowledged it was the first step in a longer-term management program. The panel made a number of comments about the

history of horses in those locations and the practicalities of undertaking control in some areas given the lack of natural barriers.

It was noted that SAP members may be unfamiliar with the natural terrain and horse behaviours in those areas.

The CAP noted that the SAP emphasis should be on the total area being targeted, not population numbers for removal. For each management area, clarity was needed around whether areas are being designated for elimination or reduction of the existing population. There was general agreement that management areas can be similar to the 2016 draft *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan* although refinement is needed in some areas due to topography and horse behaviour. Further work was required on where to retain horses in the park. The panel agreed that population and environmental impact monitoring should occur over time and in each management area.

The panel discussed:

- The need to increase rehoming.

- Having a number of control methods available, depending on the management area

- Work required to identify additional areas where horses should be reduced or eliminated.

The panel posed several questions to the SAP for their advice:

- definitive boundaries for the three priority management areas for post-fire recovery

- definitive advice and detail on methods of control recommended for post-fire recovery

- identification of future management areas

- advice on numbers that will be required to maintain viable horse populations in management areas where horses are to be retained

- advice on whether the existing population estimates can be extrapolated to smaller areas

- advice on whether a community-run population survey conducted on horseback could be designed so that it gave a statistically rigorous estimate.

Next meeting

Friday 3 April 2020 at Queanbeyan. This includes a joint meeting with Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel.

Meeting Summary

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

Friday 7 August 2020

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel was formed under the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* to provide advice on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan.

Some panel members met at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) office in Queanbeyan, while the majority attended online for its fourth meeting. The Scientific Advisory Panel Chair and Deputy Chair were guests at the meeting.

Scientific Advisory Panel final draft report

All members (except one) had reviewed the SAP's final draft report to the Minister for Energy and Environment with advice on the new wild horse heritage management plan. Each member shared their views of the report. The panel formally endorsed the report, overall finding its advice to be well-balanced.

The SAP will now finalise its report based on comments from the CAP.

Community Advisory Panel draft report

The panel reviewed key sections of their draft report to the Minister on the new wild horse heritage management plan, with all members providing comment on changes required. Further comment will be provided by members after the meeting on the remaining sections of the report. The report will then be finalised and distributed to members.

General business

Upon finalisation of the CAP's report, there may be no requirement for further CAP meetings.

Panel membership expires in September 2020, but NPWS is recommending member's terms are extended beyond this date.

Attachment 3 – Submission from CAP Members

Date: 13/08/2020

Final Response on Draft Community Advisory Panel Recommendations Report to the NSW Minister for Environment.

To: Chair of the NSW Wild Horse Heritage Act Community Advisory Panel:

Director, Southern Ranges Branch, NPWS:

From: Members of the Heritage Horse Act Community Advisory Panel

We submit the following comments and the attached for consideration by the Chair of the Community Advisory Panel for inclusion or to make changes to the draft Community Advisory Panel report to the NSW Minister for Environment

Background

The Community Advisory Panel acknowledges that:

1. The National Parks and Wildlife Act, Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management and associated approved amendments are the relevant legally binding arrangement for National Parks and Wildlife Services management decisions for Kosciuszko National Park, as approved by NSW Ministerial and Parliamentary processes. These provide for the protection and management of the area's natural and cultural heritage and ecosystem services.
2. The indigenous people maintained a presence across the high country for tens of thousands of years before the current settlement by European and other peoples. Local Aboriginal Land Councils refer to our spiritual connections to Country, ceremonies, battles, burials, birthing places, hunting places. Our culture cannot be separated from the land. Its very formation being our creation story. "The landscape is our story and its use are our culture" Note 2.
3. Clean and reliable water supplies underpinning the nation's largest river system flows and Snowy Hydro Limited business model originate in the alpine and sub alpine region.
4. The whole community of NSW cherishes and all our grandchildren have a right to learn from, experience and appreciate Australia's only Alpine and Sub alpine ecosystem national park established to protect unique ecosystems, endangered flora and fauna and our indigenous 'snow people's' cultural heritage.

Kosciuszko Plan of Management

In respecting the indigenous presence and cultural history of Kosciuszko National Park and the current NPWS Plan of Management, we remind the Minister that for indigenous people of the high country:

"Our Mother binds us to our laws/lores". "This country is our Mother". "We - the Aboriginal² People of the Mountains - belong to this country". "She is our beginning, giving us our identity and culture. She brings us together and takes us away".

"The Mountains are very old and an ongoing life force that strengthens the ancestral link of our people". "We have a living, spiritual connection with the mountains". "We retain family stories and

² Aboriginal is defined in this statement as Aboriginal people who are descendants of the traditional owners of this country.

memories of the mountains, which makes them spiritually and culturally significant to us”. “Our traditional knowledge and cultural practices still exist and need to be maintained and protected”.

“Living by natural cycles, the land provides our people with life, ceremony, family lore/law, and resources, such as tools, plant medicine, plant food, waters, fish, animals and insects e.g. the Bogong moth, while the melting of the snow gives life to the many creeks and rivers that flow out of the mountains”. “There are places of spiritual and physical significance to our people, and we are committed to working in partnership with others to protect, maintain and manage these places”.

Indigenous Land Council Recommendations on Wild Horse Control in Kosciuszko National Park

a. Twofold Aboriginal Corporation

“The brumbies are relics of colonisation. It is apparent that there is tremendous affection for the heritage and lifestyle in the high country that they represent in the general population. The reality is that a romanticisation of these animals prevails over living Aboriginal culture and heritage and that parts of this landscape are so fragile and of such cultural significance to Indigenous people that they are in danger of being lost forever, if indeed that hasn’t already happened, by the unrestrained activity of an introduced species that is now become feral”³.

b. Bega Local Aboriginal Land Council.

“The Bega Aboriginal Area Land Council holds the view that the feral horses in the SMR negatively impact and threaten Indigenous heritage and cultural values, particularly when horse numbers are left to increase largely unchecked. These values developed over millennia must not be lost through the trampling of feral horses and the destruction of precious life-giving waterways must stop”. “The Snowy Mountain Region (SMR) environment contains many endangered species and it is being disregarded in favour of an introduced animal that evidence shows is destructive to the SMR environment. Indigenous heritage and culture are of greater significance than the plague of ever-increasing feral horses that are decimating significant cultural landscapes in the SMR”⁴.

c. Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council.

“Indigenous people have lived in the Snowy Mountains for thousands of years. The mountains are unique and particularly important to Aboriginal Heritage and Culture. There is no other place like them on earth. The environment contains the only representation of many endangered species and it is being disregarded. Our culture is also unique because of the environment and the dreaming had has been given to us. Both are in danger of extinction and both must be protected. Feral horses are destroying our heritage and erasing our culture”.
“We ask that we are respected and that the culling of feral horses begins immediately, and that culling is carried out to the degree that it is effective and results in the preservation Indigenous places. The ongoing future management of the mountains must protect our heritage and culture, so that we are able to pass on our stories to all Australians”⁵.

³ A/CEO Twofold Aboriginal Corporation, 5th June 2020.

⁴ CEO Bega Local Aboriginal Land Council June 2020.

⁵ Chair Board, Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council June 2020,

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Protection

The first law protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW was the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967*, which commenced with amendments in 1970. It principally protected pre-1788 remains of the Aboriginal occupation of NSW (such as rock art, scarred trees, shell middens, and burial sites – termed ‘relics’). In 1974, a new NPW Act was made. It protected places of special significance to Aboriginal culture where no ‘relics’, now called Aboriginal ‘objects’ in the Act, may not be present (e.g. sacred sites, story places). Such places could be protected by the Minister declaring them Aboriginal Places (Aboriginal Places are further discussed under Section 8 of this document). The main law for protecting Aboriginal heritage in NSW continues to be the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

The NPW Act can be used to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in a few ways. Firstly, all Aboriginal objects are protected under this law.

Secondly, places of importance to Aboriginal individuals and communities can be given additional legal protection by:

- declaration of new Aboriginal Places,
- reservation and management as Aboriginal Areas and national parks,
- formal agreements on the joint management of national parks,
- formal agreements with landowners (Voluntary Conservation Agreements).

“There are many sites throughout the region that demonstrate the historical and ongoing connection of Aboriginal people to the landscape”. “This includes both archaeological sites and places associated with traditional stories and teachings”. “Horses can cause direct or indirect damage to sites through grazing and trampling vegetation, and damaging soils”. “Damage to Aboriginal sites in the region has been documented where wild horses are known to occur in moderate to high densities (NSW Government 2016a; Parks Victoria 2018)”.

In March 2019, Koori Elders and Clans gathered in the Ngarigo high country, on the Murrumbidgee River in Kosciuszko NP. This meeting was the first of its kind in 150 years. Men and women performed the Narjong Healing Ceremony with the aim of healing the waterways and Country and reflecting on culture and heritage. Following the ceremony, Richard Swain, a Wiradjuri man and one of the organisers of the healing ceremony, noted *“We took people to the actual spring where the mother gives birth to the Murrumbidgee. It has been absolutely desecrated by wild horses. It is not until someone goes that they feel that—it is one of those things people must see. It is really emotional; it is hard to comprehend”* (NIT 2019).

Additionally, ***The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*** that has been endorsed by the Australian Government contains clauses for the protection of indigenous people’s cultural heritage in all its forms.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

Wild Horse Control Methods Decision Pathway

The 2011 edition of the Model for assessing the relative humaneness of vertebrate pest animal control methods (Sharp & Saunders 2011) provides a practical, general means of the assessment of animal welfare outcomes for wild horse control that can be applied to any control method. The goal of humaneness assessment is to evaluate

the impact of a control method on individual animals and to use this assessment to determine which methods are, more or less, humane compared to other methods. The assessment of overall welfare impact is based on five domains:

1. Thirst/hunger/malnutrition
2. Environmental challenge
3. Injury/disease/functional impairment
4. Behavioural/interactive restriction
5. Anxiety/fear/pain/distress.

Best practice pest animal control methods as defined by standard operating procedures describe the requirements of implementing a specific method in terms of humaneness, target specificity, efficacy and cost effectiveness, as well as operator health and safety (see Sharp 2011a, b, c, d). When assessing the impact of a control method in each of the domains a key assumption is that the method is being carried out according to 'best practice'. An assessment using the five domains approach can be carried out for all control methods, while a second assessment can be carried out for lethal control methods based on the level and duration of suffering. Where multiple stages are used for control, the impact for each stage can be measured.

Wild horse history as pests and the Waler myth

The history of these Kosciuszko National Park 'wild horses' is well documented and does not support the heritage values or the breeding qualities supported by the pro horse protection groups.

Historical Reports on Wild Horse Impacts and Control

Portions of Western New South Wales and Southern Queensland were some years ago, almost devastated by brumbies; and all sorts of devices were resorted to by squatters to rid themselves of the pests. Many sheep-owners fenced in their waterholes with barbed wire in such way that nothing larger than a sheep could enter to drink. In this manner, tens of thousands of horses perished. Other holders destroyed Immense numbers by means of strong trap yards built in scrubs. Once entrapped, trapped, the horses were shot; but it being laborious onerous work to clear the yard of the dead animals, an easier and less expensive plan was resorted to. A crush—that is, two long lines of parallel fences just wide enough for one horse to pass at a time, and with wings attached—was erected; ed; the brumbies were driven into this long lane, at the end of which stood an expert armed with a keen knife. As each animal passed, its jugular vein was severed, and the bleeding creature tore madly away into its native scrub, only to stagger and die from loss of blood, within half a mile of the trap. This device, though barbarous, did away with the difficulty of removing carcasses, and became the universal method of destruction⁶.

Historically, these feral horses were not regarded as an asset and were not considered to be of heritage value. The myth that these feral horses are of heritage value because of their role as Lighthorses is false. The facts⁷ are 'The term 'Waler' has led many to the empathic belief that these horses were a type evolved and bred with the express purpose of supplying a warhorse for Military use. It is not so—they were Australian Stock horses who happened to be around and available in time of war for military use by mounted troops.' 'The term 'Waler' was used to designate all of our horses that went to war, regardless of whether they came from Cape York Peninsula, Western Australia or anywhere else in between.

⁶ <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/234034151?q=%28scourge+brumby%29+&l-availability=y&l-australian=y&c=article&versionId=258777257>

⁷ www.lighthouse.org.au/the-waler-a-breed-of-horse-legend

'The source of Paterson's poem was a journalistic piece, 'How Wild Horses are yarded'. Paterson says the wild horses, 'are a great nuisance to stock owners because valuable animals constantly stray away and join them, and nothing but desperate riding and good fortune will get them back. The wild horses are never much use. They buck like demons; they are straight shouldered and badly ribbed up and they never have any courage in captivity'.

During the 1960's the wild horses were heavily culled (shot, poisoned, driven into neck breaking wire) as they had bred up quickly and were an issue for graziers chasing grazing for their stock. The historical treatment of wild horses was neither caring nor romantic.

Indigenous history of association with wild horses

"The horse has played a major role in Australian history, also in human history. The wild horses were not part of working Australia and from their first release in the early 1800's quickly became recognised as pests. By 1875 it was necessary to cull 7,000 wild horses from New South Wales alone due to grazing competition to cattle and sheep.

*The history of Australia may have been very different if not for the horse. The practical advantage of having a horse proved invaluable in the dispossession of the First Nations people. On foot with spears and club they were no match for the mounted musket carrying riders. The horse played a major role in the Frontier Wars. The arrival of horses and riders signalled the end of the world as First Nations people knew it to be. **Men on horseback were the outriders of the invasion and dispossession.**"*

"Indigenous people, like all the people of the time, used the horses as a commodity. Wild horses and indeed all introduced species to our country, do not exist in our Cultural story and are not part of our Dreaming. They were not revered, but merely used".

"The notion that wild horse occupation of these mountains is of more significance than that of the indigenous people who have cared for this country of over 20,000 years, is plain wrong. The KNP and alpine areas have a history of Indigenous occupation and there are many places that are considered by the Indigenous people of this area to be Culturally significant. Ngarigo people are the only 'Snow people' on the mainland and therefore have a unique culture found no-where else".

"Wild horses are attracted to water, grazing and protection from the elements. These are the same requirements and the same areas that Indigenous people occupied. All feral animals are contributing to the destruction of Indigenous heritage, culture, and the environment but none more so than the wild horse because of its size, weight, and numbers. The degradation of our Sacred Springs and Waterways and the lack of consideration of the native fauna and flora has not been addressed in the Chairpersons 'Statement of intent' and does not include the concerns for Indigenous heritage as discussed in the CAP and SAP meetings"⁸.

⁸ Isa Menzies - Horse for Discourses. A critical examination of the horse in Australian culture. Oct. 2019 ANU.

Attachment 4 - VBA Proposal for Management Trial



1861 Raglan Elmhurst Rd

Glenlogie Vic 3469 0408 201 107

info@victorianbrumbyassociation.org

www.victorianbrumbyassociation.org

ABN: 11010805927

Inc #: A0050188J

KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT ZONE 3: MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL FROM THE VICTORIAN BRUMBY ASSOCIATION

Background.

One of the world's great national parks, and the largest in New South Wales, Kosciuszko National Park covers 690,000 hectares. The park contains the highest mountain on mainland Australia, the famous Snowy River and all NSW ski fields. Its many and varied attractions include walks through alpine herb fields; spectacular caves and limestone gorges; scenic drives; and historic huts and homesteads.

KNP also contains the Alpine Brumbies that are intrinsically linked with our heritage; the Brumbies made immortal by Banjo Patterson and Eleyne Mitchell. These Brumbies have roamed many regions of KNP for up to 200 years and by their very links with our nationhood, are a contentious management issue.

The Victorian Brumby Association has been involved with the Brumbies of Kosciuszko National Park for more than twelve years. In that time, we have engaged with and built working relationships with both NPWS and other stakeholders. We have shown a commitment to the welfare of the Brumbies and have made significant effort to educate and upskill ourselves in relation to best practice Wild Horse management.

The current situation.

- Passive trapping program run by expert rangers at a cost of \$1074 per Brumby removed (figures obtained from NPWS)
- Population varies across the KNP from low to medium density with some areas of high density.
- KNP demonstrates many areas where the environment is extremely healthy and Brumbies are clearly shown to be present.
- There is no current region specific published studies on effective, humane, cost effective Brumby population control methods.
- Without management, peer review research worldwide shows that wild horse populations can increase at 10% when wild horse yearling survival rates are taken into account.
- Part of the fire recovery plan after the 2019/2020 Bushfires calls for the better management and lowering the numbers of the Brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park.

- Legislation passed in 2018 requires the government to manage the Brumbies of Kosciuszko in a way that will ensure humane management of sustainable populations for the future.

Aim.....

- To manage the population of Brumbies in Management Zone 3 of the KNP to retain the high environmental value of the area whilst also preserving the rich cultural history of the settlement of the region.
- To maintain genetically viable, healthy mob of Brumbies for current and future generations to observe and experience for the benefits of:
 - o Learning about our cultural heritage
 - o Observing and learning about wild horse behaviour to benefit the management of domestically kept equines.
 - o Use PZP fertility control in a best practice method to better understand its application to the Australian environment
- To maintain a 'status quo' on a healthy, stable environment by maintaining most current residents of that environment.

Management proposal:

Management Zone 3 (as identified by the SAP) contains Brumbies who are very highly regarded in the local and Australian community. It has been identified as a management zone due to the Snowy Mountain Hwy going through the region. There is a low density of around 320 Brumbies, with an estimated 35 – 75 foals born each year (source SAP proposal).

Historically, the predominantly Blue/ Grey/ Black Brumbies of this region trace their lineage back to a Stock Horse stud. These Brumbies are beautiful, calm and a strong tourism drawcard for the area, being widely photographed.

This region lends itself to management via darting free roaming mares with fertility control due to the relatively easily identifiable individuals within it.

In order to manage this population, we propose a three fold approach as below:

- Targeted trapping and removal of habitual 'road crossers' based on strong observational evidence. This is based on the experience of Dr David Berman who believes that removing these horses will effectively reduce the risk of motor vehicle collisions.
- Installation of virtual fencing along the boundary of the Snowy Mountains Highway through this region. Virtual fencing such as that from <https://www.wildlifesafetysolutions.com.au/> has been used to successfully reduce the risk of wildlife/ vehicle collisions and would have the dual benefit of reducing native wildlife collisions along this very visible stretch of road.
- Targeted PZP fertility control program of free roaming wild mares as per the brief outline below.
 - o This control will initially aim to lower the population whilst the impact is studied and then based on the outcomes of such studies, to maintain or further lower it. Initially, to do this, assuming the higher end of reproduction, around 80 to 100 mares would need to be darted annually.

Methodology:

- Study, map and record Brumby mobs within area, entering information into the Wild Horse Information Management Web system (WHIMSWeb).

- Build WHIMSWeb system for use in planning fertility control treatments, recording population statistics and potentially tourism.
- Build/ Strengthen partnership with Sporting Shooters Association NSW (SSANSW) re delivery method (SSANSW have many members currently accredited to work in 'pest control programs' in National Parks in NSW, as well as NPWS protocols etc. They are very keen to be involved in this program).
- Explore partnerships with Universities regarding ongoing scientific studies.
- Build community support group to call on for monitoring and recording training to assist with program.
- Deliver 'citizen scientist' program to community observers to assist with recording foaling/ deaths/ other relevant events.
- Work with National Parks and Wildlife Services Rangers to record observations they make as part of their regular duties re foaling/ deaths etc
- Target delivery program – ideally early Spring to early Summer so can record births etc at the same time as delivery.
- Work with NPWS and SSANSW to develop plan to maintain park user safety whilst delivery program is occurring (estimated to be 10 days in each of years one to four of the program).
- 6 -8 trained Delivery teams consisting of: 1 shooter, 1 observer/ recorder for delivery and recording of important data
- Report in draft form annually in February on progress, trends noted, statistics
- Program to run for five years:
 - o Year 1 – Study and mapping of existing mobs, observation of foaling rates etc. Develop with NPWS, concepts for studies of ecology to be undertaken in conjunction with fertility control trial. Active delivery of PZP to breeding age mares. Also recording of last 'non control' fertility year.
 - o Year 2 – Recording of results of first 'control' year. Active delivery of PZP to breeding age mares. Report to NPWS on delivery program.
 - o Year 3 – Recording of results of second 'control' year. Active delivery of PZP to breeding age mares. Draft report to NPWS on progress of program.
 - o Year 4 - Recording of results of third 'control' year. Active delivery of PZP to breeding age mares in each region chosen for trial. Draft report to NPWS on progress of program.
 - o Year 5 - Recording of results of fourth 'control' year. Final report to NPWS on progress of program. Publish results of program. Consider/ Develop plan for ongoing management of KNP using fertility control.

Potential supporting studies:

- Population demographics/ increase estimation, using yearling survival rates.
- Study the use and benefits of the Virtual control fencing method for its potential in other areas of KNP.
- Grazing habits – seasonal and general, weed control (ie grazing of introduced grasses etc)
- Genetic studies using field collected hair samples. This will allow us to measure and compare level of inbreeding, contributing breeds, genetic health considerations etc.
- To be developed in conjunction with SAP and CAP.

Benefits.

- This is a first of its kind program – it will attract considerable attention and has opportunity for further development and roll out to other areas.
- The management of Brumbies in Australia is a hot and contentious topic. NPWS have the opportunity to be seen as trailblazers in the area of humane population management whilst maintaining an already healthy environment.
- Significant cost saving over current program costs of \$1074 for passive trapping vs less than \$200 for fertility control (with no impact of unborn Brumbies nor their removal).
- Avoidance of horse and ranger injury due to risks associated with current program and timing.
- Every foal which is not born as a result of this program is a foal who will have zero impact on the environment, nor require removal and risk of lethal control.
- KNP is a healthy, dynamic, stable environment. Altering any part of that will have inevitable flow on effects. This is an opportunity to retain this environment for future study.
- Retaining the rich cultural history of the region and our country; horses were an integral part of the exploration and settlement of this region and Brumbies have run in this area for all of post settlement history.
- Tourism currently draws on the local Brumbies. Many local tour operators offer the opportunity to see Brumbies in the wild as a drawcard. As a reasonably accessible location, there is the opportunity to build on Brumby tourism to bring further economic benefit to the area.

Importantly:

This Management Proposal is an opportunity to build a strong NPWS/ Advocate/ Science relationship. We have viewed many examples of such successful relationships in our research in other countries, but we believe it has never been done in Australia.

True Community engagement will lead to great relationships as trust is established in what has historically been a bit of a battlefield.

We propose that the Victorian Brumby Association is ideally situated to lead this program, through our work in similar programs in the USA. Our plan is to develop a healthy reference committee consisting of NPWS, Victorian Brumby Association, other Brumby Advocate groups and Science/ Universities.

The Victorian Brumby Association has the experience and the skill and importantly, the back up, to lead this PZP fertility control program. We are committed to ensuring the success of this program and believe it could become a model which is replicated all over Australia.

Brumby Management is a contentious topic and it is understood that restoring the balance in Kosciuszko National Park will require the removal of many Brumbies. Running a program such as this concurrently, will assist with community involvement and support and establish NPWS as a best practice manager of wild Brumby populations.

Supporting Documents and Comments:

1. Attachment 1 - [Achieving population goals in a long-lived wildlife species \(Equus caballus\) with contraception](#)
2. Attachment 2 - [Contraceptive Vaccines for Wildlife: A Review](#)
3. Attachment 3 - [The practical side of immunocontraception: zona proteins and wildlife](#)
4. Attachment 4 - [Economic Benefit of Fertility Control in Wild Horse Populations](#)

In relation to the above cited documents population size is of important factor in management effectiveness cost and overall success. However, this is overcome by splitting the populations into “management zones” which in effect has been and is done to facilitate population density and counting throughout the ANP.

5. Attachment 5 – Factsheet: Wild Horse Immunocontraception With Porcine Zona Pellucida (Pzp)

This factsheet was provided by Dr Allen Rutberg, Ph.D., Director, Center for Animals and Public Policy, Research Assistant Professor, Biomedical Sciences Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

Dr Rutberg has been very helpful and has stated that he is happy to provide further information if required as well specialist advice if a immunocontraception program is implemented. <http://vet.tufts.edu/capp/>

WILD HORSE IMMUNOCONTRACEPTION WITH PORCINE ZONA PELLUCIDA (PZP)



The porcine zona pellucida (PZP) vaccine...is the most extensively tested method in free-ranging horses and may be the most promising option at present."

-National Academy of Sciences, Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro



Support for Immunocontraception

In 2013, The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released a report, commissioned by the Bureau of Land Management. The report found that BLM's practice rounding up and removing a significant proportion of the herd's population every three to four years contributes to the high horse population growth rates. Instead, the report urged the BLM to implement fertility control practices, focusing specifically on PZP as one of the most promising methods for implementation.

While further research may be needed, the report found that the safety record of PZP was excellent, and that there was little chance that current longer-acting forms would show unexpected side effects. Furthermore, the report found that current forms of PZP should be aggressively applied while longer-acting methods are refined.

How Immunocontraception Works

Immunocontraceptive vaccines activate the immune system to block a crucial aspect of reproduction. The porcine zona pellucida (PZP) vaccine causes mares to produce antibodies that bind to the protein envelope surrounding the egg, blocking fertilization.

PZP is NOT a hormone and does not affect other body processes.

History of PZP Field Research

PZP was first recognized as an effective contraceptive in the 1970's. Since the National Park Service first began treating wild horses on Assateague Island National Seashore in the 1980s, thousands of wild horses and burros have been treated at a variety of different field sites in the U.S. The effects of PZP on wild horses and other animals are very well known.

Effectiveness

Treatment of wild horses with PZP typically reduces pregnancy rates by 80-95%. PZP can be delivered by hand or remotely, by dart. Using current technology, a single treatment of PZP can prevent pregnancy for 2 years or more.

Side Effects and Safety

PZP is a naturally occurring protein that must be injected to be effective. If eaten, PZP is broken down like any other protein. In wild horses, the only side effect of PZP treatment may be a slight extension of the mating season; there is no evidence that this causes any harm. PZP was registered with EPA for use on wild horses and burros in 2012.



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Population Control

On Assateague Island National Seashore, Maryland, the National Park Service (NPS) achieved zero population growth in 2 years and population reduction of 23% over the next 10 years using PZP one-year primers and annual boosters. This year, the NPS reached its management goal of reducing the herd to no more than 100 horses.¹

Long-acting one-shot PZP vaccines. In the Clan Alpine Herd Management Area in Central Nevada, researchers treated 96 mares with the one-year PZP primers and controlled-release PZP polymer pellets (known as PZP-22). Over a four-year period, 54% of untreated females foaled while only 6% of treated mares foaled the first year, 14% the second year, and 32% the third year.² Researchers are currently working to increase the longevity of the efficacy of the primer/pellets vaccine.

Follow-up research. The findings of the Clan Alpine study led to current research conducted on two BLM herd management areas – Sand Wash Basin HMA in Colorado and Cedar Mountains HMA in Utah. Although only modest reductions were observed in foaling rates associated with the 2008 hand-injections of PZP-22 at Cedar Mountains (CM) HMA (UT) and Sand Wash Basin (SWB) HMA (CO), subsequent work has produced much more positive results.

Reduction in Population Growth Rates at Sand Wash Basin HMA. In Sand Wash Basin, an average of 58% of untreated mares produced foals during the 2012 and 2013 foaling seasons, but annual foaling rates for 49 mares that received PZP boosters by dart in 2010 averaged only 23%. Among the PZP-treated groups, the mares boosted with PZP-22 did the best, with an average annual foaling rate of only 16%. *The Sand Wash Basin study showed that boosters of PZP-22 can be effectively and efficiently delivered by dart; round-ups and hand-injections are not necessary for the delivery of PZP-22.*

Reduction in Population Growth Rates at Cedar Mountains HMA. In Cedar Mountains, in 2013, 24 of the 57 untreated mares (42%) had foals. However, only 17 of 145 treated mares (12%) foaled. Mares that had received PZP boosters in 2012 had the lowest foaling rates in the PZP treatment group: only 7%. *Because PZP was highly effective and BLM rounded up and treated more than 70% of mares in 2012, the 2013 population growth rate at Cedar Mountains was only 4.5%, less than a quarter of normal rates.*

BLM's work at the New Pass/Ravenswood HMA in Nevada is also showing positive results. According to BLM's internal reports, rounding up and treating mares with PZP in 2007 and again in 2011 yielded population foaling rates that had dropped to 7.5% by 2012.

¹ Cox, Jeremy. Assateague horses reach ecological milestone. Delmarva Now. July 28, 2014.

² Turner, J.W., I.K.M. Liu, D.R. Flanagan, A.T. Rutberg, J.F. Kirkpatrick. 2007. Immunocontraception in Wild Horses: One Inoculation Provides Two Years of Infertility. *Journal of Wildlife Management*. 71(2). 662-667.



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Attachment 5 – Discussion of local Kiandra History relating to Horse populations

From the NPWS 2016 KNP Draft wild Horse Plan of Management

The CAP noted that the 2016 Draft Plan of Management made reference to the Heritage of the Wild Horses.

At Pages 8 & 9

Horses in the park Brief history Horses have been present in the Snowy Mountains since the 1830s when Europeans first explored the region (NPWS 2003). Substantial transhumance grazing (i.e. the annual movement of stock and stockmen to summer pastures in the High Country) of cattle and sheep soon followed and continued for more than 150 years (Context 2015). Horses were essential for anyone living in the mountains, both for travel and for moving stock. At times, domesticated horses would escape or were purposely released during drought or to improve the quality of mobs, and wild horses quickly became established in the mountains, including areas that are now within the park.

Over time numbers have fluctuated, but for much of the last century horse numbers in the park were kept much lower than current levels through active management. Wild horses were captured for their meat or hide and stockmen would undertake sporadic control of wild horses by shooting, trapping and 'brumby running' and roping when they became a nuisance. Captured horses were used as riding, hack or pack horses. Horse roping or brumby running was also undertaken as a recreational activity and to source horses for local events such as the Cooma and Jindabyne rodeos.

From Pages 11 -13

Cultural and social values of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park

Cultural and social values of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park Wild horses, also known as 'brumbies', are a drawcard to some visitors and people living in the area. Many appreciate their beauty and the settler heritage they represent of a bygone lifestyle in the High Country. The poem and subsequent movie of AB 'Banjo' Paterson's The Man from Snowy River and the Elyne Mitchell's children's books, The Silver Brumby series, have provided many people with a connection to these wild horses.

Many local business use the 'brumby' and its iconography as part of marketing strategies for their business or product. Commercial horse riding tour operators, and more recently specific 'brumby' or wild horse viewing or photography tour businesses, strongly desire the continued presence of wild horses in the landscape.

Cultural heritage

Each of the professional groups that evaluates aspects of the cultural significance of places does so as a 'community' with shared interests and values, although not necessarily with agreement on everything. Each expert community develops its own knowledge base, language and criteria about what is valuable and what is not.

At present some values that represent the shared values of certain communities of interest are adequately represented simply because they are incorporated into professional assessment practice. However, other communities of interest remain unrepresented in the process, and some views may never be represented by 'experts' as they do not lend themselves to professionalisation.

Our current heritage assessment practices are clearly too narrow and fail to reflect the breadth and depth of interest present in our society.

Social value has tended to mean all those values expressed by the community which fall outside our current professional framework. To enable such to be recognised and protected, social value needs to come into the mainstream of heritage assessment...

Johnston, C. 1992 'What is Social Value?', Context Pty Ltd for the National Trust of Australia

The Context (2015) assessment of the cultural heritage values of the wild horse population in the park detailed the cultural and social values that many people associate with the wild horse population, including those values outlined above.

The assessment found that the wild horse population in the park is an attribute associated with the cultural heritage significance of the park in relation to five of the nine criteria. The values associated with these criteria include (Context 2015):

- Historical values associated with the High Country pastoralism and the 'Alps experience' that contribute to the national identity. (Criterion a).
- Cultural values associated with alpine pastoral landscapes, particularly the north-east Kosciuszko landscape, that demonstrate the pastoral way of life. Wild horses are a key element of the pastoral landscape, as are the alpine and subalpine terrain, extensive grasslands, huts, pastoral properties, the bushmen/women, former stock routes and historical narrative. (Criterion d).
- Aesthetic values associated with the uniquely wild and remote alpine landscapes that represent a cultural icon with Mount Kosciuszko as a defining image in the minds of Australians. The wild horses are a tangible attribute associated with the positive experience that some people have when witnessing wild horses in the landscape. There is a strong aesthetic appreciation of the 'Australian brumby' across the Australian community and the High Country community. (Criterion e).
- The minister's assessment noted that bush skills and horsemanship of the High Country community remain valued despite the absence of pastoral practices in the KNP. The Minister suggests that the continuation of social value is derived from the long history of pastoralism rather than the presence of or absence of contemporary pastoral practices. The activity of 'brumby running' is a pastoral practice still valued by today's High Country community and associated with wild horse population control; it is regarded by some as a desirable way to remove wild horses from KNP; Brumby Running is said to have occurred from the mid to late nineteenth century...Valued tangible attributes relating to the associated activities of stock riding, brumby running and horse-trapping include the activities themselves.(Criterion g).
- Social values associated with the love of the High Country cultural landscape and The Man from Snowy River legend – a value derived from the long social and cultural history associated with pastoralism in the area. The landscape, the legend, and past pastoral activities have reached iconic status in the nation-building mythology of Australia. (Criterion g).

- The High Country environment and landscape – the Snowy River and Main Range/Cascade Hut in particular – have had an important role in the lives and works of significant people, in particular writer Elyne Mitchell (Silver Brumby series) and AB ‘Banjo’ Paterson (The Man from Snowy River). (Criterion h).

The presence of wild horses in the park has tourism, economic and marketing value to the Snowy Mountains region because some people visit the park with the expectation of seeing wild horses in the landscape. In contrast, many other people visit the region and the park expecting a pristine and native landscape without the intrusion of what they consider to be feral animals. This creates significant challenges for NPWS when trying to resolve or reach a solution around conflicts between the protection of natural and cultural values and acknowledging the cultural values of wild horses in the park.

Attachment 6 – Discussion of local Kiandra History relating to Horse populations

Historically, much of the whole Northern end of the park is renowned for having horses and livestock for over 170 years. Kiandra had a human population of 10,000 people for a time and smaller populations for 100 years with the whole locality seeing many disturbed landscapes and environments.

The horse populations of the Kiandra area especially, are important herds with certain confirmation & traits unlike anywhere else. The horses can be traced back to several different origins however a primary and major source is from the Almac Cob Stud that was established in 1899 by Frank D Brown and located near Kiandra township. Brown had an area of from 14,000 to eventually 22,000 acres around the Kiandra township & west to the Tumut River. These horses were chosen for their body strength, endurance, solid bone and hardiness used under saddle and for harness. In 1906 four stallions were standing at this stud. "Snowball" a grey (white) welsh pony, "Vim" a chestnut Norfolk Cob, "Vero" was Brown/Black Welsh Pony imported from Wales and "Almac" a dark rich bay Cob that was deemed Champion at the Sydney Royal Ag Show on more than one occasion.

The Almac Cob Stud.

THE Almac Cob Stud was founded in 1899 by Frank D. Brown, at Kiandra, in the southern part of the State of New South Wales. It is a very mountainous country, and the elevations range from 1,600 feet to 5,000 feet above sea level. At the lower and intermediate levels the valleys fall into the Tumut River, and this part gives very good feed for winter grazing. The higher altitude, which is 8 miles to the westward of Kiandra, is a mixture of undulating plain country, and produces the best of natural grasses for summer feed. The Norfolk cob and the Welsh pony are the breeds of horses of which the Almac Cob Stud is composed. For foundation mares to start the stud, Mr. Brown purchased all those of thoroughbred and pure trotting bred and Welsh pony blood, with conformation that met his approval, and the result is to-day a very fine group of youngsters, from foals 6 months old to mares 7 years old, that are doing exceedingly well, and the Sydney and Melbourne show rings have seen the geldings brought from the Stud which have won prizes at both Shows and have been sold at a good remuneration to recompense the breeder.

During the last two years Mr. Brown has been able to purchase about fifteen pure-bred cob mares from the States of Victoria and South Australia, where they were bred by Mr. R. G. Wilson, who has imported sires and dams, and Mr. C. H. Angus, who also has imported sires and dams; and from these mares Mr. Brown feels satisfied he will be able to show stallions bred in the State of New South Wales that will prove of good benefit in assisting others to advance in the breeding of true cobs. The pony mares were purchased from different States throughout Australia, and four very fine pony stallions have already been sold in different parts of Australia, and the result of the use of them is proving beneficial to pony breeders.

We show the photographs of two of Mr. Brown's cob stallions and one of his pony stallion; also one of a pure-bred cob mare, a half-bred cob gelding, and a half-bred cob gelding shown in saddle with the owner of the Almac Cob Stud.

Almac.—The first cob stallion Mr. Brown interested himself in, was bred in New South Wales by Mr. Thomas Cook, of Turonville, Seine. His sire, Flying Shales (imp.), was a very superior horse and a most prepotent sire, and



Almac, Champion Cob Stallion.

In 1912 there were 408 horses said to be resident of this property known as "The Ranch". The mares were Welsh cobs and thoroughbreds.

Early in 1912 Brown was declared bankrupt by the court and most horses were sold by dispersal sale.

DISPERSAL SALE
of the Well-known
ALMAC STUD (Kiandra, N.S.W.).

COB STALLIONS,
at
INGLIS'S BAZAAR, SYDNEY,
WEDNESDAY NEXT, MARCH 20,
AT 11 A.M.

WILLIAM INGLIS and SON have received instructions to sell by auction, as above.

VIM, Chestnut, 15 hands, aged, by **DETECTIVE** (imp.), dam **DARWHINNEY** (imp.). **VIM** has taken three champion prizes at the R.A. Show, Sydney.

REAL KING, Brown, 14.2, rising 4yrs., by **Reality** (imp.), dam **FOREST QUEEN**, a purebred Cob Mare from imported stock.

ALMAC, Bay, 14.3, aged, by **FLYING SHALES** (imp.), dam **GIPSY**, bred by Mr. **THOS. COOK, TURONVILLE**. **ALMAC** was the original sire used at the above Stud, and has won the champion prize at the R.A. Show, Sydney. His progeny have also been great prize-winners at the leading Shows in the Commonwealth.

ALMAC'S SON, Bay, rising 4yrs., 14.3, sire **ALMAC**, dam **ATTACK** (a purebred Cob Mare from imported stock).

VIDI, Grey Welsh Cob, 14 hands, rising 6yrs, by **VERO**, dam **GREYLING**, by **GLENGARRY**.

The above are all sure foal-getters, and thoroughly broken to saddle and harness.

NOW ON VIEW AT OUR BAZAAR.

It was reported by the court that 119 horses were never accounted for. It is believed that these horses are the ancestors of at least the Iconic mobs at Kiandra. These current well known mobs of horses are renowned for their unique traits of heavy bone and cob type conformations.

In 1925 the Department of Lands published the Kiandra district map showing the area adjoining and north east of Kiandra township as "Wild Horse Plain". This is an indication that the horses were well established over 100 years ago in this location along with other livestock. This is a part of the same area as the as the suggested "Broad Toothed Rat" habitat.



Along with the identified Cob horses there is also much other evidence that horses were introduced into these areas by others including the Lampe, Brownlee, Franklin, Cochran & Day families. Many of these released horses in more recent times were Arabian and thoroughbreds.

The Gooandra & Tantangara area was well known as running over more than 30,000 sheep, some cattle and many horses. Unlike the livestock, the horses were turned out to fend for themselves in the winter when the others went to the lower country. Some were never mustered.

Consequently, it is the view that the Kiandra & surrounding horses are not only an integral part of the Kiandra area's history but hold important heritage value to the local community as well as being a drawcard for tourists.

Attachment 7 - Submission from a CAP member on this report

Comments to the CAP first Draft Report July 2020 – CAP member

- I agree with the draft report in its principle.
- Firstly, the legislation that put this panel here states that this report “*is to identify the heritage value*” of populations “*and set out how that heritage value will be protected*” in the Kosciusko Wild Horse **Heritage Management** Plan. I attempt to address this in my heritage report.
- I would like to emphasis even further at how vital it is that the community **MUST** be included in the decisions of and participation of any management programs of the wild horses.
- The horses had been managed by the local community in one way or the other for well over 100 years before the area ever came into the National Park estate and also for a time after. But the last few decades have seen brumby control taken away from community. Clearly its time to try something else.
- Lack of trust in NPWS has been contentious for many years for many locals and will continue to fester further without community based solutions.
- It is essential that a Community Based Organisation (CBO) (for want of a better name and description) should be established but they should be considered just as any other professional contractors albeit on a voluntary basis or use a permit system. (In 2002 a similar group were used for trials which were very successful and had started a good relationship with parks. Photos follow. This ended with the 2003 fires)
- The CBO should not be an open slather group of horse people and should only include horsemen preferably with the heritage connections of the brumbies and mountains (including Traditional owners with the same) but **most** importantly with the expertise, knowledge and hands on experience of dealing with wild horses in the wild. In some cases the CBO may require further people to assist on one off occasions, for example for a large muster.
- I do not agree that the CBO should include pro brumby supporters or anti brumby people that do not have the above skills and attributes to contribute.
- The many brumby groups who want to have a say should organise a parent group to represent their views (similar to the CAP) that the NPWS should liaise with.
- Any CBO activity that would take place in brumby management would be with the supervision and partnership with NPWS staff. This could be a similar relationship to Kosciusko Huts Association or other experts and contractors in the various field type programs that already assist parks. Working alongside each other would make for a far better relationship AND understanding of each-others experiences and issues.
- **The more participation and decisions that include the local people will make for any removals and methods of management to be more acceptable and palatable by the wider community.** Any members of the actual CBO working groups should need to undergo accreditation and training with combined parks and horse professionals.

- The CBO could also be beneficial to general park management with monitoring not only horses but other issues in isolated areas such as feral animals, weed mapping and trail maintenance for some examples.
- It should be remembered that this is a management plan not just a removal plan. Some Issues can be addressed in different ways and should also be considered case by case.

I have attached a report on the Identification of Heritage Values which will also address the questions of where horses should be retained.

We have a great opportunity to at least trial what could be a highly effective and visionary solution.

The situation will otherwise continue to be another wasted opportunity and we will continue along with the same old outcomes every year. If we keep doing the same thing as in past we are assured of the same outcomes but with further resistance building in the pro brumby community.

The pro brumby lobby is growing exponentially but could be appeased somewhat if it is demonstrated that National Parks are open to trying better solutions that include the community.

National Parks continually ask the community to trust them in their decisions, now it is time for the National Parks to take a chance on the community.

Following are some photos of examples of a CBO successfully working with parks in the past.

Renowned Mountain horseman Brian 'Dooley' Pendergast and Ranger oversee horsemen loading some brumbies 2002.





4 Brumby stallions trapped with Snowy Mountains Horse Riders volunteers taking the lead.





All contact and handling brumbies is done on horseback which alleviates their fear. Handling from the back of a horse makes it safer for riders and less stressful for brumbies. They are 50% taught to lead before they leave the yards.





The ridden horses lead the brumbies all the way onto the trailers with Help from portable wings used.



The brumbies on the trailers without fuss.

Able assisted by park staff.

A Veterinarian was also overseeing this project.

CAP member - Further response to SAP and CAP draft reports and previous discussion:

1) I dispute that there has been **any agreement** by the CAP that the horse population in the Park was unsustainably large or that there was a consensus of determining 4000 horses needed to be removed. The 4000 estimate by the SAP in the 3 zones is strongly rejected.

More to the point is that this misinformation has been wrongly related to the minister and aired publicly as coming from the CAP. Yet this is what the minister relates and is untrue and should be corrected. The only consensus on high densities of population was the Currango area where ironically trapping has not taken place?

2) The 2019 Cairns survey is totally rejected by my community for both northern and southern Kosciusko. A new survey count by at least 2 different methods should be completed in the 3 focused post fire recovery areas immediately.

- Any new surveys in the current climate should include independent participants (as already requested) to gain any trust and credibility. **A new survey was committed** to take place in the 3 areas before any trapping started this winter however the community is still waiting of any news of this.

- *“A **small-scale survey of horse numbers** will occur in each management area before removal of horses starts, then regularly during the horse removal program. This will provide a baseline measure to ensure horse densities decline as management is implemented. It will also help us to better correlate horse numbers with environmental impact.”*

(Stakeholder email from NPWS 1 May and posted on OEH website)

- The absence of a new survey as promised only deepens the lack of trust of the NPWS by the community as demonstrated by media recently.

3) I agree **in principle** with the SAP's 7 x International Consensus Principles for ethical control.

4) I agree with the SAP that adaptive methodology and management and continuous monitoring is essential as every locality, every season and every population is different and ever changing.

5) I agree with the SAP that the Kiandra area and horses would be ideal for any pilot trials for retaining and maintaining protected populations.

6) The SAP and CAP both agree that removal of horses should be based on Impacts. Removal of horses should only be based on confirmed safety aspects or identified permanent damage caused from high densities of horses. Any removals should be from the specifically impacted area and not just any accessible trap site miles away from impacts as we are seeing today. Currently horses are removed from any area that trap sites are already existing without the impacts warranting the removal. The trap sites themselves are a major concern for causing damage.

7) Any new trap sites should not allow salt or molasses lures on the ground. Salt blocks can be hung up on special plates off the ground by a chain to stop leaching into ground where all animals will be attracted and will cause impacts. The current sites are a disgraceful mess of ongoing damage that is being perpetuated by continual use by parks and tenfold severe impacts by brumbies free roaming. **Trap sites should be rested and moved to a different area seasonally when required.**

8) It is disappointing that the SAP's only conclusion for mitigation was removal from the landscape or modifying human practices. Modifying some landscapes can also work for some mitigation. More 'land management' methods should be implemented particularly in identified heritage retainment areas. Land management is also key for NPWS just like any other land managers. Fencing is used in so many other high valued areas of the park but completely ignored with regard to brumbies as it does not fit the eradication agenda. Investigation of virtual fencing used broadly in Europe for deer has also been continually ignored.

- i) The statement or rather question should be – are impacts reaching unacceptable thresholds? What mitigations can be put in place to reduce considered adverse impacts. Mitigations for reducing impacts should be considered no differently to other impacted areas in the park by other pressures like roads, resorts & Snowy 2.0 for example site hardening of crossings or drainage areas.
- ii) Sensitive and vulnerable areas should be prioritised in order of importance or threat by whatever means and focused in that order for mitigation and protection rather than just blanket removal of horses from the easiest or accessible areas as is happening now.

9) Contrary to the SAP report, it is felt that a target overall retained population estimate in the park is essential. A minimum population estimate is required by the community so as to ensure that removal is not overly excessive for sustainable and viable populations to be retained and protected as per the Act.

- i) It is clear that there would have been between **4000 and 6000 brumbies** throughout Kosciusko directly before the 2003 fires and subsequently before there was any movement for removal of horses below the snowline. Consequently, it is deemed that this is a good starting estimate for a target population size across the park.

10) A survey/study of the actual locations of horses is also appropriate rather than the continuing extrapolation and assumptions by sample modelling surveys. There are many areas where horses do not venture and have not been counted but are 'assumed' to inhabit.

11) I agree with a muster in appropriate areas where warranted as a supplementary tool along with passive trapping and some roping & fertility control. We would also welcome a trial for all the above methods under the supervision of NPWS and Veterinarians with expertise in Equines and Conservation Biology;

- a) Horse riders in the muster can traverse rough and timbered country to flush out brumbies
- b) Roping can target horses in more remote areas
- c) All methods are cost effective for park using knowledgeable and willing volunteers
- d) Management using locals gathers more positive public opinion in the local community
- e) There are minimal impacts to the environment compared to permanent trap yard sites static with salt for months.
- f) Brumbies can be assessed and vetted immediately by expert horsemen/women & vet.
- g) Fertility implementation could also be trialled in these scenarios.

12) The community that I represent totally reject any aerial or ground shooting. Why is this continuing to be discussed as a potential management method?
We reject that it should be included in the new plan.

- i) **Aerial shooting** in NSW was **permanently banned** by Environment Minister Bob Debus. Aerial shooting does not comply with the intent of the KWHHAct 2018 and will not be tolerated by the community.
- ii) **Ground shooting uncontained horses:** *"In steep or wooded terrain, where much of the horse control operations will be carried out within Kosciuszko, it is not effective. A major problem with ground shooting compared to helicopter shooting is that it's difficult to follow up and ensure mobile wounded animals are killed quickly."* (**Kosciuszko National Park 2002-2003 draft Wild Horse Management Plan**)
- iii) If KNP own veterinary consultants and technical advisors believed that ground shooting was unacceptable in 2002, the public will never tolerate it in 2020.
- iv) Aerial or ground shooting included in the plan will be met with strong resistance by the community once again. If shooting is included as in 2016 draft the whole exercise of the SAP and CAP panels has been futile just as in previous years.
- v) *"The (2016 draft Plan) does not give due consideration to key potential adverse effects... including a single shot failing to render an animal unconscious...prolong suffering, pain and distress.... Does not take into account the remainder of the mob and the strong social bonds formed between horses..."* Aust Veterinary Assoc Ltd. (AVA) submission to 2016 draft plan.

13) I agree with SAP that a trial of roping should be considered and a new SOP should be measured using updated welfare considerations. Roping should always be considered as a **supplementary removal tool only** but certainly before any shooting or abandonment to perish (eg.2017 cannibal brumbies) is ever considered. It can target specific horses in more remote and difficult to access areas. Only accredited and expert horsemen in this activity should ever be considered to participate.

- i) Whilst there may be well meaning criticism by some of roping we maintain that cruelty is not the norm today by experienced horsemen. There is a major lack of knowledge of the actual activity by the majority of people (including CAP and SAP members). Much of the criticism is based on ill-informed assumptions from ignorant and inexperienced people but it is also acknowledged that it is a unique skill mastered well by very few.
- ii) Dogs or winches have never been used in NSW to our knowledge and in fact has been severely condemned by Snowy horsemen of their Victorian counterparts. Several decades of experience by extremely experienced horse people have demonstrated many great outcomes and turned out some champion horses to many disciplines.
- iii) Dominant horses chase horses everyday in paddocks or the wild. It's a natural horse herd behaviour and process. Horses being chased by horses for a minute or two is far more natural and less stressful than by a helicopter or gut shot on the run or being trapped and travelled distances with dominant others for any length of time.

14) *"If the horses are to be captured, trained and found homes for where they will have a secure future for the rest of their lives, then the stress of being run and caught by Experienced Horseman with true care and knowledge for their craft and the horses they capture, is justified. A true Horseman will be able to affect necessary training in the process of the capture that will benefit the horse for his future learnings and whether he is in a Round yard or running in the open, the stress will be much the same, as a horse's first interaction with man will always be one of extreme learning no matter where it takes place.*

Although there will be sufficient fear and stress from any 'Untouched' horse when they feel their very first rope or halter, I have always found that catching off another horse, will always allow the captured horse to feel more comfortable than when done off foot in a yard and by running beside them as other mob members do, they will feel less inclined to panic. It is natural for the caught horse to want to stay close to the horse nearest to it (being the mount of the catcher himself).

If we have a chance to train and find homes for them, then a good team of 'Brumby Runners' will not only clean up the unwanted horses but will have already began the training process and as the 'First Physical Touch' is always the horses biggest fear, sometimes getting it over straightaway is this the very best way to do it.

As a horse's major fear is of being 'Caught and Eaten' the sooner we are able to prove to them that this is the furthestest thing from our mind, the better. To give two scenarios here.

Scenario 1, you capture the horse in a trap yard and take him to a facility and feed and water him and walk around him for a month and wait till he calms down and he will still fear that first touch and be extremely wary of it and may still fight for his chance to be free and good horsemanship will be paramount no matter how relaxed he once seemed.

Scenario 2, he is captured by a skilled Horseman and in a short time he reaches the facility, he already has some idea of giving to pressure and understanding physical touch and as he will have already had this first experience and sought the guidance of the well trained horse and his handler, he will be much more prepared for what's to come with a lot fewer questions to be answered.

As an Australian Horseman now based semi full time in the USA, I have witnessed first hand that wild horses of America (the Mustang) are a symbol of their countries past and a beacon of pride and honour and I sincerely feel that our Brumbies should be the same.

The uproar that I feel when people talk over here of Australia's dealings with our wild horse problem is extremely volatile and most certainly does not paint the picture that a proud Australian Horseman wants the world to see of his beloved country and we have a chance to fix this now."

(2 x World Champion most prestigious international horseman's challenge event – Road to the Horse. Internationally recognised and acclaimed as one of Australia's finest natural horsemen and clinician. Guy McLean)

15) Consideration of brumby-runners as predators and wild horses as prey is useful in understanding how brumby-running is currently influencing the wild horse population. Pople et al. (1998) used the same analogy for control of goats by aerial shooting. Predators have the effect of reducing the densities of prey animals. For example, densities of caribou (*Caribou tarandus*) populations with no wolf predation are two orders of magnitude higher than populations with high and constant predation (Seip 1991 in Caughley & Sinclair 1994) and red kangaroo and emu populations are higher when dingoes are scarce (Pople et al. 2000). Brumby -runners may play the functional role of a true predator. True predators kill their prey (Begon et al. 1990); brumby-runners remove them from the population, and may therefore have the same effect as a true predator.

Predator-prey theory relevant to this chapter covers two areas, firstly, the behaviour of the predators and the way this affects what and how much they consume, and secondly the consequences of predation in terms of the dynamics of the prey population (Begon et al. 1990).

An increase in population size in Kosciuszko and not in Victoria could be expected given that there has been no active management of wild horses in Kosciuszko in the last 20 years (NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service 2002b), while brumby -running continues in Victoria. The evidence of an increased distribution of wild horses in northern Kosciuszko National Park (Chapter 2) also supports this hypothesis. "

(Population Ecology of Wild Horses in the Australian Alps Michelle Walter BSc (Hons) 2002)

16) Volunteer horse riders worked closely with NPWS to undertake a trial of the method of trapping horses in the alpine and sub-alpine area in the Rams Head Range/Dead Horse Gap area. These local horse riders brought a high level of experience and skill which was instrumental in the successful trapping (and leading out of the park on horseback). Service staff were very impressed by the manner in which the horses were handled and loaded on to transport to be removed from the Park. **(NPWS KNP Area Manager FERAL HORSE MANAGEMENT Report of a Workshop 2004)**

Brumby running has several pluses as a method of capturing feral horses.

Individual horses or groups can be targeted for removal.

Brumby running is highly mobile and low cost and can be undertaken by small groups in remote and difficult-to-access areas, with relatively very little equipment or outlay (other than public liability insurance).

Dave Foster, Parks Victoria FERAL HORSE MANAGEMENT Report of a Workshop 2004

17) As stated in my Heritage Report: In 2001, the first ever formal horse survey of brumbies was completed. It identified that there were approximately 3000 horses in the small spatial area that was surveyed of 1600km² (M Walters). Today's surveys in KNP only are double the spatial area of over 3000 km². Also worth noting is (Walter survey 2001) North Kosci = 795 km² and (Cairns survey 2014/2019) North Kosci = 1,549 km² a vast difference.

- i) Judging by the survey methods of extrapolating densities, if the spatial area is doubled, so should the horse numbers.
- ii) Michelle Walter's survey plainly stated that it did not survey well known brumby habitats including the massive area of Byadbo wilderness and 50% of the northern end. I have also identified that horses have been seen in those areas for over 150 years. It would then be reasonable to assume therefore that there would have easily been **4000 – 6000 in 2001.**

- iii) At that time this region was also in the grip of extreme drought which culminated in the widespread 2003 fires and consequently the numbers then should be considered on the lower scale in hindsight compared to previous good seasons.

18) Management Zones

- a. **Zone 1** corresponds to an area that was designated for total horse elimination in the 2016 Draft Management Plan. We have already conceded that as this area would be kept horse free.
- b. **Zone 2** lies to the north of Zone 1 and was considered an area warranting protection of karst and other key environmental assets in the 2016 Plan, as well as an area that could provide a buffer to prevent horses from moving into the ACT. If this zone is to reduce horse densities in the immediate future we would very reluctantly consider the Mt Morgan & Murray Gap areas and north east of the Pockets Saddle Road and Trail to Pockets Hut areas only to be prioritised for reduction as a buffer to the ACT for the immediate future.
 - i. The Blue Water Holes and surrounding area has already had a major reduction of horses by NPWS trapping only last spring and should not be considered at this time.
 - ii. Reduced density of horses in the Currango Plain area should be considered before any other areas to the north.
- c. **Zone 3** includes an area that was originally identified as high risk for public safety but is expanded from that described in the 2016 Plan to include an area inhabited by the endangered broadtoothed rat. We strongly reject the blanket removal of horses particularly in the northern section of zone 3 above Kiandra. The locality was named 'Wild Horse Plain' for over 100 years for good reason. We feel that many bands of important horses have already perished from zone 3. For the purpose of safety in the short term, we strongly recommend simple fencing parallel with the highway on eastern side. A simple 2 or 3 strand wire fence will have good affect in stopping the risk of horses crossing at least as a temporary mitigation until the new management plan is placed. The same applies for the Broad-toothed rat habitat. If there is a sincere and real urgency and concern for the rat recovery, a large fenced enclosure area (5 or more hectares) is an obvious solution for the immediate post fire recovery period. If a stranded wire fence is not deemed suitable, a portable electric (Solar) fence could also be trialed. In our experience, brumbies will not push through any fences unless forced by stresses to so.

19) Community involvement

Community involvement and the education of management of brumbies is vital. Brumbies have been identified as being of profound importance to the majority of the local community as well as the community at large. It is encouraging that the SAP noted that misinformation causes social issues particularly regarding estimate numbers and that the lack of 'real' community engagement will be a cause of continued failure in management.

- a. If a new approach is not sincerely sought and trialed then the issue and conflict will ever continue.
- b. It is recommended that a permanent **Community Forum** specific to the management of brumbies be introduced that includes representatives from a wide sector of interest groups. The forum would only need to meet a handful of times a year. It would enable people to identify and articulate their beliefs and concerns and to further engage with NPWS and other groups. Horse management and the deep connections with horses is very complex as is the great concerns for the environment.

- c. Specialists and experts in the differing disciplines could attend as guest speakers to the forum at different occasions to explain and educate on the intricacies of environmental and horse management. For example: Specialist scientists of archaeology or ecology as well as expert horsemen or behaviourists could educate the forum on different perspectives of the issue.
- d. Traditional owners should also be encouraged to participate to not only share their cultural knowledge and history but share their own history that included brumbies.
- e. This could be an educational opportunity for all from both sides of the horse and can only benefit the community as a whole for such a vast and complex issue that will be on going.

20) It is further recommended that the local community of horse people (**SM Horse Riders as example only**) be once again invited to be involved and utilised on the ground to volunteer their knowledge and share their hands on experience and skills. As has been demonstrated in the past, under the authority of NPWS this can only be of benefit to all.

Any type of management and control measures of brumbies will be much more easily accepted by community when the local horse community is involved in the decision process and the physical activity itself as partners with NPWS as opposed to being considered the enemy.

Including the community as volunteers is a step towards the right direction given this is such an emotive issue and very close to home (literally) for some stakeholders.

- a. Using volunteers could not only help enhance relationships with NPWS and other stakeholders but also enable vital knowledge and heritage based skills to be passed on which are rapidly declining. (One example is the trapping that is already taking place by NPWS – introduced and demonstrated originally by our group as volunteers).
- b. *“Establish a KNP Horse Management Reference Group. Involve the community in ongoing management of wild horses through volunteer and extension programs. Work with local communities to establish appropriate information and interpretive material on the heritage values associated with the horses in the park”*
(Australian Veterinary Association Ltd)

A CAP member

Attachment 7 – Discussion of Horse capture and drafting via large scale muster (droving)

Strategic Intent

To deliver a viable and workable solution for horse implementing wild horse management within KNP. This section works from an assumed acceptance of the preceding report as a proposed methodology to increase community involvement and active management of Wild Horses and their Heritage in KNP in a manner that focuses NPWS and the Community on a collaborative working approach.

Principles

Commencing with the concept that the CBO run an annual horse muster.

Volunteers push the horses out of visible locations away from highways and other sensitive zones.

The CBO revive The High Country Muster and its traditions:

- The CBO become the new umbrella organisation – The Snowy River Riders (in memorial of Patterson’s line from the poem).
- To be successful the community needs a structured and disciplined organisation. The CBO should be managed via an independent Board of Horseriders.
- NPWS to agree to change their command and control role and share control of the horse management via the High Country muster and other similar tools – so long that CBO continue to effectively perform their role.
- The CBO select where to muster each year to control the mobs and the numbers. Thus they are charged with their own legacy and destiny.
- The CBO uses its own volunteers to complete the work i.e. set the yards etc.
- The CBO must continue to provide cost effective solutions to fixing the issues.
- The CBO initiate and run a High Country Muster every Autumn – when it is safest for all – to bring in the horses. The CBO can muster out agreed areas every year. The CBO must work with NPWS and NSW Police close out areas that are being mustered for safety where needed e.g highways and exclude risks and trouble makers etc .
- Snowy Hydro could be asked to support NPWS to pay for infrastructure like round yards, horse holding yards maps, radios and other required kit. The Community must bring the riders and the organisation skills.
- NSW Government to acquire on behalf of the Snowy Riders a holding and gentling station out of the high country. Somewhere such as Khancoban or Adaminaby that is accessible in all directions. In the first instances it may be that a showground or a racecourse is used for receiving the horses. From here they can be yarded and drafted off to a sperate location from there after they have been fed and gentled.
- The muster would need to be supplemented with selective Trapping, smaller musters and Brumby Running in problem or inaccessible areas during the year and those horses can be brought out to the same holding location.
- NSW Government to pay for and permit installation of portable yards to facilitate a 2 week muster - run over 2 weekends and a total of 12 days. It may in some way also support local Tourism.

The CAP suggest that cattle yards per the link below. – in the order of a 1200 head design and the teams on the ground can work backwards to install wings as well as crushes, tread in posts for the out edge of the wings and shade cloth.

In lesser locations a smaller set of portables could be used but with large mobs the bigger yards are safest.

<https://clipex.com.au/cattle-yards/>

A separate procurement schedule, run sheet and budget has been prepared.

Critical success factors ;

- Political commitment to implement the first muster. A “dry run’ seems prudent.
- NSW Government or NPWS need to supply a holding facility out of the high country where horses can be fed and shipped out over 3-6 months.
- Government to acquire the yards – probably 3 in fixed locations and 3 sets of large portable yards plus 4 x 300+ yards of wings and then over 1000 yards of tread in posts and around 6 crushes.
- Organisation infrastructure around the Snowy River Riders organisation.
- Commitment to make it happen.
- NPWS will want verification of animals etc. It will require compromise as they will have to relax the rules to let riders camp and muster out in order for the operation to be successful. i.e. all parties will need to compromise all round.
- Good logistics and insurance coverage via NSW Government and then waivers for riders.

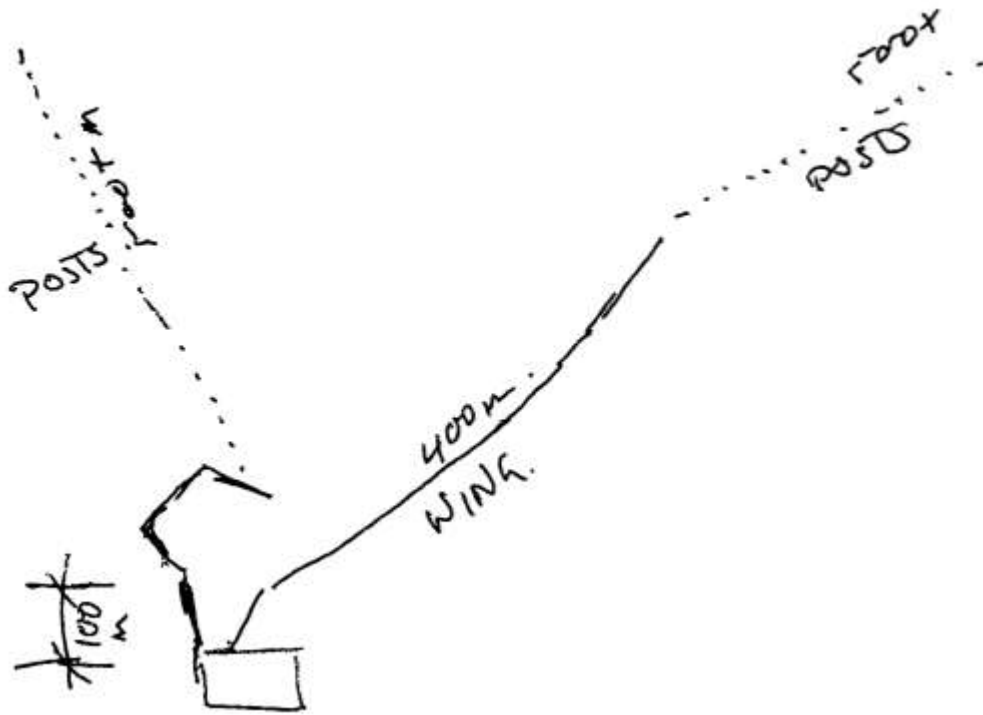
Over-view of implementing mustering operations

The following is an imperfect but indicative methodology to implement a mustering operation.,

A key principal is that the speed and movement of brumbies needs to be slow and methodical such as a drover, rather than a rodeo or traditional paddock based muster.

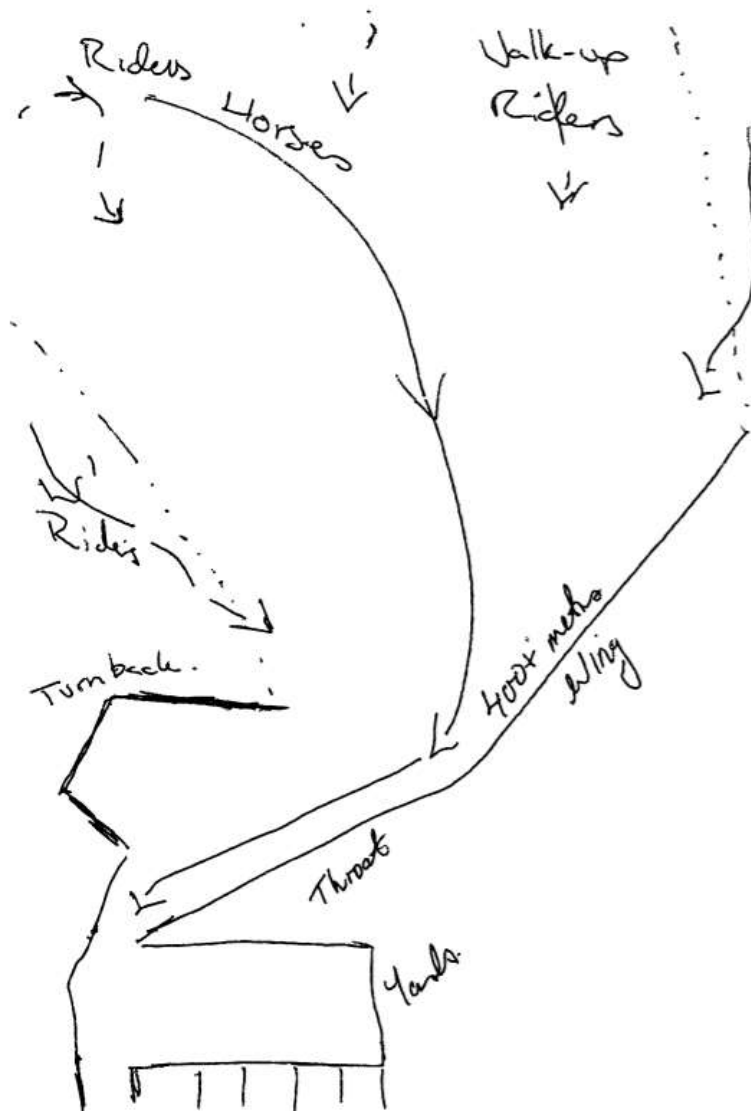
Overall the key elements are ;

- Select key locations for horse concentrations e.g. Currango Plain, Long Plain and Big Boggy.
- Riders and support people to be selected for calmness and level-headedness. The required approach is a series of slow coordinated movements. Unsuitable riders will want to race to catch every horse. It is better to hold the mob rather than rush and let the mob escape.
- The yard locations may require that some of the yards be left in situ over a five year window as assembly is a major issue. To increase safety wild horses need to be used to seeing the yards and wings etc. to avoid fear and flight.
- Yards to be set to match horse movement behaviours and mobs i.e. when they take flight they naturally move into the wing and along it. This means setting yards into the topography that also provides an egress for vehicles etc.
- The Muster needs to end with yards and drafting races that reduces mobs and groups into manageable sizes. The race needs to funnel of a long set of wings that the horses don't pick
- Key gullies and tracks will need to be scouted well in advance to block exits or apply pressure.
- Salt blocks will need to be laid out on the plains in a variety of locations. This allows mobs to be nearby but to be gathered from selected locations to avoid pushing horses across too many obstacles. As mobs are brought in from a close location the outer salt blocks can be removed.



On any muster the concept is to apply gentle pressure to selected mobs near the yards and walk them in slowly with pressure from riders (carrying UHF in a radio holster) who are located out on the plains. This could be further coordinated by aerial drone observation from behind the yards.

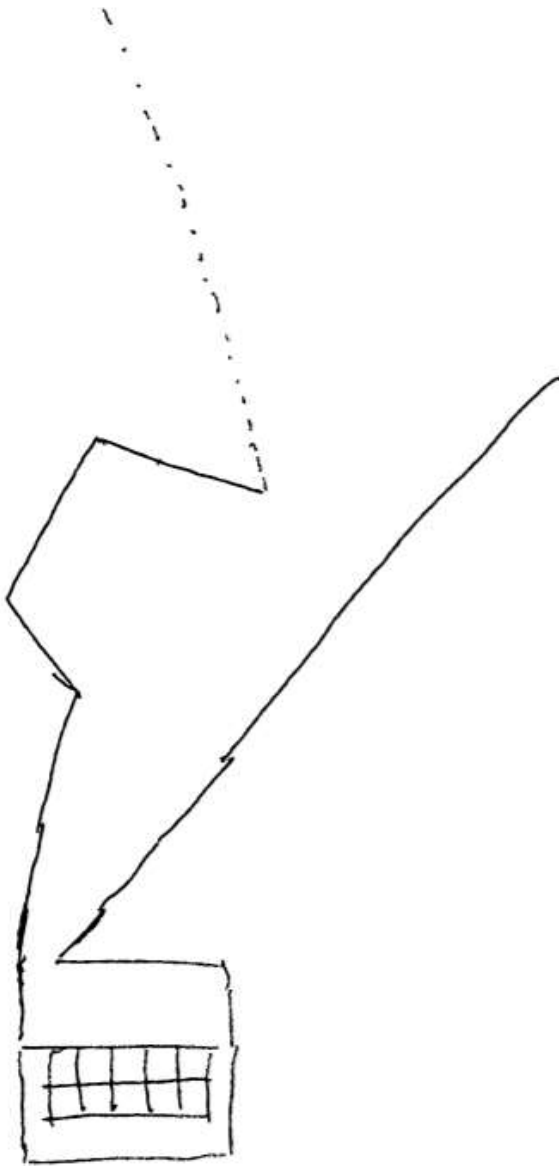
The aim is to allow the horses to walk into the yards as small family mobs.



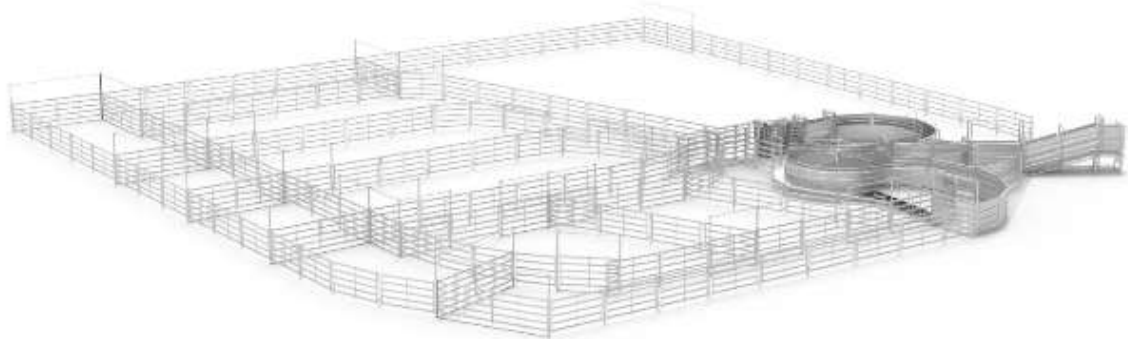
The target is to bring in one mob at a time slowly and capture 4-5 mobs per day. This then needs a means to draft and hold as well as identify captured and released horses.

Drafting and retaining mobs – Concept for retain or release:

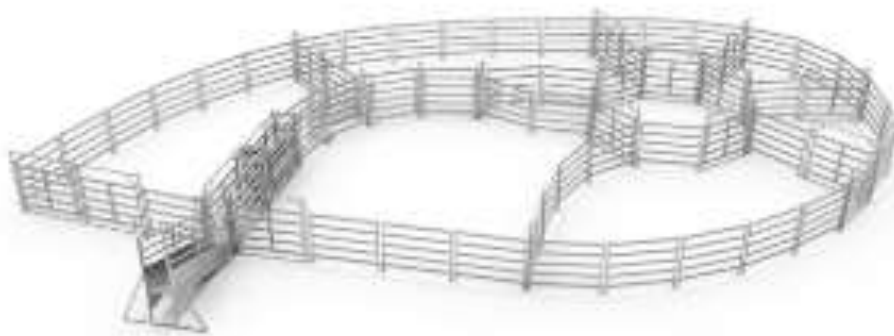
- The highest priority target group is Stallion Mobs. They add the least. Stallion Mobs to be yarded and moved out excepting selected alpha or beta horses. This is to retain diversity and stronger gene pool.
- Family mobs are the lower priority. To be held and released with their stallion (or his beta) with an agreed but reduced number of younger mares. Older mares and young colts to be removed selectively.
- Mares with Foals at foot to be kept together.
- Pregnant mares to go with their stallion with whatever component is released.



Example of large yards



Small Portable Yards for more remote locations



Concluding Comments

It is suggested that this be put to the Community of horse riders

A third party facilitator may be useful.

The engagement approach is simple. The Community takes responsibility for the issue or they accept NPWS implementation.

To prove the concept the CAP suggests that a low-level a dry run somewhere small and safe. An example is Currango Plain. This would allow proof of concept that a CBO can do this on a small scale.

Suggested Sites for a Dry Run – West of Rabbit Hill or North of Currango



Attachment 8 - Submission by a CAP Member

Memorandum of Understanding - 20 November 2006 ('MOU')

The current legislation resulted from the tireless pro-Brumby community lobbying. This lobbying had occurred over several years and culminated in 2006 with the signing of the MOU between the current NSW coalition government (then in opposition) and stakeholders.

Amongst the promises that the coalition made in the MOU were two specific issues that enticed support from the stakeholders namely;

- 1) to legislate for the recognition and protection of viable Brumby populations in reserved areas and;
- 2) not to permit shooting as a management tool.

The coalition subsequently formed government and untimely caused legislation to be passed in accordance with its promises fulfilling thereby the legitimate expectations it had created in the MOU.

Whilst not part of the current Act, the MOU is and remains a written recording of a solemn promise the government made to stakeholders and failure to comply with the terms thereof would amount to a breach of this electoral promise. Such a breach will undermine, damage and further harm the already tenuous relationship that currently exists between the government and NSWPS on the one hand and stakeholders on the other.

CAP member

4 September 2020

Attachment 9 – Wild Horse Heritage Values and Supporting Material – A CAP member as a representative of a family with wild horse and pastoral connections

Kosciusko National Park

Wild Horse Heritage - Identified Values

A report to the Minister for Environment

and the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Community Advisory Panel

The purpose of this work is to identify the heritage values of the Kosciusko wild horses and determine their historical areas for retaining populations.

This document is not intended to be a formal Heritage Assessment.



Bringing in the Brumbies on near Charlottes Pass, Kosciusko 1949

Photo by Jim Fitzpatrick (National Library of Australia)

CAP member

July 2020

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Executive Summary

There have been wild horses (also fondly known as Brumbies) roaming in the Snowy Mountains since the beginning of white settlement in the region. Since then, they have become an integral and inseparable part of the heritage and folklore of the Snowy Mountains.

Like our ancestors, the Brumby grew its own knowledge and connection with the land for its survival... But equally as important our old people were animal lovers. They would have had great respect for these powerful horse spirits. Our people have always been accepting of visitors to our lands and quite capable of adapting to change so that our visitors can also belong and have their place. Learning their ways and gaining true understanding. A caring and sharing culture.

David Dixon elder Ngarigo/Djiringanj The Ngarigo, Djiringanj and the Brumby 2017

The intention of this report is to identify just *some* of the history and the locations of where Brumbies have historically inhabited and which localities they should remain and be managed in sustainable as well as genetically viable populations. **This will recognise that the Brumbies heritage value does need protection but it also ensures that protection of all natural and cultural values is vital and required under NPWS Act 1974 and the KWHH Act 2018.** Equally it demonstrates that traditional practices and values created by the Snowy Mountains people and their extended families and communities, should be encouraged to continue. This is so the fundamental practices established by their ancestors for a significantly Australian culture and heritage that has been bonded to the Snowy Mountain Brumbies, will continue for current and future generations.

The Brumbies have roamed free in and around these mountain areas in often immense numbers for well over 150 years, but the major controversy of their existence has only been in the last 10 to 15 years. The mountain area became National Park in 1967 and it was only in the late 1980s that the local mountain horsemen were prohibited from having any participation in the management of the Brumbies even though this had been their custom for 150 years and many generations.

In 2002 the Guy Fawkes River National Park saw 620 wild horses massacred by National Parks & Wildlife Service by aerial shooting. There was a ground swell of outrage and disgust not only in Australia but internationally which identified that many people in the community have the view that Brumbies deserve a place in the mountains as it has been there home for so long but more so they deserve better treatment and should be considered differently to other introduced animals.

Major bushfires in 2003 saw more than 50% of the Snowy Brumbies perish. The following years saw a complex change in brumby populations and their locations. With good growing seasons the populations recovered quickly and National Parks started major removal programs thereafter which only added to the complexity of their population dynamics and the areas they inhabited.

In 2016 the Kosciuszko National Park drafted a new management plan for the Snowy Brumbies. The plan intended to remove almost the total population only retaining 600 horses throughout the whole park. It also proposed the removal of Brumbies by shooting. The draft plan was overwhelmingly rejected by the public as was the biased public consultation process and saw major protests.

As a consequence, there was much lobbying by the Snowy Mountain community and in June 2018, the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act (KWHHAct 2018) was assented by the NSW parliament. The object of the Act *“is to recognise the heritage value of sustainable wild horse populations within parts of the Kosciuszko National Park and to protect that heritage.”* The Act directs the Minister to prepare a new Wild Horse Heritage plan of management.

In preparing the plan, the Minister is to seek advice from the Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel. According to the Act, the functions of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) is *“to provide advice to the minister on any matter relating to the identification of the heritage value of, and the management of, sustainable wild horse populations with Kosciuszko National Park.”*

To date the CAP has not discussed recognition nor introduced any identification of heritage values of wild horse populations as directed by the Act. Neither has there been any field inspections as requested to identify any impacts by horses which would go a long way to understanding other values which may be threatened but are vitally important and must also be protected. So far, the CAP has only discussed the conspicuous but typical ‘Wild Horse Removal plan’ and not a ‘Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan’. The discussions have been no different to any other futile consultations in the past. The management of Brumbies is not just simply removing them from the landscape, but other measures and controls must also be considered.

The intent of the KWHHAct 2018 legislation must be supported as it was absolutely endorsed by the people in last year’s democratically held state election. The Hon. John Barilaro MP introduced the legislation and then riding on the back of the “Brumby Bill” he was further given a mandate by the community by being re-elected to Parliament. **This election win had a record swing to Barilaro where he won every polling booth in the electorate which had never been done before. This is the highest recorded win in history in this electorate’s marginal seat. There is no doubt that the majority of the community value the heritage of the brumbies.**

It’s also appropriate here to relate the views of many unrepresented individuals, in particular long-term local residents and descendants of the mountain people. This report will demonstrate the history and ongoing existence and long-term heritage practices of the Brumbies in Kosciuszko.

It concludes that Snowy Mountain Brumbies have significant cultural heritage value to many people at all levels throughout Australia. It maintains that retaining wild horse populations in culturally and historically appropriate areas must be implemented and that management includes, if not driven by local community experience knowledge & practices. When Brumbies are managed well the heritage

significance remains intact and all natural and cultural values are protected equally. This is not just for the local communities but crucially also for the preservation of the Australian culture and identity.

There are no exact map lines drawn however localities within KNP have been identified which are of significance for our cultural heritage and the management of Brumbies:

1. Kiandra, Tantangara, Gooandra, Rules Point, Long Plain, Currango, Cooleman, and Peppercorn, and Coolamine areas
2. Pilot Wilderness: South of Cascades Hut, Tin Mines, Mt Pilot to Ingeegoodbee, Wombat Gully to Thatchers Mountain, Jacobs River to Pinch River to Willis, Cowambat flat areas.
3. Byadbo Wilderness: Bidli Creek, Pinch Mountain, Sandy Creek, Sheepstation Creek, Guttamura, Merambego and Black Jack Mountain area including Muzzlewood to Jacobs Ladder to Reedy Creek
4. Snowy Plains (Davies Hut area) – Botherum Plain

Although wild horses have also inhabited most of these areas below historically & extensively at times it is also acknowledged that today these areas should remain horse free.

- Main Range from Thredbo to Cabramurra (excluding Snowy Plains)
- Jagungal wilderness
- Lobbs Hole area, Yarrangobilly, Nungar Plain & east of Tantangara & Pocket Saddle Roads.
- Dead Horse Gap, Big Boggy, Cascades Hut, Bobs Ridge & Ramshead Ranges.

Methodology

This brief of the history of brumbies in Kosciusko is based on historical research encompassing several sources including National Parks & Wildlife Service publications & commissioned consultative and committee reports, online archives of newspapers and books, personally owned documentary books & videos, journals, diaries & photo collections and personal communications including:

- TROVE National Library of Australia Newspaper Search
- National Library of Australia
- NSW Archives
- Snowy Monaro Regional Council
- Researchgate
- NSW Land Registry Service

*The criteria for assessing cultural heritage values are based on those used in the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 and the Burra Charter of Australia ICOMOS1 (Marquis-Kyle and Walker 1994) to refer to qualities and attributes possessed by items that have **historic, aesthetic, scientific** or **social value** for past, present and future generations. These values may be seen in places and physical features but can also be associated with intangible qualities such as people's associations with or feelings for an item, or in other items described above such as cultural practices, knowledge, songs and stories.*

Cultural significance is a concept that helps in estimating the value of items. The items that are likely to be of significance are those that help to provide an understanding of the past or that enrich the present, and that will be of value to future generations.⁹

It should be remembered that the assessment of living animals, and in particular an introduced wild animal population as heritage is new ground both in Australia and overseas. The only known wild horse population on a heritage list is the Dartmoor Pony population of England, which are native to the landscape they continue to inhabit. The wild horse population is neither a place nor a value. In the national heritage assessment approach in Australia, the term 'attribute' is best applied.¹⁰

⁹ (Kosciusko National Park Independent Scientific Committee (ISC) 2002 An Assessment of the Values of Kosciusko National Park)

¹⁰ (CONTEXT) Melville, G., Johnston, C., Doyle., H & McLay, C (2015) 'National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment & Conflicting Values Report: The Wild Horse Population Kosciuszko National Park', Context Pty Ltd

CONTEXT

In 2015 a study was commissioned by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to better understand the cultural heritage values and conflicting values associated with the wild horse populations in Kosciusko National Park (KNP). Noted here as the CONTEXT report.

The CONTEXT report noted that wild horses were an attribute which was based on and met at least five of the criterion of the National Heritage Listing (NHL) of which is considered to have outstanding heritage value to the nation. CONTEXT also subsequently recommended that further research and projects are needed to gain an even better understanding of the relationships that people have with the horse populations as well as to better understand the conflicting issues and impacts on other values.

This report will *also* recommend that further research is needed but needs to include more participation of locals with identified long term family history in the area. There is much local history omitted to date both pre and post settlement. This would identify significant heritage values that includes wild horses (brumbies) in Kosciusko at Local, State and at National levels along with historical evidence of the spatial locations where the heritage identified horses should remain.

In the Kosciuszko National Park Draft Wild Horse Management Plan 2016, the CONTEXT assessment of the cultural heritage values of the wild horse population in the park detailed the cultural and social values that many people associate with the wild horse population, including those values outlined above. In the CONTEXT study the wild horse population in the park is considered as an 'attribute' of the place; the place being Kosciuszko National Park. The National Heritage List criteria and assessment guidelines were used to frame the assessment of the significance of wild horses in the park. The CONTEXT study drew on previous cultural heritage assessments relating to the listing of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves (which include the park) as a place on the National Heritage List.

In relation to KNP and wild horses, these meanings are intangible. They can be expected to be held by many of the visitors to KNP, and also will be held across the wider Australian community, many of whom may never visit KNP. The Burra Charter is very intentional in using the words 'respect', 'continue' and 'revive'. Meanings are cultural expressions that cannot be conserved except through a culture or subculture itself. Meaning should be expected to change over time, and the meanings described as 'Snowy Mountains' mythologies demonstrate this. However, it should not be expected that the meanings associated with wild horses will disappear; they may over time, or they may strengthen. Meanings can be respected through interpretation – through careful consideration of language for example – and by the continued engagement with those for whom those meanings are particularly important. The aesthetic values attributed to the experience of seeing wild horses in the landscape are related to the 'Snowy Mountains'

mythologies as well as to broader cultural values associated with the admired characteristics of horses. The opportunity to see wild horses in the landscape, particularly in places related to the history of pastoralism or locations evoked in literary sources offers a way to retain positive aesthetic values, just as reducing the likelihood of seeing a wild horse in a remote wilderness area helps retain that very different aesthetic experience. Opportunities to see wild horses could be presented as a special experience and made available in particular locations or through guided tours. (CONTEXT 2015)

The assessment found that the wild horse population in the park is an attribute associated with the cultural heritage significance of the park in relation to five of the nine criteria. The values associated with these criteria include:

- *Historical values associated with the High Country pastoralism and the ‘Alps experience’ that contribute to the national identity. (Criterion a).*

- *Cultural values associated with alpine pastoral landscapes, particularly the north-east Kosciuszko landscape, that demonstrate the pastoral way of life. Wild horses are a key element of the pastoral landscape, as are the alpine and subalpine terrain, extensive grasslands, huts, pastoral properties, the bushmen/women, former stock routes and historical narrative.*

(Criterion d).

- *Aesthetic values associated with the uniquely wild and remote alpine landscapes that represent a cultural icon with Mount Kosciuszko as a defining image in the minds of Australians. The wild horses are a tangible attribute associated with the positive experience that some people have when witnessing wild horses in the landscape. There is a strong aesthetic appreciation of the ‘Australian brumby’ across the Australian community and the High Country community.*

(Criterion e).

- *Social values associated with the love of the High Country cultural landscape and The Man from Snowy River legend – a value derived from the long social and cultural history associated with pastoralism in the area. The landscape, the legend, and past pastoral activities have reached iconic status in the nation-building mythology of Australia. (Criterion g).*

- *The High Country environment and landscape – the Snowy River and Main Range/Cascade Hut in particular – have had an important role in the lives and works of significant people, in particular writer Elyne Mitchell (Silver Brumby series) and AB ‘Banjo’ Paterson (The Man from Snowy River). (Criterion h).¹¹*

¹¹ (CONTEXT) Melville, G., Johnston, C., Doyle., H & McLay, C (2015) ‘National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment & Conflicting Values Report: The Wild Horse Population Kosciuszko National Park’, Context Pty Ltd

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage identified values and the heritage of the Man from Snowy River community - intrinsically linked:

Historical significance

The Wild Horses Of Kosciusko

Today, in the little known country round Kosciusko, thousands of wild horses, or brumbies, roam the ranges. They are the descendants of horses belonging to the early settlers, which, lost or turned out because of age by their owners, found their way up into the mountains and remained there. This article tells how they are captured during the summer months, and are later taken to Victoria to be sold.

Wild Horses Of Kosciusko (1948, October 14). *Chronicle (Adelaide, SA)*

There is much evidence of wild horses being present at one time or another in the whole of the Kosciusko/Monaro Region from East to West across the Great Dividing Range and from the Victorian border in the south to the Australian Capital Territory border in the north.

Since the early to mid 1800s, wild horses have roamed throughout the current boundaries of the now Kosciusko National Park throughout most of the park's varying landscapes, elevations and ecosystems.

Cattle and sheep were also seen in their 'tens of thousands' at least seasonally for well over a century. During this time the actual numbers of wild horses continually fluctuated in all areas. Grazing of livestock in snow leashed areas would mean the controlling of the wild horses also. Horses were culled or removed sporadically and horses were also further released into the areas to improve bloodlines or for pasturing. Snow, fire and drought have played a role in reducing numbers of horses as did good years for their return but the horsemen took the role of predator.

It is known that at times horses were seen in great numbers at different times and different locations and at other times were found to be elusive.

James Spencer Snr and later Jnr lived at West Point (Waste Point). From the 1840s father and son were both mountain guides to many scientists including Clement Wragge, Von Lendenfeld and Von Mueller in 1851. Several journals and diaries include notes of wild horses to be seen on these journeys as well as the guide's protection of their riding and pack horses from the brumbies.

However, since grazing was abolished from the main range areas the brumbies have seldom returned and are now replaced with manmade and permanent tourist resorts and associated infrastructure that ironically developed in their place.

The wild horses of the Snowy Mountains are historically significant to many Australians nationwide and locally:

- Brumbies are evidence of the distinctive way of life of people who lived in the mountains of which has a unique culture to the rest of Australia.
- Similar to the First People who would gather in summer on the high plains for ceremonies and Bogong Moth feasting and came from different areas surrounding the mountains, the new settlers also gathered together in the high country coming from all over the mountain districts to attend events and festivities like brumby runs, rodeos, sporting days and races.
- The brumbies are associated with the history of pastoralism in the Mountain districts which included long-term relationships with the surrounding & neighbouring mountain people as well as the Traditional Owners and pastoralists from both sides of the mountains.

The Men from Snowy River

“The words been passed around about the Men from Snowy River, Their story wasnt forgotten and not allowed to wither, For a wise and strong Bugeenj woman who listened to her Elders, Nurtured the seed of future story tellers’

The connection between my family (Hoskin and Mundy) and the Brumby (Australian Wild Horse) isn't that well known. The Mundy side of my ancestry also lived at Delegate Aboriginal reserve (gazetted 1892 - 1957) on the Monaro, and also at Wollondibby within the Koskiosko National Park. The Mundy's are Ngarigo people. Living at Wollondibby close to the Alps would have been central to capturing the Brumby from the wild before the long and arduous journey driving the horses to the coast.

Some of the horses would have made their way onto farms, but its also possible that some made it to the front lines of the Second Boer War 1899-1902 in south Africa, as the timelines coincide. And brumbies were used within this war. This is where the legendary Australian Light Horse first seen military action.

Jack Hoskins and his family lived upon the Aboriginal Reserve at Blackfellows Lake/Lagoon (then called Cohens Lake). There were two reserves at Blackfellows Lake. The first Aboriginal reserve was gazetted in 1883 (R895 - 112 acres) before being revoked. The second reserve (R17616 - 55 acres) at Blackfellows Lake was gazetted in 1893 with our family recorded on the reserve up to 1925. This second reserve, which encompassed part of the first reserve was created for Jack Hoskins and his

family. Aboriginal Protection Board records make reference to the local Bega police constable recommending land acquisitions up to 40 acres each for Aboriginal families on the Bega River.

The Aboriginal reserve at Blackfellows Lake is where the Brumbies were rested and tamed. They were then taken to the old steamers at Tathra wharf. Agricultural works, for their own food and produce for external markets, was also carried out on the reserve. Our family also had interests in the fishing industry within the Bega River, and off the coast of Tathra. This was my family living between two cultures...adapting...surviving....trying to provide for kin via shared contribution.

Our collective journey is one that requires us to acknowledge OUR collective past and strive to right the wrongs and realise justice is possible. This is a shared history, not a segregated one...it depends on how you view it I suppose. It's a shared history, the good along with the bad. Our family story about our interwoven history with the Brumby, as told by our Elders, is one that reminds us that reconnecting with our past can be a powerful connector to conversation, ideas and possibilities that can unify rather than divide. Which is, within itself, a giant leap towards justice and healing for everyone.¹²



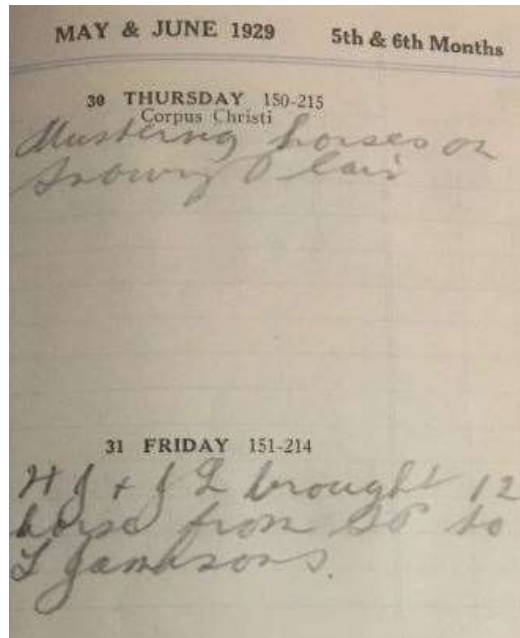
George Day mustering brumbies near Charlottes Pass for the annual rodeo 1948 (Photo by Fitzpatrick NLA)

A report in the Alpine Pioneer on 28th December 1860 describes how a party of 'enterprising gentlemen' including an American, Mr Inchcliffe, climbed from the Thredbo/Crackenback diggings to the top of the adjacent mountain range. The climb took upwards of three hours and once on top the party found remnant snow drifts three feet thick. The report said, 'On ascending the table land, immense herds of wild horses were seen, which it would be

¹² David Dixon, Ngarigo and Djiringanj mawa (male) "Retelling of my elders story of Ngarigo, Djiringanj and the Brumby... The Men from Snowy River

impossible to drive in.' It would appear that the party had climbed the Ramshead Range and looked out across the alpine country in the vicinity of Perisher Valley. Clearly the horses they saw had been in the area for some time.

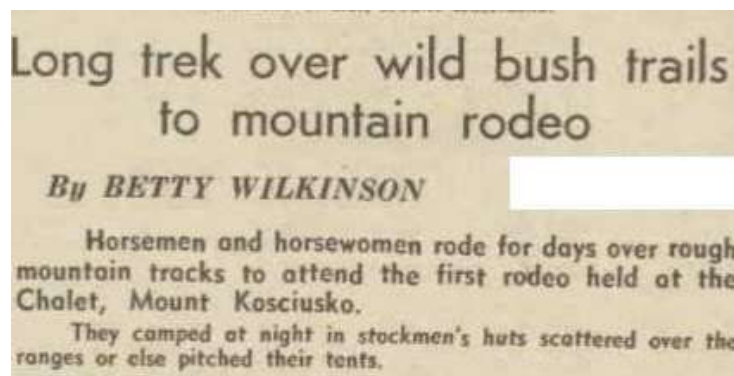
(Hugh Capel 2003 Kiandra Gold 'historical facts')



Jardine Family diaries at Bullenbalong 1929.

"HJ & JL Brought 12 horses from Snowy Plains to yards at Tom Jamiesons"

Lisa (Jardine) Rowbotham collection



"Some of the horses were turned originally out on the mountains where they were running with hundreds of brumbies. One, who gave a good exciting show of buckjumping, had never been ridden before. Snowy River horsemen think a lot of these mountain ponies for when they catch them nowadays by yards in unexpected places putting salt in them.

"The horses will come around to get salt," said veteran Leo Byatt, who has ridden them for 50 years. "They would come right into the Chalet if there were no people about."

"FOR THE BUSHMEN LOVE HARD RIDING" The Australian Women's Weekly 23 February 1946 (above)



Hotel Kosciusko (Charlottes Pass) Rodeo (NLA)

"Hackney" writes:-"I have heard boundary-riders and farmers' sons say that the wild horses or brumbies running at large in the mountainous country about Mt Kosciusko when broken were the finest horses they ever handled, having great, strength and endurance, not having been pampered in stables as the more finely formed racehorses are. So it is in America, The wild horses on the great range of Texas, California, Oregon, and Dakota when broken to the saddle, make the best sort of army, and cavalry horses-hardy sturdy beasts..."¹³

¹³ HORSE-BREEDING. (1900, July 28). *The Australasian*

Snowy River March.

On the 6th January there will start out on its pilgrimage to the metropolis from Delegate the route march known as **The Men from Snowy River Route March.** This is a march distinct from any other route march owing to the environment of the people through which it passes. The famous Manaro brumby is noted for its staying qualities, whilst the man from Snowy River for his fine physique and stamina.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer Tuesday 21 December 1915

Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Tuesday 4 November 1941.

ARMY STILL NEEDS HORSES

Transport and Cavalry

CARE AND SKILL IN TRAINING

BY A STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Australian Light Horse in its last series of camps, which ended in May, used nearly 10,000 horses, while 4,000 remounts are permanently on army duty in Australia.

Horses for the remount depots are always obtained unbroken. Many of the best draft were taken from the unbridled freedom of Kiangra and the slopes of the Southern Tablelands.

Aesthetic significance

Wild Horses do have high aesthetic significance and value when included in some natural landscapes. For many people the nature and integrity of the landscape that includes horses is closely related to their own spiritual and cultural values. This visual appeal includes the sensory perception and appreciation of the horses' freedom, strength and wildness. Catching just a glimpse of elusive brumbies running through the bush and hearing the galloping stampede of hooves or a whinnying call from one horse to another can be breathtakingly exhilarating and thrilling for many.

Some people feel that the horses can add a kind of beauty and cultural meaning which has exceptional aesthetic value as they are a defining inhabitant in these unique landscapes. There is also a simple admiration for the horses that cope and adapt to the inhospitable elements. All this has obviously stirred strong emotions and associations with humans in these remote and wild landscapes for over a century in one way or another.

A barren and almost industrial landscape of disturbed and damaged gold diggings at Kiandra for example can look cold and uninteresting and even ugly, so is not considered worthy until a wild horse adds its noble majesty to the frame which instantly changes and heightens the senses.

While it is acknowledged that some may feel that horses on some landscapes have negative aesthetic values it is equally true of some manmade items that is ironically deemed valued.

A national icon celebrated by another national icon:



The remains of the pastoral theme in the mountains history, especially the huts, and their exotic domestic plantings in a unique and beautiful mountain setting along with the brumbies have a very strong connection and appeal to many visitors and especially to locals imbued with their pastoral traditions. Our past history, our stories, myths and legends as well as the remains that are left behind have been used for more than a century by famous Australians to create works of literature and art which continue to be nationally recognised and still celebrated today and which form a part of the national psyche. A principle inclusion in the pastoral theme of old is the wild horses as expressed in Kosciusko and is of national aesthetic significance.

Truscott et al. (2006:134) argued that the national threshold for social value of the Australia Alps generally is reached because of the iconic status of the place and the Australian community's sense of national identity based on cultural myths such as 'The Man from Snowy River', originating in 1890, and continues as one of the central nation-building narratives of post-colonial Australia. This symbolism has its roots in the simple but aesthetically evocative image of horses in the wild mountainous landscape — often linked to the horses' mere presence in the landscape ...¹⁴

¹⁴ (CONTEXT)



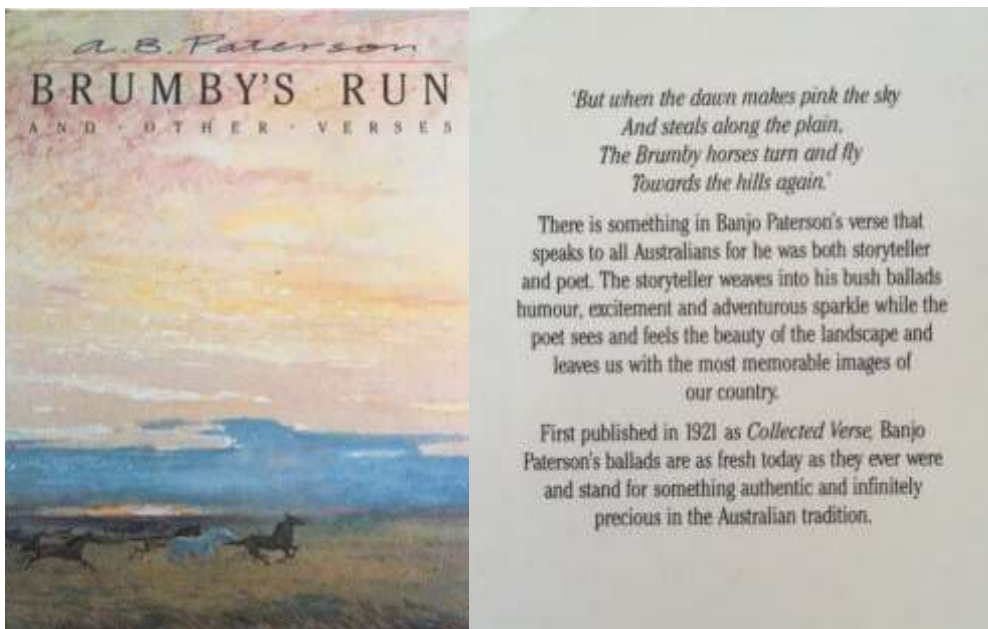
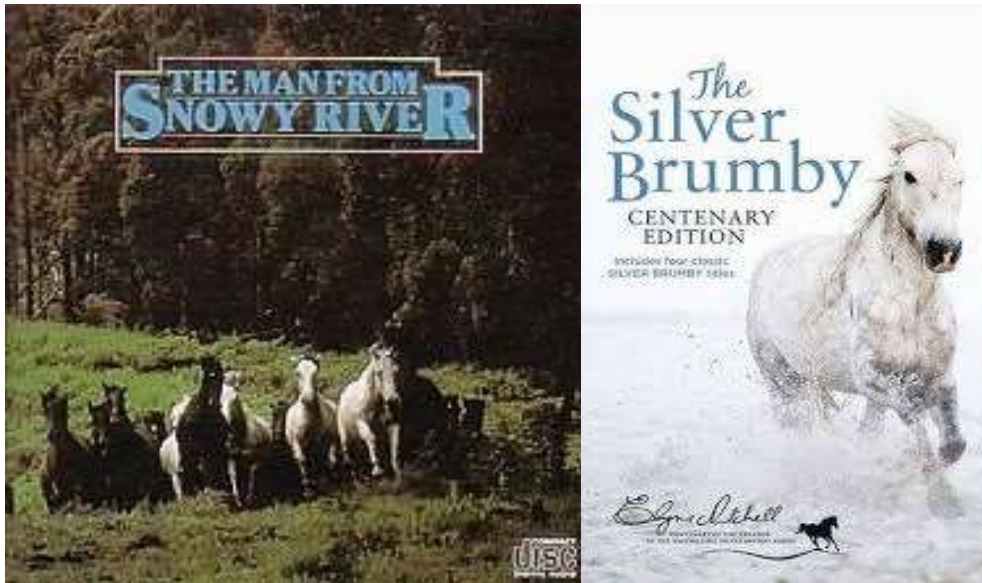
Carol Hancock Photography

Several generations of Australians grew up reading or knowing of the Silver Brumbies series of books (famous and still in print for 60 years) or has watched the Man from Snowy River movies or TV shows. Maybe they have visited the long running 25 years Man from Snowy River Bush Festivals or the Gold Coast's theme park of the Outback Spectacular started by the Man from Snowy River Spectacular which had booked out tours around Australia in 2002 to 2004. There are also hundreds of smaller celebrations of the same brumby themed celebrations of our history continuing today around Australia.

The majority of the audiences all long to see the real brumbies of the Snowy Mountains in the flesh to tick off their bucket list, or to start a new love affair with the mountains. The Snowy brumbies are loved by people from all walks of life. Without needing any personal connections to their history, many just cherish the sometimes 'once in a lifetime' experience and to photograph the wild horses in real time.

Although the Snowy brumbies were already acknowledged locally for decades before the famous poem, The Banjo then brought them to the world via the Bulletin in 1890.

Later in 1958 Elyne Mitchell who lived at the foot of the mountains carried the baton even further when she brought the brumbies to *life* in the Australian bush. They amongst many other writers and artists celebrated the brumbies in poetry, paintings or literature. They can today be very glad that the story of the brumbies is still told well over 100 years later but in now beautiful photographs and digital video shared around the world in an instant.



The Kosciusko NP wild horse population is recognised as a tangible attribute associated with the positive aesthetic experience of witnessing wild horses in the landscape. This appears likely to reach the national threshold due to the strong aesthetic appreciation attributed to the 'Australian brumby' across the Australian community (and linked to the Snowy River mythologies), and by the High Country community for the same reason, as well as for their more intimate aesthetic connection to the KNP landscape, their own histories and to wild horses.¹⁵

¹⁵ (CONTEXT)

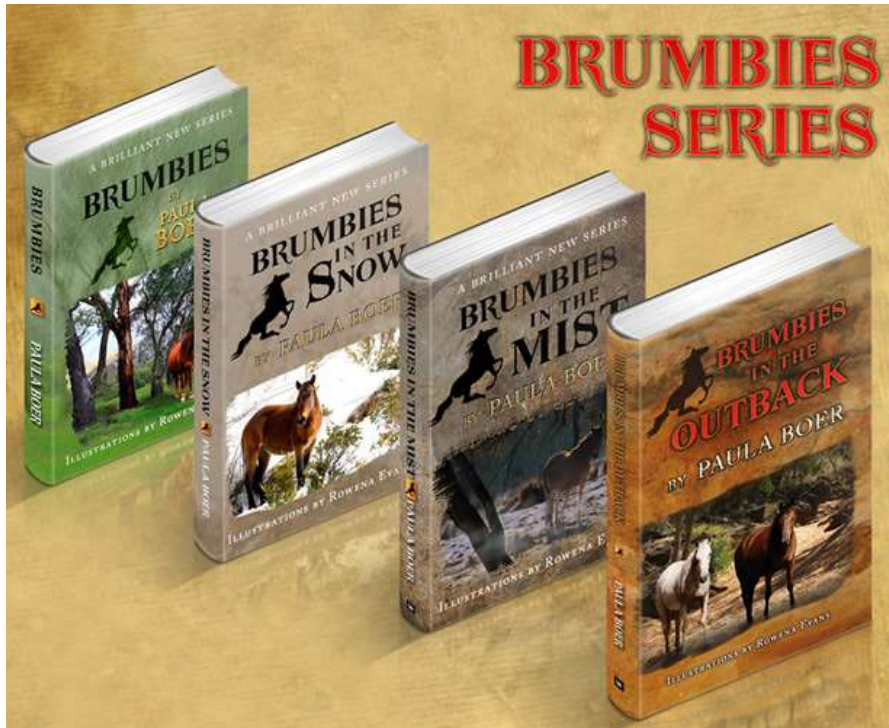
Not many other introduced animals to Australia can lay claim to being the subject of several famous creative works of excellence that the brumbies have. Works of art, poetry and literature were popular in the last century as brumbies were a common theme. Today it is no different and modern artists still see quality and significant meaning and value in the brumbies.



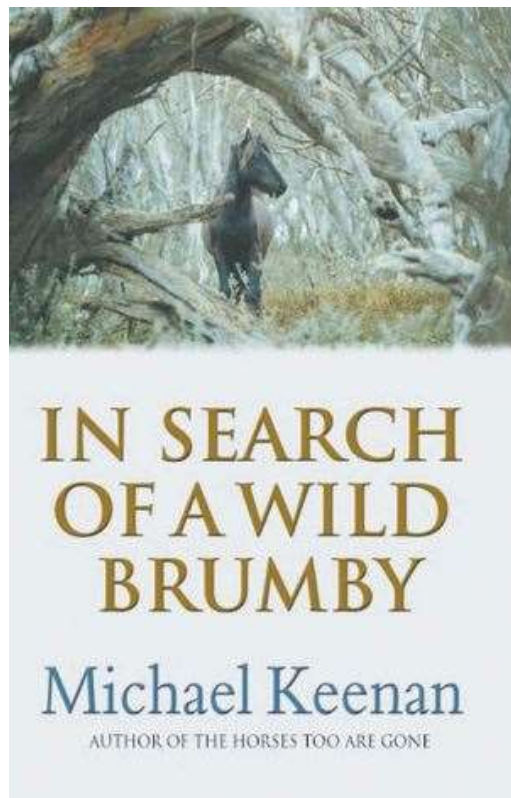
Kevin Best: Brumbies in the Snow, Brumbies Hideaway...and others



Darcy Doyle: Brumbies in flight, Brumbies Run ...and others



Paula Boer: Brumbies, Brumbies in the Snow, Brumbies in the Mist, Brumbies in the outback



Michael Keenan: In search of a wild brumby, Horses too are gone, Wild horses don't swim & Last horse Standing.

There are numerous talented photographers with portfolios full of wonderful images of brumbies in the Snowy Mountains. These images are shared around the world generally but it is not uncommon to see as posters or framed prints on display in many tourist retail outlets, accommodation houses and resorts and public houses as well as in many corporate type office work environments. The brumby images are also popular as calendars, postcards and even cushion covers. There is no end to the appreciation of this beautiful imagery that is most popular in the community.



Snowy Mountains Brumby Photography



Australian Brumby Photography





Social significance

“These values may be seen in places and physical features but can also be associated with intangible qualities such as people’s associations with or feelings for an item, or in cultural practices, knowledge, songs and stories.”¹⁶

Kosciuszko Wild Horses without doubt are known to have outstanding social significance to the local community and the Australian community at large because of their historical and cultural associations. Brumbies are recognised and esteemed by associated communities as a part of their story and their identity. Many locals and non-locals venture to the brumby areas to horse ride or hike and photograph. The brumbies evoke a sense of freedom and history in the landscape and have a strong visual appeal to many.

Brumbies are intrinsic to communities’ sense of wellbeing and, if removed from the landscape would result in a strong sense of loss.

¹⁶ (Sharon Sullivan and Jane Lennon. *Cultural Values*, KNP Independent Scientific Committee (ISC) 2002)

The current plight of the brumbies being played out in social media further demonstrates the continuance of strong community associations with them in the bush and the deep meanings and feelings arising from those connections.

*'The KNP wild horse population is recognised as a tangible attribute associated with this value, again one of a suite of tangible and intangible attributes, and strongly evidenced in the continual appearance of the 'Snowy River brumby' in the Australian and High Country communities' public realm of expression.'*¹⁷

The pioneering history of the high country is valued as an important part of the construction of the Australian identity featuring in myths, legends and literature. The ballad "The Man from Snowy River" epitomises horsemanship undertaken historically in the rugged landscape. The stories, legends and myths of the mountains and mountain lifestyles have been romanticised in books, films, songs, and television series and many such as the Elyne Mitchell's Silver Brumby novels are part of Australia's national identity.

¹⁸

There continues to be numerous relevant local events held annually as well as many more national shows and multi-media events all significantly celebrating the heritage of the Man from Snowy River and his Snowy Mountains brumbies. This demonstrates the continuing popularity and the national iconic status of the brumbies and the horsemen.

Combined, these establish that the brumbies are a symbol as a reminder of a past times including traditional and historic associations.

¹⁷ CONTEXT 2015

¹⁸ (National Heritage Listing)

Even our great grandmothers rode brumbies. Alice & Charlotte Adams Jindabyne (1920)



Jindabyne 1930s



Personal collection

Local Festivals

- Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Assoc annual 'Man from Snowy River Mountain Muster' - Winners of the "Canberra Regional Awards for Culture".
- The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival – 25 years Annual event over a week in Corryong
- The Snowy River Festival – Annually Dalgety
- Mountain Cattlemen Association of Victoria's Get Togethers – Vic. Annual circuit of several high country districts
- Mansfield Great Mountain Race – annually Mansfield Victoria.
- Australian Mountain Racing Australia – Annual Circuit of Vic & NSW high country riders.
- Annual Man from Snowy River Rodeo – Jindabyne. Boxing Day annually since 1940
- Adaminaby Stockmens Challenge
 - Murrarundi Stockmens challenge, Gundagai Stockmens Challenge and others

Major National Media Events that celebrate our heritage

- The Man from Snowy River – feature movie
- The Man from Snowy River II, Return to Snowy River – feature movie
- The Man from Snowy River, The MacGregor Saga - TV Series
- The Silver Brumby – feature movie
- The Silver Brumby children TV shows
- The Silver Brumby book series over 60 years
- The Man from Snowy River Arena Spectacular – stage show tour of Australian cities
- The Man from Snowy River show – annual Sydney Royal Easter Show
- The Gold Coast Outback spectacular theme park “High Country Horses” theme
- The Opening of Olympic Games Sydney



In comparison with other wild horse populations, the KNP wild horse population strongly represents the ‘Snowy Mountains’ mythologies, notably through the influence of Paterson and Mitchell, as well as having an historical connection to the High Country cultural landscape created through pastoralism. The wild horse population is also valued for the aesthetic qualities of wildness.

- *The horses played an important role in the cultural history of the region;*
- *They have a strong association with some sections of the local communities in the Kosciuszko area and the direct descendants of pastoralists and pastoral workers;*
- *The stories and traditions associated with them have a strong association with a group of people of importance in the cultural history of Australia — poets, artists and writers in the pastoral tradition; and*

- *The most celebrated wild horses in the Australian pastoral tradition are those associated with Kosciuszko, which have to some extent become a national icon, along with their riders and musterers, as demonstrated in literature, art, film and the ‘Man from Snowy River’ sequence that opened the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.¹⁹*

The (Context) analysis also found that there are no wild horse populations outside the Australian Alps that better represent the three key value themes identified, although some other wild horse populations may embody similar values such as identity-building within communities, cultural memories of past land uses and cultural practices, and ideas of the untamed natural landscape. Unlike comparable wild horse populations within Australia, KNP and the Victorian Alps’ wild horses are the only populations directly associated with ‘The Man from Snowy River’ legend, which was in turn inspired by the Snowy Mountains landscape. For some members of the Australian community, KNP’s wild horses represent powerful ideas of horsemanship in the mountains and the mountain lifestyle expressed in ‘The Man from Snowy River’ legend. This legend and associated ‘brumby’ mythologies of Elyne Mitchell form an integral part of Australian folklore and Australia’s national identity in the present. The wild horses continue to represent a dichotomy between civilisation and wildness, being seen simultaneously as domesticated assets of pastoral occupation and as wild natural creatures in a natural mountain landscape.²⁰



The Man from Snowy River Re-enactment at

¹⁹ (ISC REPORT 2002 Cultural Values)

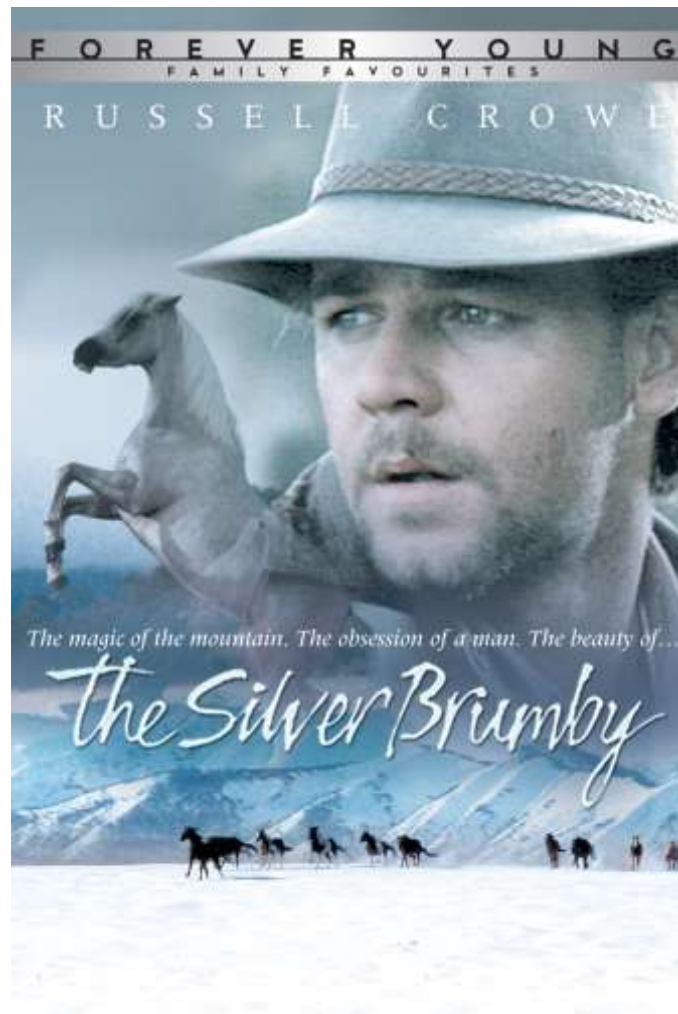
²⁰ (CONTEXT)

The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival, Corryong 2019

Thousands of visitors waiting for the brumbies to arrive
'at the bottom of that terrible descent'....



High Country – Myths and Legends at the
Australian Outback Spectacular



As the television images and thousands of photos taken at that moment still show, The massive black animal was power incarnate, an expression of the ultimate in horsemanship. And on his back The Man from Snowy River had come alive to welcome the World to Sydney. The world's attention was gripped The organisers had done it – they found the image that identified Australia to the world! They had brought Australia's bush legend to life²¹

²¹ (Evan McHugh Outback Heroes 2004)



“Some nations are lucky enough to have a national poem, a work that encapsulates the national character, that speaks of its history and unfolds its ideals at the same time...Paterson’s genius was to capture, in 13 stanzas and six and a half minutes those things that are quintessentially Australian. The larrikin spirit, the never-say-die determination, the identification with the underdog, the national right to a fair go – they’re all there in Snowy.....Some say our sympathy for the battler is a heritage of our convict past, when we were all underdogs and seeing the toffs take a spill would make our day. But even for us New Australians, children of two traditions, it is precisely those traditions embodied in Snowy that make us most want to identify as Australian. I think we were all surprised just how proud we felt when that lone rider came out and cracked his whip, that night at Homebush. But really, we shouldn’t have been. After all, Australia is probably the only country in the world where every citizen knows at least one line by the national poet”²²

²² (Ignatius Jones - Co-creative Director of Sydney 2000 Olympic Opening Ceremony)



The ACT Brumbies Rugby Union team – ‘the team’s logo – the Brumby, which is the fearless wild horse that roams wild in packs in the Alpine country south of Canberra’.²³

The relationship between humans and horses is long-standing and horses continue to be held in high regard as domesticated animals that support human endeavours. While this value may be primarily connected to domesticated horses and other evidence of their important role, the history of KNP demonstrates that the releasing, re-capturing and harvesting of wild horses formed a part of pastoral activity in the High Country.

However, KNP (along with the adjoining conservation reserves in Victoria and the ACT) appears to offer the strongest evidence of specific narratives and values associated with High Country pastoral activities and transhumance, as well as with brumby running and brumbies in Australian mountain and alpine landscapes.

24



The National Icon on our currency

²³ (A short history of the Brumbies – The Runner Sports)

²⁴ (CONTEXT)



The National Icon on our postal stamp

“The pastoral theme as expressed in Australia's highest mountains has strong social value, demonstrated in the very active continuation of and celebration of its traditions and the respect for its physical remains including its pastoral landscapes, wild horses, and stock routes. The Man from Snowy River is known in many households around Australia. In this sense the social value of the theme is of national importance. The most celebrated wild horses in the Australian pastoral tradition are those associated with Kosciuszko, which have to some extent become a national icon, along with their riders and musterers, as demonstrated in literature, film and the Man from Snowy River sequence which opened the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.”²⁵

Jane Lennon 2002 Australian Heritage Commissioner

²⁵ (Jane Lennon 2002 Australian Heritage Commissioner. The Cultural Significance Of Australian Alpine Areas, International Year of Mountains Conference)

At the Local Level – Man from Snowy River country

‘From the beginning, there has been a series of major problems in local relationships, and sometimes deep and long enduring resentment of the park. There are many residents who have a real sense of attachment to the park, but that is not very evident to the visitor. The commercial sector and in particular the ski resort industry, totally dominates...’

‘In so far as the social dimensions of park management have already been considered, this has been based primarily in the utilitarian spheres of recreation, tourism and public education. There has been little or no exploration of the spiritual, ideological, and community identity elements of the park experience; we know all too little about how people perceive or value the park experience, or what that experience really means to them.’²⁶



A brumby welcome at the entrance to the Snowy Monaro ACT/NSW border by Snowy Monaro Regional Council



The Man from Snowy River welcome at Cooma Centennial Park by Snowy Monaro Regional Council

²⁶ (Elery Hamilton –Smith Social Values Independent Scientific Committee 2002)



A demonstration of the Delegate community's value and celebration of 'The Brumbies' in the main street



The Man from Snowy River at Corryong Victoria on the western side of the mountains

The above repetitive theme undeniably states that the Snowy brumbies have played a very significant role in the Australian story. At the local level the brumbies have a much more personal and deeper importance as they are an integral part of our local history and culture in the Snowy Mountains. Since colonial settlement of all the mountain districts, wild horses were never far away and a huge part of the story.

It is true that some of our ancestors did not always look kindly on the wild horses. In the early days most of the whole region was unfenced and consequently the brumbies were considered pests to be loathed as they competed against the domestic livestock for forage & grazing just as the deer and kangaroos do today. Unfenced land holdings and new ventures of pastoral enterprises starting out meant they were also a threat to domestic horses to cross breed or worse to actually *"join the wild bush horses"*. Brumbies were often shot or snared and used for

their hides. In the very early days it was a matter of survival in the wilderness and wild horses were a plentiful resource for various needs.

As the years passed, the mountain community started to warm to the brumbies. Chasing of brumbies was soon considered a sport and the good types caught were used for mounts or bred and released again. The Boer war also saw many of the wild horses then a valued commodity as horses were wanted by the army as well as for stock work.

Following many decades of fairly disparaging attitudes towards wild horses, there was a discernible shift in the 1880s and 1890s in popular attitudes to the wild mountain horses. Terms such as 'splendid' and 'magnificent' begin to be applied to the wild horses of the district. A sales notice for a pastoral run in the Kiandra district in 1880, for example, advertised '200 splendid wild horses on the run' (Queanbeyan Age, 28 Jan 1880). An article on the Upper Murray District in 1885 noted the wild horses that occupied the nearby Snowy Mountains on the border between Victoria and NSW. A local pastoralist named Findlay declared, 'he did not let his horses run on the back hills as there was danger that they would join the mobs of wild horses that are frequently found in the high mountains'. The article continued: 'These horses are said to be remarkably swift and agile, and whenever seen are always in excellent condition' (North Eastern Ensign (Benalla), 24 Nov 1885).²⁷

The close relationship of brumbies with some in the local community was never a secret but is mostly unknown today. For generations, the mountain horsemen grew up listening to their forefather's stories of dash and danger and of bravery and endurance. Just like 130 years ago many claimed to be the subject of the famous "Man" and today the competition is still just as strong. This is demonstrated today in "Challenge" events around Australia. Every generation of riders is never as good as the last generation before it in their own eyes. The bushmen continue to show honour and reverence for those who rode before them and it is equally thought of the horses.

This culture has not disappeared it has merely evolved to suit the era. The world has now grown larger around the mountains. Tourism has seen a major expansion into the mountains in recent decades. Many newcomers are unfamiliar with this heritage however many newcomers also came *because* of that heritage. Although resorts and infrastructure have now taken over the grazing runs and development and bitumen roads has replaced the stock routes, there are still some families today continuing to carry on the traditions.

Some people cannot grasp the social and often emotional connection. It has been said that the blame lies with Banjo Patterson for leading us astray with his romantic poetry and then say that he was fraudulent in his descriptions of the wild horses and that they were purely make believe.

²⁷ (CONTEXT)

As we here in the Snowy all know, the Banjo did in fact spend a lot of time here in the mountains with our own families and the stockmen. Banjo saw the magic all first-hand. The magic is very real and common knowledge to those of us who have been lucky enough to experience it.

Here in the Snowy the Brumbies are an integral part of our high- country heritage and its folklore. They reflect the history of our ancestors, a history that in this part of the world gives us our own identity of which we are rapidly losing.

The Snowy Mountains Stockmen now almost extinct, rightly or wrongly had their cattle taken from the mountains, then their homes and history flooded for Hydro-Electricity and more recently their way of life of riding their horses in the mountains was prohibited too.

The horsemanship, bush craft and bush lore that was once passed down and celebrated by Australians is all but gone. What is there left now if not for the brumbies to even demonstrate that our history ever existed.²⁸

The horsemen have come of age over the last century with their horsemanship and skills, their knowledge and treatment of their own domestic horses and also with brumbies. More than ever before, horsemen are now at their best. They are thirsty for knowledge to give the horses a better deal and to learn from them. Horsemanship has changed dramatically from what it once was and is continually evolving. It is acknowledged that we never stop learning about and from these special animals. These special skills are demonstrated and celebrated in many equine disciplines today but most particularly in stockman's challenges that indeed include brumby events for all to see.

²⁸ (Leisa Caldwell - Why the Emotion? - Response to 2002 KNP Wild Horse Steering Committee on Guy Fawkes massacre)

Scientific significance

The Wild horses of KNP could have very high scientific significance in the potential to yield information that will contribute to a better understanding of:

- horse impacts on environments (positive and negative)
- horse impacts on human behaviour (psychology/therapy)
- understanding horse behaviour
- population management

The modern species of Equus has been around for at least a million years. Humans hunted horses for food and their hides from around 50,000 years ago. Something special happened around 6,000 to 8,000 years ago when the horse became domesticated by man.

Humanity and civilisation was transformed thanks to horses. The horse and man relationship and *later* the wheel, combined gave a great boost to man's ability on earth and consequently the civilised world evolved.

This 21st century is now seeing for the very first time ever in human history that horses are no longer needed for the mainstay of civilisation (transport, fieldwork, food or war). The horse carried us into wars, and by our side died for us as partners for thousands of years and still continue by our side as pets and partners. Horses have been a part of our own evolution since the beginning of human time and so instinctively for many people today wild horses in particular evoke very deep feelings in us. There is no other species on the planet with such a record as horses have had interacting and partnering humans whether it be as a beast of burden, or as man's best friend. The inter-connection is still as strong as it ever was.

We are learning more about our connections with horses every day. The bond between horses and humans is profound and emotional and now there is plenty of evidence that horses both wild and domesticated can be utilised in mental health therapy programs around the world.

Horses are now known to be healers and teachers. This intimate response to horses is well known in groups who use horses for therapy for disabled and autistic people for example.

RDA (Riding with the disabled) now have thousands of established volunteer groups around the world specific to helping people of all ages with mental and physical disabilities. They know the profound effect that horses can have for therapy.

Throughout time horses have held a certain allure and mystery for human beings.... horses have a mythical significance; the wild horse represents the uncontrollable instinctual urge of the unconscious, whilst the horse also stands for the magical side of the person, the intuitive mother within. Horses are also rich with metaphoric possibility. In the Bible the horse is most often depicted in battle. Speed, endurance, strength, beauty, and loyalty are characteristics associated with horses. ²⁹

1. Horses, just by their large, gentle presence, put people therapeutically in touch with the vitality of being alive.
2. People who ordinarily shun physical and emotional closeness often can accept closeness from a horse and through therapy can transfer these skills to their daily lives.
3. The behaviour of a sensitive horse display the rider's emotions to the therapist and provides a vehicle the therapist can use to teach the patient coping skills.
4. Therapists with an interest in horses can learn more about how to become involved in an equine-facilitated psychotherapy practice through the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association

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Wild horses are also being further used for helping rehabilitate prisoners and returned veterans with PTSD. Some people prefer to just seek them out in the wild to sit and watch them in harmony with nature. Should brumbies need to be removed from the National Park, they can continue to contribute to the health of the human species in ways that we still don't fully understand.

People of all ages can benefit from Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP)

Some specific client challenges include: behavioural issues, Attention Deficit Disorder, anger management, conflict resolution, relationship problems, couples therapy, depression, anxiety, stress, substance abuse, eating disorders, at-risk youth, victims of abuse, those in bereavement, those lacking self-esteem, veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, people who are unresponsive to traditional therapies, and people with other mental health challenges. EAP is also used for corporate retreats, group and family sessions. ³¹

²⁹ (Randy Zasloff 2009 Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy: An Outcome Study)

³⁰ (Anne Bates June 2002 of patients & horses. Equine-facilitated psychotherapy)

³¹ (Laura Trask Ph.D. Wild Thoughts 2010 Psychology Today)

Horses Heal our Hearts and Can Heal our Lands



Horses carry the Wisdom of Healing
in their hearts
and offer it
to any humans
who possess
the Humility
to Listen ...

Tackfully Done

Private Messages received:

“I am a client with beyond blue and I am suffering with severe depression.why am I saying this is simple when the world is hard on my shoulders I head to the mountains to see the brumbies running free . It's my therapy it's my time and space to forget about everything. To sit and watch them graze all day to sit have lunch with them and to just be there makes my life feel fresh and happy again. Its like they absorb all negativity. Working all the time with nowhere to escape and when u find the place they are now distorting it . Some people wont admit it but they go out there to cry to feel free of pressure and the general day to day life experiences.” ANON

“My best mate and I share the same thing escaping to the snowies to just be at peace to relax in the bush to see the brumbies wonder freely we go searching for them and get all excited when we sight them we count them quickly take photos and go wow check that little fella out hehehehehe. We both live it up there it's the land of the free. A slice of heaven wrapped up in those big beautiful brown eyes . As you look into them it's like there taking out what's bothering your mind and easing it away. It's like a breath of fresh air been sent back through you starting from the grass roots up . Touching your blood flowing through your veins that pumps eventually into your heart . The cold fresh air that comes from their snout blows towards your face and you breathe it deep with in your lungs that slice of air is the cold snap of life been reborn into your body . A tear rolls down your face not of sadness but of happiness . Because you could see this majestic free animal for one more time .

When I head there I head there to be reborn I head there for a slice of heaven a slice of the meaning why we work so hard . A slice of silent thank you . There is no greed there is no politeness there is no crime there is no humanity crimes . Please save our brumbies.” ANON

There is much to learn from our wild horses.

So far it has been refused to investigate any benefits to the natural environment in Australia by wild horses. Any benefits are dispelled automatically in Australia simply because horses are not native. If horses were human this would be deemed discriminatory.

If government wants to sincerely rely on scientific evidence alone then all values and impacts should be rigorously researched. All literature today tells us that there are still many knowledge gaps. Yet to date, there has been no long-term independent field studies on impacts (good or bad) of wild horses in Kosciusko. Too many assume that the grazing era studies suffice when we know that horses are a totally different grazing herbivore to that of cattle and sheep on the environment and can have benefits if managed properly.

Australian authorities are quick to reference studies from overseas such as the BLM or New Zealand experience to consider removal methods or other issues, although refuse to seek further knowledge of the European experience in their use of rewilding areas with horses.

There is ample evidence that proclaim that grazing by horses is not only very different to that of cattle or sheep but can also be beneficial to some natural ecosystems when managed.

(Particularly after fire) They can adapt. It is not all black and white as the narrowly focused conservationists maintain.”³²

In Kosciusko National Park it is often noted by many locals when exploring different areas of the bush how there seems to be much more birdlife in brumby habitat areas. There is so much more to learn and field studies are vitally needed to fill these knowledge gaps.



Michelle J Photography Copyright

³² Craig Downer Wildlife Ecologist, (2014) Report to Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Assoc.

THE MISSING LINK

Hard-hooved animals and the Australian environment

Many people have strained credibility by claiming that so-called soft-footed animals have less adverse effects upon soil and water conservation values than do 'hard' hooved animals.

It is difficult to support this theory after observing the extensive areas of bare and disturbed ground scarified by lyre birds beneath the scrubby understory of forests in the Eastern ranges and the burrowing and soil subsidence following countless years of wombat excavation.

Half a century ago there was vast devastation by soft-footed rabbits that completely denuded the land, destabilized river banks, and ring-barked millions of tree seedlings.

The inconclusive rhetoric that has been circulated and has gained some currency with people who do not understand grazing animals, has led them to believe that the so-called hard-hooved animals are detrimental to the Australian environment.

Australia appears to have had by far the greatest soil erosion rate of any of the major land masses on the planet Earth and yet it is the only country that has not had vast herds of grazing ungulates. History indicates that in other countries, great herds of these hooved animals generally moved in a migratory fashion as they followed seasonal pasture growth and had their herding instincts developed by predators.

As they moved across the land, their hoof and tooth action reduced most of the remaining previous season's brittle and combustible dead grass to composting litter and converted new growth to fertilizer. Unfortunately human intervention with animal management has not always been accompanied by good husbandry practices in various parts of the world and this has created the misplaced belief that hooved animals are all bad for conservation values.

In Australia, where geologists have informed us that in past ages mountain ranges were as high as 25,000 feet above sea level, the large land creatures other than birds were marsupials and reptiles. Most grazing marsupials avoid the more elevated and snowy regions but it appears that as the mountains eroded and the plains became more arid and the annual snow melt reduced, these animals developed a unique reproductive system that better equipped them to survive droughts.

Until the aboriginal race of humans, and dogs came (a short space of time in ecological terms) their survival instincts were directed rather to withstanding drought than to the depredations of large and effective land based predators.

For millions of years the high country of Australia which is derived from the same basic foundations as are to be found throughout the rest of the world, was affected by successive routines of fire, flood erosion and regrowth which continued with relentless and devastating effect.

The average elevation of land in Australia is probably less than 200 metres while all other major land masses would have an average elevation of perhaps 1,000 metres or more.

There is a very great difference in the erosion levels while the only real significant difference is that Australia has not had the same beneficial hoof and tooth action of vast herds as they followed the seasons and made the annual regrowth of ground cover less fire-prone.

There is ample evidence today that well-managed grazing activity uses, and at the same time, strengthens plant communities of pastoral value.

In conclusion, is it not a fair question to ask, has the lack of hooved animals been responsible for accelerated land degradation in Australia?

Jim Commins

There is an opportunity to lead studies of managing horse populations.

Given the vast and diverse elevations and types of ecosystems that horses inhabit in and around KNP, it should be utilised for rigorous research that is needed for Australian environments. Not all areas are impacted the same.

Some salient examples of further scientific research that is required regarding horse impacts from previous studies regarding horses in Kosciusko National Park:

- *It has been noted that horses' hooves loosen and human feet compact surfaces (McQuaid-Cook, 1987), suggesting that there may be an advantageous 'cancelling-out' effect with concurrent trail use by horses and walkers. This is evident in field observations at Kuring-ai Chase NP, Canberra Nature Park, and South-east Queensland by the author of this current report. However, this has not been investigated in the literature.*
- *Geomorphic systems are characterised by thresholds relating to soil stability. When these thresholds are exceeded change, expressed as the initiation or development of gullying, rilling or sheet erosion, occurs. However, whilst this concept has been applied to responses of trails to use and climatic events in the United States, it has been noted that: Almost any rainstorm or level of use impacts new trails, but extreme storm events or very heavy use is needed to initiate change on existing tracks (Kuss, 1986). This has important implications for management of existing trails but needs to be assessed within the Australian context.*
- *Australian studies are extremely limited with significant constraints for wider application due to poor experimental design, site specific conditions or inadequate analysis of results. In addition, Sun and Walsh (1998) have stated that most studies have used field survey techniques which provide rapid results with relatively low costs.*
- *Snapshot perspectives do not provide an understanding of seasonal or annual variations in use or environmental factors;*
- *Short term data cannot provide an understanding of the relationship between the degree of impact and the intensity of use;*
- *The influence of prior events which define vegetation cover and surface soil condition (such as fire and/or extreme climate events) may not be integrated into the study*
- *The absence of grazing (by native, domestic and/or feral animals) is the most salient factor influencing the number of weeds (Whinam et al., 1994, Weaver and Adams, 1996)*
- *'plot experiments cannot be extrapolated to the landscape scale and certainly not to other ecosystems.'* (Sawyer, undated)

(Dr Sara Beavis ANU Senior Lecturer, Fenner School of Environment and Society.
Report to Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Assoc 2002)

Compensatory responses in survival, fecundity and age of first reproduction in the population should also be considered in any management program. That is, when culling reduces density, survival and fecundity may increase and age of first reproduction decrease, as reported for feral donkeys ³³

Compensatory reproduction is defined as an increase in reproduction as a direct or indirect consequence of management reductions, including removals and contraception. Indirect responses could include increased fertility, foal survival, or adult survival due to reduced competition for forage.³⁴

... it may seem as if the ecological effects of feral horses are well established. We contend that this is not strictly the case, particularly for Australian ecosystems. Like all species, horses use and respond to their environment in a heterogeneous fashion (Turner 1987) over several spatial scales (Bailey et al. 1996; Beever et al. 2003; also see Wiens 1989; Mackey and Lindenmayer 2001; Kelly 2006). Hence they modify the spatial patterns of landscape elements variably across spatial hierarchies (Hobbs 1996; Beever et al. 2003)...

...This problem is best exemplified by the critique of Rogers (1991), offered by Linklater et al. (2000), demonstrating that positioning of horse exclosures can result in impact measurements unrepresentative of the broader system...

...The small number of feral horse studies that have paid credence to the importance of factors such as scale (see Beever and Brussard 2004), feedback loops and indirect effects (see Levin et al. 2002; Beever and Herrick 2006) have been undertaken in semiarid and marshland environments, and hence their applicability to similar disturbances in other ecological systems may be limited. Furthermore, we are not aware of any peer-reviewed research that analyses the effects of feral horses on native environments in Australia. In conclusion, there remain several critical gaps in our understanding of the ecological effects of feral horses on native environments, particularly with regard to Australian ecosystems.³⁵

³³ (Walter 2002 Population Ecology of Wild Horses in the Australian Alps)

³⁴ (Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward (2013)

³⁵ (Dale Graeme Nimmo & Kelly K. Miller (2007) Ecological and human dimensions of management of feral horses in Australia)

Each of the professional groups that evaluates aspects of the cultural significance of places does so as a 'community' with shared interests and values, although not necessarily with agreement on everything. Each expert community develops its own knowledge base, language and criteria about what is valuable and what is not.

At present some values that represent the shared values of certain communities of interest are adequately represented simply because they are incorporated into professional assessment practice. However, other communities of interest remain unrepresented in the process, and some views may never be represented by 'experts' as they do not lend themselves to professionalisation.

Our current heritage assessment practices are clearly too narrow and fail to reflect the breadth and depth of interest present in our society. Social value has tended to mean all those values expressed by the community which fall outside our current professional framework. To enable such to be recognised and protected, social value needs to come into the mainstream of heritage assessment...³⁶

Genetics

It has been proven in other countries that the worth of each nation's iconic horses is twofold.

Firstly, as a tourist resource, where people are able to view and study the wild horse; to see firsthand, the horse in nature, in his environment. To make that link with that generational asset.

There can be little doubt that the Brumby is now an adapted species of the Australian Mountain areas.

Secondly, the Brumby is a valuable genetic seed stock. The natural environment selects for that environment. Favourable mutation causes the variation we observe in any adapted species. Natural selection is not random, nor is evolution. The genetics of the Brumby have developed outside that of domestic breeding. Domestic breeding uses artificial selection to increase the frequency of traits we like, thus our domestic horses evolve by artificial rather than natural selection. Because of this fact, our equine genetic diversity is reduced, the rare alleles that were selected by nature will be lost. The 'wild' Brumby on the other hand isn't pressured by nature to 'look good' or perform exceptionally, he is likely to have a greater genetic diversity that is the future seed stock for our domestic breeds when it is required in the future. Destroying the Brumby, is destroying that genetic diversity, and those rare alleles that we may well need for our domestic animals.

³⁶ Johnston, C. 1992 'What is Social Value?', Context Pty Ltd for the National Trust of Australia

In discussing the areas for the horses to be deemed as heritage I would say this; the smaller the horse numbers, they would have to be more closely managed so as not to enforce inbreeding. They should be allowed to range free and to intermix with other mobs. This would preserve the DNA and keep alive the rare genes in the sub population. The more you restrict the horses the more likely you are to enforce inbreeding.

Brumby DNA is an ongoing project. At the moment Dr Gus Cothran (retired), works part time on this project free and analyses the results as provided by Dr Rytis Juras (a past student of Gus's), at the Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences at Texas A&M university in Texas, who are the world leaders in equine genetic analysis.

I work as a sole link to these gentlemen. It helps control the database. The A & M is a teaching facility not a commercial lab, but they are a worldwide authority on equine DNA and the lab is extensive in its abilities.

Gus has single handedly written management plans for many of the worlds rare and endangered wild horses.

The Hoofs2010 brumby group have been collecting brumby samples for testing and we are building a database in regard to various brumby mobs from Kosci and including the Barmah forest brumbies.

What is important is that they have 'survival' genes that differ from domesticated horses.

(Richard Crispin (2016) Dip Equine Genetics, Snowy River Waler Horse Stud)

PRELIMINARY GENETIC ANALYSIS OF THE BRUMBY POPULATION OF THE KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK AND BARMAH FOREST NATIONAL PARK, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

The following is a report of the findings of a preliminary genetics study of feral horses (Brumby) primarily included 31 horses from Barmah NP and 37 from Kosciuszko NP and these were the focus of this study. Genetic variability measures were calculated for the two populations above and compared to measures from 56 domestic horse breeds and the Przewalski Horse. These results for the two Brumby sample sets and representative domestic breeds are shown.

Looking at genetic resemblance of the individual Brumbys shows considerable diversity among them (Figure 1b). This figure is a plot of the genetic coordinates of individuals from four localities including

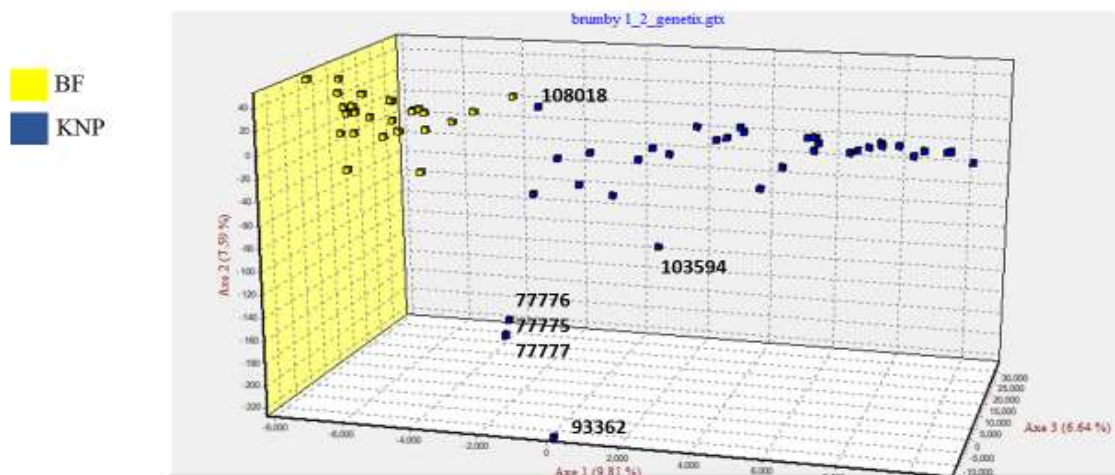
BF and KNP. Of note, the KNP individuals are spread over the entire space while the BF horses cluster rather tightly with the exception of a couple of individuals.

As would be expected based upon the history of horses in Australia, both herds fall within the cluster of breeds that can trace their origins to the English Thoroughbred. The KNP shows closest resemblance to the Australian Waler breed. The BF is closest to trotting breeds in a cluster that is just outside the Thoroughbred cluster.

What needs to be done as we progress is to get samples from a number of different locals and analyze each local as a separate population. We can then characterize levels of genetic diversity in each local to determine what the genetic risks are for each area.

We can look at the relationships between each local and perhaps determine something about the origins of each (this is often very difficult with groups that have highly mixed origins as the Brumbies are likely to have). Overall, the goal is to devise a management plan that is based upon what is known about the genetics of each herd which can be incorporated into plans that need to take things such as the ecology into account. Wild horse management is complicated as is most wildlife management but adding genetics into the plan gives a much stronger strategy.

Figure 1b.



(E. Gus Cothran, Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA)

Brumby Habitats

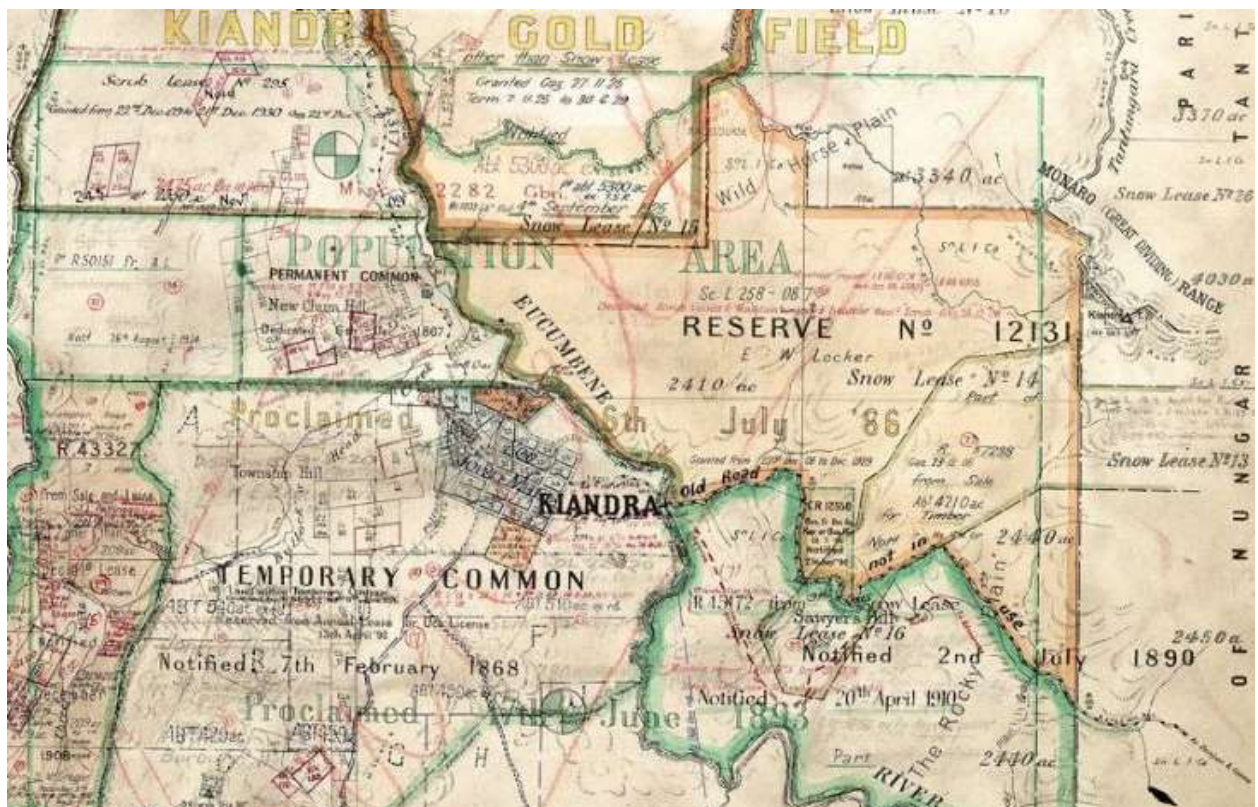
Northern Kosciusko – Wild Horse populations should be retained

Kiandra, Tintangara, Goandra, Long Plain, Currango, Cooleman, Rules Point and Peppercorn, and Coolamine areas.

Historically, the whole Northern end of the park is known for having horses and livestock spread far and wide for over 160 years.

Kiandra was settled with the gold mining boom and had a human population of more than 10,000 people plus their horses and livestock around 1860 and for some time after and then smaller populations thereafter for over 100 years. The whole northern locality from Kiandra to Peppercorn has seen many disturbed landscapes and environments from the diggings and pastoral settlements throughout the area.

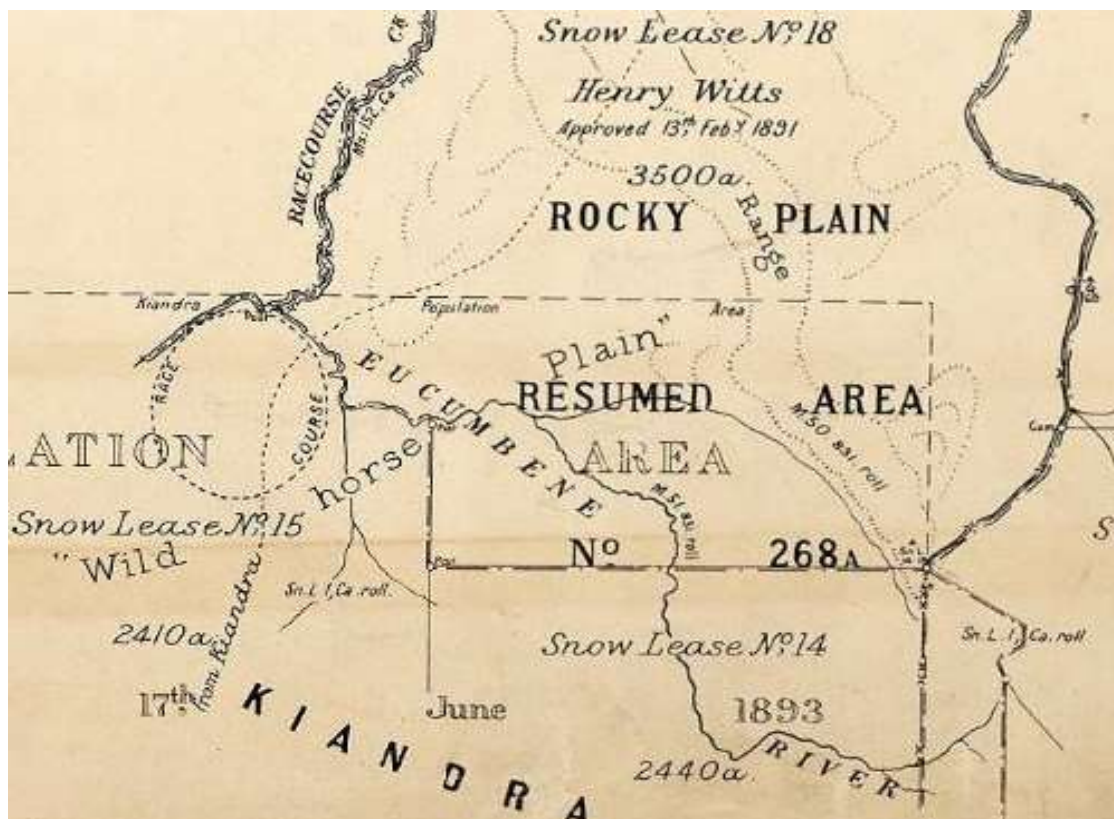
In 1866 the parish map of the heavily populated Kiandra district distinctly shows the area adjoining and north east of Kiandra township as “Wild Horse Plain”. A good indication that the wild horses were well established by 1866 in this location. The reserves and commons were intensely grazed by horses and livestock for over 100 years.



As had occurred in the nineteenth century the women largely stayed at the homestead and when there was no stock to muster the men hunted, fished and prospected throughout a wide geographical area encompassing the Long Plain and the Cooleman Plain. Additional money could be made from brumby running, rounding up wild horses and breaking them in; Tom Taylor was often hired by other station managers to break horses in. The division of labour changed gradually, with women participating in cattle droving and taking over the mail runs. By the 1940s women participated in the musters, horse races, buck jumping competitions and brumby chases.

Lachlan Cochran of Yaouk, who was decorated in the Boer War, is believed to have been one of the stockmen that Paterson used as a model. Amongst the families who lived on the mountain plains mustering and brumby chasing skills continued to be passed on from generation to generation. These practices continued to be employed until well after World War II and are documented in oral histories.³⁷

Even when the gold ran out, these bustling settlements in this populated region continued to thrive. There were several permanent homesteads, huts and outstations as well as hotels and guest houses at Kiandra and Rules Point. Social events were common including dances and picnics, sporting days and brumby chases. Horse racing was very popular and a regular event. This Kiandra parish map shows the circled racecourse above Wild Horse Plain on the bend of Racecourse Creek. Races were also held at Currango.



³⁷ (Coolamine Historical Analysis (2007) Otto Cserhalmi & Partners)

FEBRUARY 4.

A very enjoyable day's racing came off on Wednesday, in Centennial week, at Mr. Fisher's selection on the Currangorambla run, belonging to Mr. H. T. Whitty, near Kiandra, which is situated about 22 miles north east from Kiandra, and is nearly out of the snow-line, the herbage changing its character in a great measure in the total absence of snow-grass, but a profusion of wild oats is growing luxuriously on the open rolling plains. The attendance was very large, considering the sparsely populated neighbourhood, but which a few years ago was the habitat of the wild horse and the dingo alone. A great mistake was made in not having the meeting registered, as the fields would have been larger and the patronage more extended. Racing commenced with the Maiden Plate, 1 mile, weight for age, which was won by T. Oldfield's Nightshade, with W. Fisher's Nimrod and J. Mulvaney's (Kiandra) Miner occupying the other places. Hack Handicap, 1 mile, fell to J. Fisher's Dot, with W. Warner's Cinderella second, and T. Oldfield's Lucy third. The Currangorambla Handicap, 1½ mile, was an easy win for H. Oldfield's Cossack, who made all his own running and won by about 20 lengths, with T. Oldfield's Nightshade second, and W. Fisher's Queen third. The Ladies' Purse Handicap, 6 furlongs, was won on the post by half-a-head by Oldfield's Fairy Girl, with J. Hawkins's Tim and Fisher's Kathleen occupying the other places. The Trotting Race, 1½ mile, 1st. up, was won easily by E. Hawkins's Creamy against six starters.

. During the afternoon, in a race for a bridle, an old stock horse of Mr. T. Oldfield, by the name of Tom Webb,

known to be 22 years of age, and famous in his young days for running wild horses and bullocks, beat six other hacks of a superior description in a race for half-a-mile for the above prize.

(Kiandra. (1888, February 11). The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser)

The pastoral theme as expressed in Australia's highest mountains has strong social value, to descendants, to modern bushmen and to many other Australians. This is demonstrated in the very active continuation of and celebration of its traditions and the respect for its physical remains including its pastoral landscapes, wild horses, and stock routes. The high country's traditions are known, celebrated and passed on locally, and regionally and have an important place in the historic consciousness of Australians especially in regional Australia, albeit in a somewhat romantic way. The Man from Snowy River is known in many households around Australia — urban and rural. In this sense, the social value of the theme is of national importance. The pastoral theme, as it is expressed in the alps in general and Kosciuszko in particular, represents a unique high country variation of a way

*of life and a period of economic and social development that is of historic significance at a national level.*³⁸

SPORTS DAYS

Although each hut and homestead had no close neighbours there was no shortage of entertainment where everyone in the area would get together. Bushmen's carnivals, sports days, rodeos and races were held at Yarrangobilly Village, Yaouk, Talbingo, Rules Point and there was a New Years Sports Day at Kiandra. The Yarrangobilly Sports day was held not long after the Yaouk Rodeo. Locals rode down Yaouk via Currango and then back up to Yarrangobilly. Horses were the only means of travel. You went on horseback or you went in a horse and sulky. We [the Taylor family] rode everywhere. We used to go to Adaminaby or we'd ride to Tumut. It was a long trip down there but nobody thought twice about going fifty miles to a rodeo or something. The first Rules Point Sports day was held in 1915, with the proceeds donated to the Tumut hospital. It was at one of these sports days, in 1929 that Tom Taylor met Mollie Marden. Mollie's photos show the sapling yards, the buck jumping contests and the assortment of cars and buggies that brought the spectators to Rules Point. The Rules Point Guesthouse ...became the venue for the important annual event, the Rules Point Sports Day, usually in March. Flat races were run across the road, on the start [of] Long Plain. It was possible to get as much as four furlongs (800m) of fairly level ground, in one straight run. George [Day] remembers some of the best riders in the 1920s were Clarrie Rees, Bung Harris, the Yan boys, Clarrie Ware, Alvy Oddy, Tom Taylor and Doug Maxwell. Most were real daredevils and thought nothing of having a spill.³⁹

³⁸ (Independent Scientific Committee 2002)

³⁹ (Coolamine Historical Analysis for KNP (2007) - OTTO CSERHALMI + PARTNERS P/L)



Buck Jumping, Rules Point Sports Day, 1929 Note the similarity of the yards to those at Coolamine. Source: Taylor Family Collection via Coolamine Historical Analysis OTTO CSERHALMI + PARTNERS P/L

The whole Kosciuszko landscape has been affected by the pastoral phase in Australia's national development, and it presents continuing evidence of this era. Significant evidence of the pastoral era on the landscape includes impressive and appealing cultural landscapes, vegetation change, changed fire regime, the continued presence of wild horses and other introduced species, and distinctive erosion patterns. Much of this evidence constitutes damage to the pre-European environment left by the Aborigines, but this record also has significant historic and scientific value.

(Independent Scientific Committee 2002)



Kiandra Plain diggings with wild horses in distance – photo circa 1890-1920

The current wild horse populations of the Kiandra area are important herds with specific confirmation & traits unlike anywhere else. Although the wild horses were already well established in the Kiandra and surrounding areas 40 years beforehand, another primary and major source of the horses' ancestry is from the Almac Cob Stud also known as Pleasant View Stud that was established in 1899 by Frank D Brown and located near Kiandra township. Brown had an area of from 14,000 to eventually 22,000 acres around the Kiandra township & west to the Tumut River. These horses were chosen for their body strength, endurance, solid bone and hardiness used under saddle and for harness. In 1906 four stallions were standing at this stud. "Snowball" a grey (white) welsh pony, "Vim" a chestnut Norfolk Cob, "Vero" was Brown/Black Welsh Pony imported from Wales and "Almac" a dark rich bay Cob that was deemed Champion at the Sydney Royal Ag Show on more than one occasion.

Early in 1912 Brown was declared bankrupt by the court and most horses were sold by dispersal sale. It was reported by the court that in January of 1913, there were 408 horses on "The Ranch" books at the time but there were 119 horses unaccounted for.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ (BANKRUPT MANAGER. (1913, March 12) The Daily Telegraph)

It is believed that the Almac horses went on to join the brumbies that had already been pre-established in the region and are now the ancestors of some of the revered iconic mobs at Kiandra today. These current well known and loved horses are renowned for their unique traits of heavy bone and cob type conformations.

The Almac Cob Stud.

THE Almac Cob Stud was founded in 1899 by Frank D. Brown, at Kiandra, in the southern part of the State of New South Wales. It is a very mountainous country, and the elevations range from 1,600 feet to 5,000 feet above sea level. At the lower and intermediate levels the valleys fall into the Tumut River, and this part gives very good feed for winter grazing. The higher altitude, which is 5 miles to the westward of Kiandra, is a mixture of undulating plain country, and produces the best of natural grasses for summer feed. The Norfolk cob and the Welsh pony are the breeds of horses of which the Almac Cob Stud is composed. For foundation mares to start the stud, Mr. Brown purchased all those of thoroughbred and pure trotting-bred and Welsh pony blood, with conformation that met his approval, and the result is to-day a very fine group of youngsters, from foals 6 months old to mares 7 years old, that are doing exceedingly well, and the Sydney and Melbourne show rings have seen the geldings brought from the Stud which have won prizes at both Shows and have been sold at a good remuneration to recompense the breeder.

During the last two years Mr. Brown has been able to purchase about fifteen pure-bred cob mares from the States of Victoria and South Australia, where they were bred by Mr. R. G. Wilson, who has imported sires and dams, and Mr. C. H. Angus, who also has imported sires and dams; and from these mares Mr. Brown feels satisfied he will be able to show stallions bred in the State of New South Wales that will prove of good benefit in assisting others to advance in the breeding of true cobs. The pony mares were purchased from different States throughout Australia, and four very fine pony stallions have already been sold in different parts of Australia, and the result of the use of them is proving beneficial to pony breeders.

We show the photographs of two of Mr. Brown's cob stallions and one of his pony stallion; also one of a pure-bred cob mare, a half-bred cob gelding, and a half-bred cob gelding shown in saddle with the owner of the Almac Cob Stud.

Almac.—The first cob stallion Mr. Brown interested himself in, was bred in New South Wales by Mr. Thomas Cook, of Turonville, S. m. e. His sire, Flying Shades (imp.), was a very superior horse and a most prepotent sire, and



Almac, Champion Cob Stallion.

a very fast trotter, as in his day he has trotted 12½ miles within the hour. He was a horse of wonderful vitality, and proved himself a good sire at 29 years of age. All his stock have the best of dispositions, and Abner is indeed a very fine double stallion, now rising 16 years old. The dam of Abner Gipsy, was also bred by Mr. Cook, and her sire was Flying Shales, so you will note the result of interesting with a sire to his daughter. Abner is a beautiful rich dark bay with black points, and stands only 14½ hands high, and when in condition he has turned the scale at nearly 1,200 lbs. His bone is over 5 inches below the knee, and today, as a 16-year-old, he is as sound as a bell. Abner won first prize for two years at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show.



Snowball. — Sire, Bismark; dam, Tyne's Abner.

Snowball.—A Welsh pony, bred in South Australia, and purchased from there by Mr. Brown. His sire was Bismark, and his dam by the celebrated Tom O'Bhanter, the great progenitor of ponies in the State of Victoria. Although Snowball is only 12½ hands high, he is strong, and well able to carry 15 or 20 stone. He is now also 16 years of age and has proved himself a very valuable sire, and the constitution he has will probably see him live to an old age, as he runs with his mane summer and winter in the hills, and the country is as much like the mountain ranges in Wales as can be imagined. Snowball won first prize at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show.

Vin.—A pure-bred Northfolk, bred in Victoria by the late Hon. W. I. Winter Irving, M.L.C., who imported Vin's sire, Detective, and his dam, Darwins, from England. Vin is a chestnut horse, 14.3 hands high, and



Vin. — Sire, Detective (imp.); dam, Darwins (imp.).

shows great dash with beautiful action, and a very fast trotter. He won first and champion prize at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show.

Via.—A chestnut mare and a full sister to Vin, and she was bred in Victoria by the late Hon. W. I. Winter Irving, M.L.C. Via stands 14.3 hands high, is strong enough to pull a spring cart or harness cab, and is a



Via, pure-bred cob mare. — Sire, Detective (imp.); dam, Darwins (imp.).

very fast mare in harness, with beautiful action and a fine disposition. She won the double at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show by amassing the highest votes and the special for best cob in two-wheel vehicle.



Barrow, bay colt. — Sire, Attack; dam, half-bred mare.

Barrow.—Bay gelding, 14.3 hands high, bred at the Almac Cob Stud. His sire is Attack, and his dam a thick-set mare, whose sire was a trotting horse and her dam a half-bred mare. This shows the class of horse produced by the first cross with the Norfolk cob Attack to a half-bred mare. Barrow has won two first prizes at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Shows, one in saddle and the other in harness as a gentleman's cob. He is a very rich dark bay, like his sire, and coming from a mare a little heavier than his sire he shows a bit more substance, but with it he has good power and a kind disposition.

George.—A dark bay horse, bred by the Almac Cob Stud, 14.3 hands high.



George and rider. — Sire, Attack; dam, Mare mare.

The photograph showing him shows Mr. Brown, the breeder, in the saddle, and George is carrying 20 stone, and with it has won prizes at Sydney and Melbourne Royal Agricultural Society's Shows. George is also a son of Attack, and is a very well-bred, sturdy mare, bred on the Monaro country, a mare that one could ride or drive, as she was very hairy; and George has also proved himself a very handy useful animal in saddle or harness.

DISPERSAL SALE
of the Well-known
ALMAC STUD (Kiandra, N.S.W.).

COB STALLIONS,
at
INGLIS'S BAZAAR, SYDNEY,
WEDNESDAY NEXT, MARCH 20,
AT 11 A.M.

WILLIAM INGLIS and SON have received instructions to sell by auction, as above,

VIM, Chestnut, 15 hands, aged, by DETECTIVE (imp.), dam DARWHINNEY (imp.). VIM has taken three champion prizes at the R.A. Show, Sydney.

REAL KING, Brown, 14.2, rising 4yrs., by Reality (imp.), dam FOREST QUEEN, a purebred Cob Mare from imported stock.

ALMAC, Bay, 14.3, aged, by FLYING SHALES (imp.), DAM GIPSY, bred by Mr. THOS. COOK, TURONVILLE. ALMAC was the original sire used at the above Stud, and has won the champion prize at the R.A. Show, Sydney. His progeny have also been great prize-winners at the leading Shows in the Commonwealth.

ALMAC'S SON, Bay, rising 4yrs., 14.3, sire ALMAC, dam ATTACK (a purebred Cob Mare from imported stock).

VIDI, Grey Welsh Cob, 14 hands, rising 6yrs, by VERO, dam GREYLING, by OLENGARRY. The above are all sure foal-getters, and thoroughly broken to saddle and harness.

NOW ON VIEW AT OUR BAZAAR.

. (The Cob. (1907, August 31). The Newsletter: an Australian Paper for Australian People)

The Alpine Pioneer & Kiandra Advertiser weekly newspaper in 1860 noted many lost horses in the district. The following is a small example of straying horses in the now northern end of Kosciusko National Park of which could also add to the brumbies ancestry..

Notice.

THIS is to give notice that a BAY HORSE, about 15 hands high, with black points, branded FH off, shoulder \approx) near shoulder is now running on my station, at the King-yard. Any one claiming the above can get the same, by giving authority as to being the right owner by applying to Mr. DAVID O'ROURKE, Kiandra, or to Mr. FRED. GLOVER, Culliman, and paying all expenses.

33-33

FRED. GLOVER.

£1 Reward.

LOST, from Kiandra, a Grey Pony, hog mane and tail, branded g on shoulder. The above reward will be given on delivery to

WM. CARRUTHERS,

33-33]

Telegraph Office, Kiandra.

£5 Reward; £2 Reward.

STRAYED or Stolen from Kiandra:—One bay Mare, branded JR on the near shoulder and snip out of near ear, star in forehead. Also, one bay horse branded \approx C on near shoulder, small star on forehead, and party finding and bringing the same to Mr. Turner will receive the above reward. [33-35

£10 Reward.

STOLEN or strayed from Kiandra, a dark bay Mare, branded J V Y near shoulder, near ear clipped. If stolen the above reward will be given on conviction of the thief or thieves, and £2 if strayed, on delivery at the office of this paper.

33-35

JOHN MORIARTY.

£2 Reward.

LOST, from the Long Plain, a LARGE BAY HORSE, branded TO on off shoulder, long tail. Whoever will deliver the above horse to MESSRS. NEWELL & CO., Auctioneers, Pioneer-street, Kiandra, will receive the above reward. 33-35

Like the many people who settled in these areas, the brumbies were also widespread around Coleman, Tantangara, Gooandra, Long Plain, Currango, Rules Point and Peppercorn areas in large numbers at times since the mid 1800's. There are many stories and biographies of journeys crossing the mountains in the early days and noting the many mobs of brumbies. Although

unfavourable to the horses the old stories are nonetheless a valid demonstration of the abundance of the horses at different times.

...These pests are extremely numerous and devour grass enough to maintain large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. In various directions across the plains and through the timbered country their paths, like ordinary cattle-tracks, form a complete network, leading to favourite feeding-grounds, watering places, or crossings over the creeks and rivers. When the country is unoccupied they roam undisturbed over the mountains and plains, in herds of scores and hundreds, sleek and fat, now feeding, now basking in the sunshine or reposing in the shade, and anon sporting, neighing, and gambolling in the exuberance of their spirits....They are rarely seen in large numbers below the Wombat Ground, or even north of Diamond Hill. But, nevertheless, when sheep and cattle invade their domain, these useless brutes retire into the most unfrequented mountains by day, descending to the plains to feed when the invaders are quietly ruminating in yards or folds. At break of day they may be seen trooping off to their mountain fastnesses, as if conscious of their danger from man, or their weakness and inability to sustain their claim to the herbage of the plains when the lord of creation asserts his right to the same for the use and enjoyment of the tractable animals which content themselves in his possession and under his control.

As proof of the extent to which the plains are infested by wild horses it may be mentioned that in certain spots their ordure lies in prodigious heaps, more than enough to fill the largest horse or bullock dray...⁴¹

... We reached the limestone plains of the Cooleman run. When near the bottom of the mountains, we noticed a large mob of wild horses, feeding close to the edge of the plain below us, and resolved to stalk them, but when we saw how level and smooth the plain was, we determined to have a hunt on horseback. So we dashed into the widely scattered feeding mob at full gallop, and singled out a couple, which we managed to ride up against and shoot, after a little more than a mile's chase. While poisoning these horses for the native dogs, a grand-looking horse, with his tail sweeping the ground, came up to look at us, and I fired at him, but he went away apparently uninjured. Shortly after a mob passed at a gallop. It would have been great sport chasing them, but we were afraid of tiring our horses. Hiding across the plains this afternoon in search of a camping place, we shot another entire that ran up to examine the horses, while we lay on the grass holding them by the bridles. Several mobs of horses were seen feeding in different places, some we went close enough to disturb, others in the distance we could just distinguish to be horses...⁴²

⁴¹ (John Gale 'WILD HORSES' SIX DAYS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF COWLEY (1875, April 10). *Queanbeyan Age*)

⁴² (Australian Alps. (1875, December 11). *The Brisbane Courier*)

The Peppercorn, Long Plain and Cooleman areas are well known for their horses by their heavy and stocky builds as well as their chestnut and taffy colours of many.

“McDonalds arrived in the 1860s, two brothers John (my great grandfather) and his brother Alexander. John selected Peppercorn and Alexander selected Coolamine. They bred Remounts for the army as well as ran stock...they bred a lot of horses and according to Tom Taylor who lived nearby at Currango for many years, they couldn't yard them so a lot went wild. They were sired by a thoroughbred horse called “War God” who was by Carbine (sire of Phar Lap), Tom said they were very tough horses.

Then my grandfather took over Peppercorn and some other mountain leases. He put a Suffolk Punch breed stallion over the mares and this is how many of the brumbies are the colour they are to this day...Suffolk Punch carry the Pangare gene which can revert to the silver manes and tails and markings of the very distinctive Peppercorn brumbies today.. McDonald's also used the Sullfolk Punch horses to plough some of “Peppercorn” and the plough furrows can still be seen today from the air.

When grazing was stopped in the mountains most of the fences fell down and these horses slowly started to spread out all over the plains again.”⁴³

⁴³ (Personal communication Maret Rose, Great Grand Daughter of John McDonald
May 2020)



An Example of the Suffolk Punch prize bred Stallion (top photo) and today a Peppercorn brumby continues some Suffolk Punch traits (bottom photo)

The Suffolk: Another drafting horse is incredibly endangered, with fewer than 1,000 known to exist at the moment. All of them have a chestnut coat, though there can be varying shades of it. It is one of the few remaining horses that was specifically bred for regional farm work needs. The Suffolk region is filled with wetlands and marshes, so this breed was adapted to those conditions. (<https://karina-brez.squarespace.com/blog>)

Southern Kosciusko – Wild Horse populations should be retained

Pilot: Cascades south to Tin Mines, Mt Pilot and Ingeegoodbee areas, SE of Wombat Gully to , Little Boggy to Thatchers Mountain, Pinch River, Jacobs River & Willis/border creek areas.

Byadbo: Bididi Creek, Pinch Mountain, Sandy Creek, Sheepstation Creek, Guttamura and Merambego and Black Jack Mountain areas.

North of the Cascades Hut to and including the Big Boggy/Bob's Ridge/Brindle Bull/Chimneys Hill Paddy Rushs and Teddys Hut back to Dead Horse Gap on the Alpine Way has been well known for its extensive history of brumbies. However, it is recognised that these areas should be kept horse free as it is considered a feeder area to not only the Alpine Way but on to the Thredbo and Ramshead ranges which should not include brumbies. However the remaining areas of the Pilot and Byadbo Wilderness as stated above should retain managed brumbies as has been the case for many generations.

Brumbies have inhabited the whole of the southern section of the now Kosciusko National Park known commonly today as the Pilot & Byadbo wilderness areas. Like most other areas of the mountains the horses had been well established for well over 100 years before the area was ever declared a National Park in 1967. Byadbo was added to the Park estate in 1967.

The area is very remote today but is known to include ancestral pathways of and regularly used by the First nations people to go from the coast to the mountains. From the early to mid 1800's the area also saw some mining and prospecting but mostly grazing was established after colonial settlement until the park system in the 60's.

The Barry Way which divides the Byadbo & Pilot was also a major stock route from Jindabyne to Gippsland in Victoria which winds through steep forested terrain in between the two Wilderness areas and also runs parallel to much of the lower Snowy River which up until the 1960s was only a cattle/bridle track.

From the 1830s and 1840 when the Monaro and Snowy Mountains district was first settled, the occasional Thoroughbred and other breeds escaped from pastoralists, overlanders, or stockmen, or became lost, and inter-mixed with a growing wild horse population. A wild horse population was established in the Mt Kosciuszko area by the 1850s and probably by the 1840s. In 1861, during the ascent from Kiandra of Mount Inchcliffe, near Thredbo, the members of the climbing expedition sighted 'immense herds of wild horses, which would be impossible to break in' (Age, 7 January 1861). The presence of 'immense herds' would suggest that the horses were well established in the mountain environment at that time. There are various accounts of horses accidentally escaping at Mt Kosciuszko, including the horse/s belonging to Georg von Neumayer's scientific expedition of 1869. Domesticated horses were also intentionally released into the wild at Mt Kosciuszko from at least c.1900 by graziers and stockmen in order to 'improve' the wild horse population with fresh stock. Whereas in other pastoral districts of NSW the wild horses were culled on a large scale, the difficult terrain of the mountainous area of Kosciuszko provided a place of

refuge for escaped and wild horses. By the 1890s, the wild horse population was probably greater in the Alps than in the Riverina and other districts. In 1890, Richard Helms noted 'A great number of unowned horses are found all over the ranges' (cited in Slattery 1998:145). (CONTEXT)

...By the mid 1800s, Aboriginal people had become an important part of the region's pastoral industry, working as stockmen, station hands, house servants, and 'black trackers'. Many oral histories recollect stories of mustering brumbies from the Alps to be transported to the south coast then shipped to be used as cavalry horses; sometimes Aboriginal people would also trade horses for food⁴⁵

History of traditional owners' connection to Snowy Mountain brumbies

An often-overlooked part of Australian history is how the Ngarigo and Djiringanj people forged a strong connection with brumbies after they were introduced to the Snowy Mountains. Due to the traditional owners' talents when it came to controlling horses, it is also thought their feats as stockmen helped inspire the rider immortalised in Banjo Paterson's poem the Man From Snowy River.

Ngarigo and Djiringanj elders Ellen Mundy and David Dixon said their ancestors would catch the wild horses in Currawong and Wollindibby – the area around Mount Crackenback – then break them in before driving them down to Tathra Wharf, where they would be shipped to Sydney.

From the mid to late 1800s these stockmen included Jack Hoskins and Bobby "Old" Mundy, who would stop at Blackfellows Lake at Kalaru for two weeks before taking them to the wharf.

Many horses went on to become used in Australia's military campaigns such as the Boer War around 1900.

Ms Mundy said the Ngarigo and Djiringanj developed such an affinity for the animals they became "horse whisperers". "Even though horses were an introduced species, they still learnt how to communicate with them," she said.

Knowing the safest routes, her ancestors would take the animals along traditional pathways that rolled gradually down from the high Snowys to the coast, past Bombala, Candelo and Bega, where they knew to find food and water.

"They were really great stockmen because they knew the land inside out," Ms Mundy said.

"They knew the shortcuts, they knew the best ways to come down to Tathra.

"They would have brought the horses down into places where they would have had a good run without breaking their legs."

It was not an easy life as her ancestors would not have been paid the same amount as their European counterparts - if they were paid at all - but they would have benefited from the work in other ways, as Mr Dixon said there was the thought that as the Ngarigo were stockmen they should be left alone.

⁴⁵ Australian Alps National Heritage Listing – Summary Statement of Significance (Wesson 1994).

"Maybe without the connection with horses it would have been harder for our people to survive," he said. Ms Mundy said being left alone gave them security and being part of the system and helping the economy gave them safety.

"There would have been white people with empathy and compassion who saw the talents of the Ngarigo at the work who would have given them an opportunity," Mr Dixon said.

"But at the same time they would have been told to assimilate, as they were still seen as savages.

"The relationship would have come about through necessity, it was an economic relationship that was unbalanced."

Ms Mundy said while her ancestors worked for the European colonists they were still traditional men. "They lived in two worlds, the white man's world, but they were still practicing their traditions," she said.

The identity of the man in Banjo Paterson's famous poem has been hotly debated over the years and a number of individual colonists have been named as possible inspirations.

Three decades ago the official historian for Victoria Bernard Barrett proposed the character might have been based on a young Indigenous Australian man named Toby.

"As a black-tracker, Toby was able to find trails of brumbies whenever they got out of sight," Dr Barrett told The Canberra Times in 1988.

However, Ms Mundy and Mr Dixon believe the poem's title character should not be looked at as being based on a singular man, instead as based on the Snowy Mountains' stockmen in general - both European and traditional owners.

"The best stockmen up there would have been our people," Mr Dixon said.

"But Banjo Paterson would not have been able to make a hero out of our people in his day."

Mr Dixon and Ms Mundy said the traditional owners and the farmers around the Snowy Mountains shared history with the brumbies.

They said there should be another option rather than either than culling the brumbies, due to the damage they cause to the environment in Kosciuszko National Park, or just leaving them in the mountains.

"We were the first conservationists and environmentalists in the world, not just the country," Mr Dixon said. "Catching and droving the horses also protected the land and environment.

"If people come together a solution can be put in place where the brumbies don't have to be culled or left there."

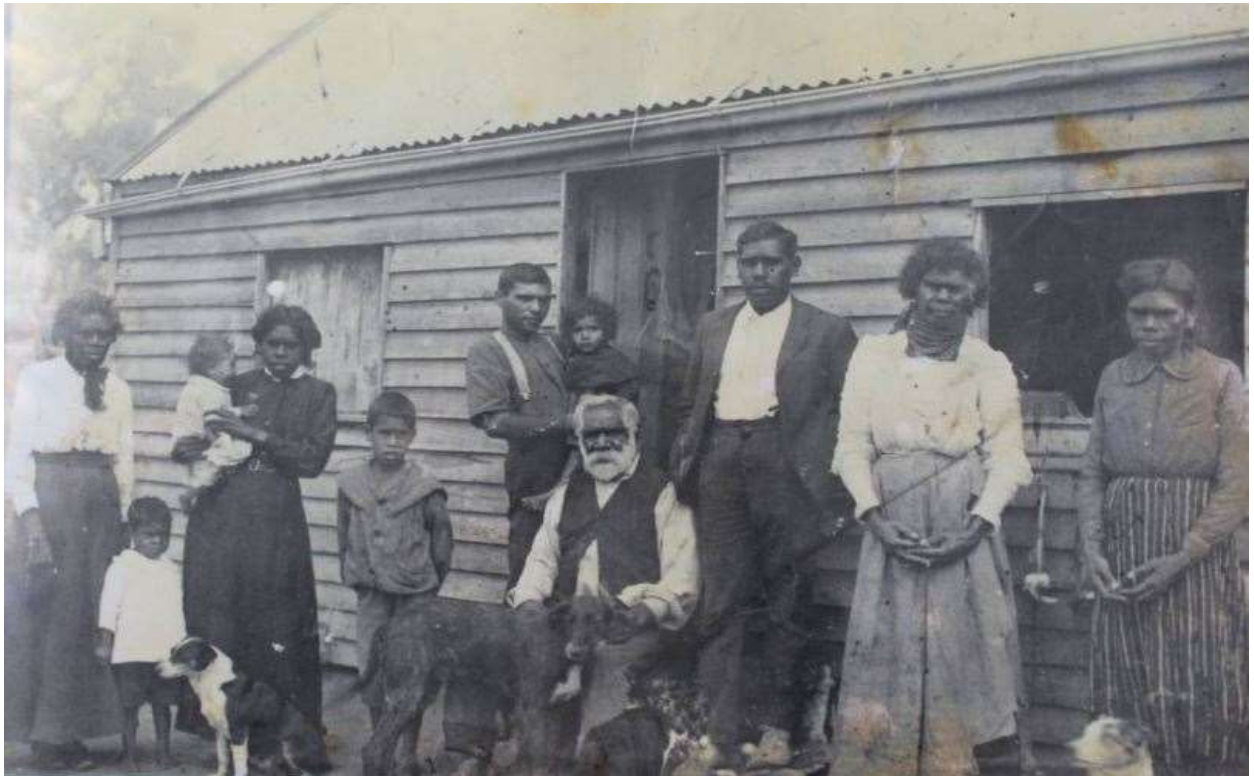
Ms Mundy added it was part of her people's law and customs not to kill an animal unless for food.

"A ceremony would have been held even for that to understand the taking of a life," Mr Dixon said.

As for hero of the Djiringanj Jack Hoskins, he eventually had land gazetted to him and his family near Kalaru as a reserve in 1893 at what was known as Cohens Lake, but was renamed Blackfellows.

Along with the large sign of a tribal warrior that once stood at the main road through Kalaru to point the way to the reserve, to many people the connection between brumbies and traditional owners has been lost or forgotten to time.

“There’s a lot of things people don’t know about the history of this country” Ms Mundy said.



(History of traditional owners’ connection to Snowy Mountain brumbies (30 May 2018)
Bega District News)

Brumbies have been common for well over 150 years in the Crackenback, Wollondibby to Moonbah area including Mill Gap and Little Boggy. The Cascades, Big Boggy, Tin Mines and Ingeegoodbee are especially widely known now for brumbies thanks to Elyne Mitchell’s “Silver Brumby” novels. Dead Horse Gap near Thredbo also reminds us of brumbies sometimes caught in snowstorms.

*The association with the pioneer families from this area, McGuffickes and Pendergasts is relevant as is the ability to demonstrate former lifestyles and customs particularly the practice of summer grazing in the high country and capturing brumbies in the mountains. There are still some yards located in the Moonbah valley that still exist today which were probably built in the early 20th century and were used for drafting cattle, sheep and brumbies brought down from the mountains.*⁴⁶

ABC’s show ‘A Big Country’ documents below a snapshot of the last brumby runs into the heritage listed yards at the ‘Top Place’ on the Moonbah River. Norman McGufficke aged in his 80’s rode on the wing to run the brumbies from the park into the yards in 1972. Other local riders were Dooley Pendergast, Noel Pendergast, Nugget Pendergast, Charlie Byrne and Richard McGufficke.

⁴⁶ (The ‘Top Place’ - NSW Heritage Listings database)



Norman's son Teddy McGufficke together with Dave and Noel Pendergast built 'Teddy's Hut' further up the mountains in late December 1948 for grazing and brumby running. The brumby trap nearby the hut was built in 1930 and 1931 by Kerry Pearce and rebuilt in 1960. It remains visible, just, in the small clearing immediately above the hut.⁴⁷

On the other side of the Moonbah range was another set of yards on Nugget Pendergast's property on the Alpine Way. These yards were also used to capture and release horses over the years from the Wombat Gully, Little Thredbo River, Penderlea, Wollondibby and Thredbo Valley areas.

A little higher into the mountains is the Big Boggy and the infamously named Dead Horse Gap. The story goes that many years ago a mob of brumbies were blinded by a snowstorm. The horses all huddled together and the snow built up around them. The snow continued to build high and eventually it froze to ice. This then became a wall of ice that the horses could not jump out of. The ice wall can last for several weeks before it melts. It is said that the brumbies survived the first few days by eating each other's manes and tails but without water they perished after several days.

⁴⁷ (Kosciusko Huts Association website 2010)

A hut was built at Dead Horse Gap in the late 1920's by Jim Nankervis who had the snow lease on the area. It was used seasonally for cattle mustering by Leo Byatt and other stockmen as well as the Cascades Hut. Both huts were also frequented for brumby running. Herb Hain used to organise brumby hunting parties which was another means that the locals could earn some extra cash.⁴⁸



Herb Hain pictured with a young brumby and a hunting party at Dead Horse Gap near the hut in 1949. Nankervis Collection

⁴⁸ (People of the Australian High Country 1994 Klaus Hueneke)



Hall Metcalfe, Harold Bluet, Laurie McGufficke, George Day & Berry McGufficke at Dead Horse Hut in 1940. The hut was burned down soon after the National Parks took over in late 60's.

(Klaus Hueneke, 'People of the Australian High Country (1994)

The Cascades Hut was built in 1935 by Nankervis when they had the grazing lease and was used for both mustering and brumbyrunning. This is the area of the Silver Brumby which was well known to Elyne Mitchell who visited the hut and rode the surrounding area often.



Mustering at the Cascades, 1940.

Left to right: Dick McGuffick, Ernie Bale, Jack McGufficke, Jack Carson.

Greta Jones Collection



Teddy's Hut 2017 Michael Scott Lees Wild Places Photography



Old trap yards above the Moonbah River near Teddys Hut

People of the Australian High Country, 1980 Klaus Hueneke

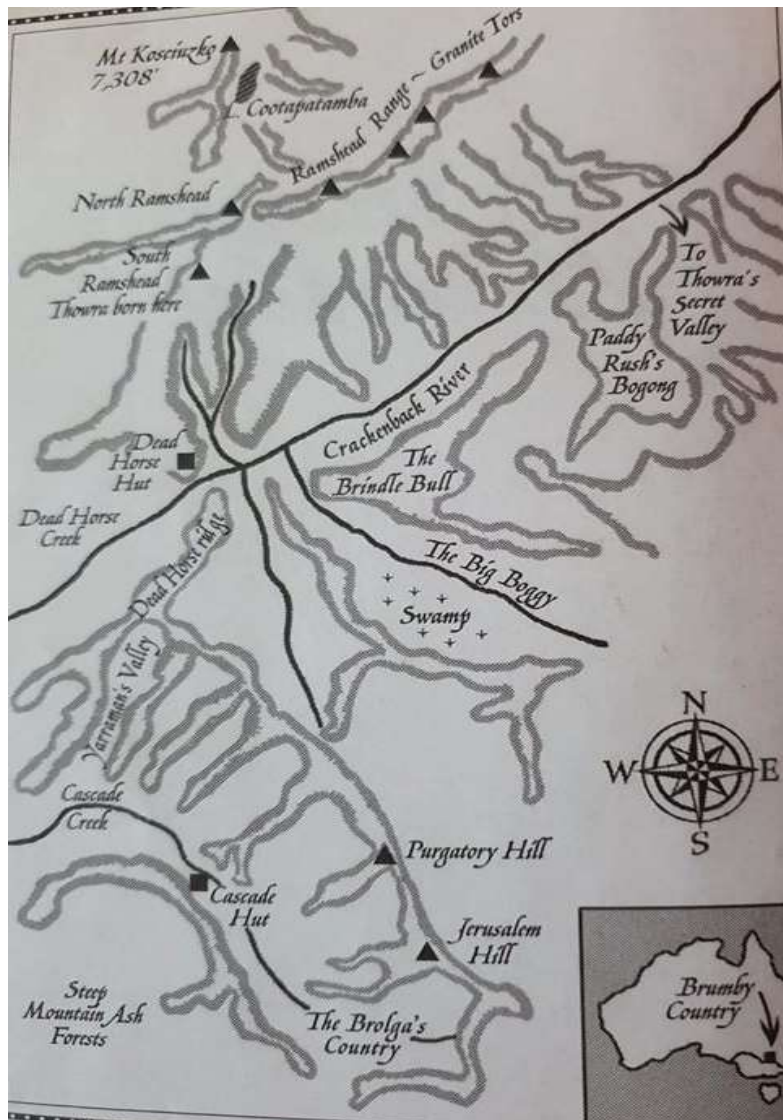
“The magnificent silver stallion Thowra was born in a storm on the south Ramshead Range and forever known for his ghost-like elusiveness. He was the son of the majestic chestnut Yarraman who was the “King of the Cascade brumbies”.

A map of Silver Brumby country according to the first famous Silver Brumby book by Elyne Mitchell.

Note the arrow (top right) indicating Thowra’s secret valley actually points towards Teddy’s Hut to Little Thredbo river area. Many oldtimers will confirm that indeed there were a many silver grey horses in the Cascades and Big Boggy area.

The series of 13 books dedicate several different areas as brumby country including the northern area of Lobs Hole to Coleman plain. Although a work of fiction and fantasy, all the books by Elyne Mitchell are written with her own intimate experiences and expeditions

of over 50 years of studying brumbies in those areas. All the maps and novels indicate the real names of real places including the real descriptions of the environments.



The first map of The Silver Brumby country published 1958 by Elyne Mitchell

<i>WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:</i>
HOME OF WILD HORSES ON
THE GREAT DIVIDE
South of Kosciusko is the land of the wild horses. Their summer home is among the colorful, gnarled snow gums on high tops, and in the eerie grey silence of the white gum forests on the broad slopes of the Great Divide.

"WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:" The Age 11 September 1954

According to this article in 1954, the brumbies were widespread and grazed in mobs mostly of eight to a dozen in the Mt Pilot, Tin Mines and Ingeegoodbee area. Some call this area the 'the real outback of the mountains'.

Escaped horses would add new strains to the brumbies and in the early days was constantly enriched with new blood of errant thoroughbreds. Drovers had to be careful in the brumby country to bell and hobble their horses at night in case they were tempted to join the wild bush horses.

The stockmen summarised the brumby thus: "He'll put up with you if you'll put up with him." Most mountain stockmen owned some brumbies, chiefly as packhorses for their hardiness and sure-footedness in rough country. Brumbies have been part of the bush population in many parts of Australia for more than a century. They bred from horses of miners and graziers which escaped' particularly before holdings were fenced.⁴⁹

In the NSW/Victoria border country it is commonly knowledge that many of the brumbies are said to have descended from thoroughbreds brought in by David O'Rourke who planned a breeding establishment modelled on the studs of his native Ireland.

In 1843 Davey O'Rourke brought 70 horses and two sires to Black Mountain near Suggan Buggan. The latter were a black stallion called Peacock, and Gander, a grey. They were of the 'Steeltrap' thoroughbred breed and were turned on to a lower portion of the Black Mountain station afterwards known as The Turnback. Davey O'Rourke died in 1855 with no will or beneficiaries and so the horses were never mustered. These were the first horses brought into this portion of Gippsland and the Snowy River country and from them originated many of the brumbies which became numerous in later years.⁵⁰

In 1843, Entrepreneur Benjamin Boyd had 14 holdings on the Monaro before his extraordinary empire collapsed in 1849. Boyd had controlled over a million acres and owned hundreds of horses. Two of his holdings was Matong and Suggan Buggan within the southern area including several miles of the lower Snowy River. It is believed that most if not all of his horses were never mustered and spread the now known Pilot and Byadbo wilderness.⁵¹

Some heydays of the brumby catchers was in the South African Boer war. Tom Goldby then held adjacent to the Matong holding and he was a well-known Monaro horseman who took 400 brumbies across the border in one mob to Bairnsdale saleyards. Big drafts went down to

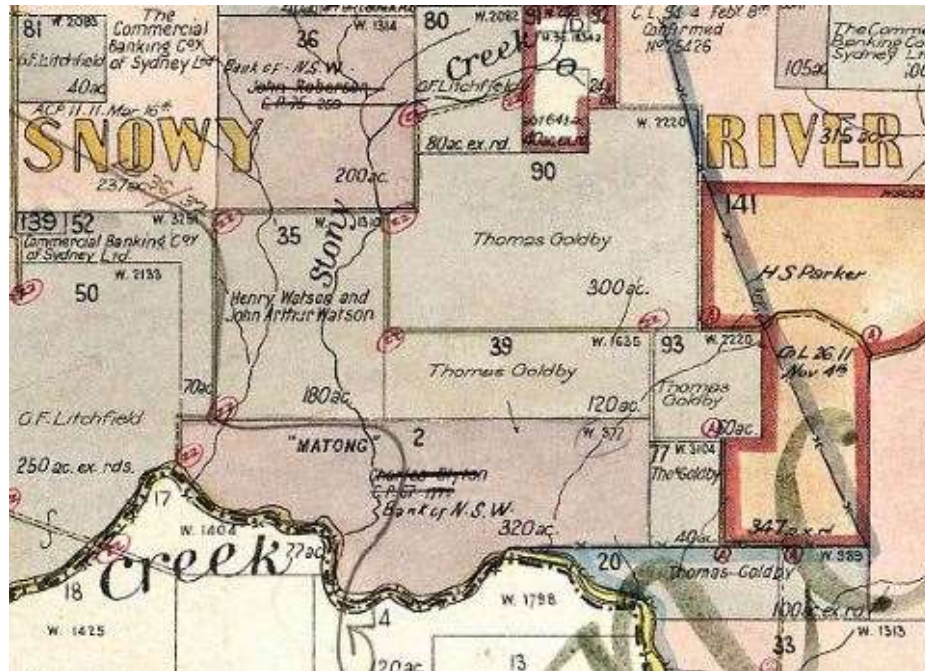
⁴⁹ ("WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:" The Age 11 September 1954)

⁵⁰ (Recollections of Edward O'Rourke Bairnsdale Advertiser 1930 retold in 'Cattlemen & Huts of the High Plains' Harry Stephenson 1980)

⁵¹ 'Discovering Monaro - A Study of Man's Impact on his environment'(1972) W K Hancock.

Corryong and Benambra too. Brumbies have been fairly regularly sold in the stockyards of the north-east and Gippsland and have at time stopped the market with prices over £30.⁵²

(Personal communication Milton Golby Great Grandson Thomas Goldby June 2020)



Many beautiful animals are found among- the brumbies— browns, chestnuts, bays, whites, greys and roans.

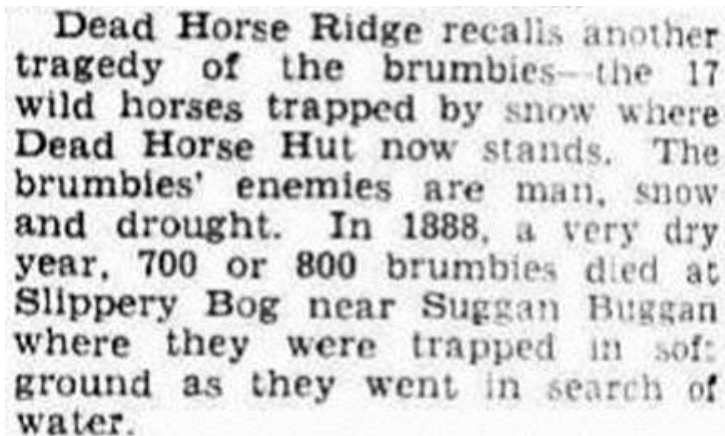
The untamed beauty of a wild mountain mare is commemorated today by a hut, a creek and a range near Mount Kosciusko. For years "The Grey Mare" (near Jagungal) eluded the cunning and skill of her pursuers and when finally caught she leaped a fence and was strangled by the halter in a frenzied struggle to re gain her mountain freedom.

Dead Horse Ridge recalls another tragedy of the brumbies— the 17 wild, horses trapped by snow where Dead Horse Hut' now stands. The brumbies' enemies are man, snow and drought.⁵³

⁵² 44 ("WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:" The Age 11 September 1954)

In the early days Jingellic was noted for its fine wild horses (brumbies), descended from a thoroughbred stallion (Moustache), which escaped to the bush. At times drafts were run in and sent down for auction at Kirk 's bazaar with the station horses, and one of the best carriage pairs in Melbourne was a pair of chestnuts, the property of a Collins street doctor, originally of the wild mob on Jingellic. ⁵⁴

“In 1888, a very dry year, 700 or 800 brumbies died at Slippery-Bog near Suggan Buggan where they were trapped in soft ground as they went in search of water.”



Dead Horse Ridge recalls another tragedy of the brumbies—the 17 wild horses trapped by snow where Dead Horse Hut now stands. The brumbies' enemies are man, snow and drought. In 1888, a very dry year, 700 or 800 brumbies died at Slippery Bog near Suggan Buggan where they were trapped in soft ground as they went in search of water.

("WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:" The Age 11 September 1954)

Wild horses have been running the mountainous country of East Gippsland, in which are the sources of the Buchan River, and through which the Snowy River and its tributary the Deddick River flow. To this I must add the dividing range from Omeo to Mount Kosciusko. The wild horses probably date back in place to a time antecedent to the discover of Gippsland in 1842. On the Manero tableland which lies on the New South Wales side of the border, and extends up to Kosciusko and Kiandra and Sunit, as also from the country to the heel of the dividing range, I have no doubt that horses escaped and became wild. Of course these have been of all kinds..

On the high mountain plateau which lies between the upper Tambo River and the sources of the Buchan River I have seen horses which can be best described as dwarfed cart-horses and probably were the descendants of light draught stock used by prospectors and miners in the early times of gold discovery – after 1850. The country they live in is very high and cold, being covered in winter with snow and altogether ill adapted to feral horses. In the warmer but very hilly country which lies to the east of the Snowy River in Victoria, for instance at Gatemurra, Deddick and

⁵⁴ (Memoirs of a stockman Harry H Peck 1974)

Tubbut the horses were of a much better stamp in many cases showing good breeding partly due to the excellent stamp of the NSW horses of about 50 years ago, but also to the fact that a Persian horse imported by Benjamin Boyd of Twofold Bay escaped and lived for many year after in the Deddick, Gatemurra and Tubbut country. The grey horses which occur there may be attributed to his influence.

The horses of this district were in many cases very good, being especially sure-footed, but frequently were broken down by galloping when driven over the mountainous and exceedingly rough country which they inhabited. I have often seen one of thee 'mobs' as they are called coming down the mountain side when disturbed at a gallop... I know of cases where they were driven to the coast say at Bega and sold at half a crown...⁵⁵

⁵⁵ ('The Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred Horse' (1905) Sir William Ridgeway
And a letter by Dr Alfred Howitt in 1904)

The Late William Kidman

As already briefly reported in the "Express," the death occurred on Thursday morning, 6th inst., of Mr William Kidman, Sr., at his late residence, Paupong.

"Billy," as he was universally known, was born 71 years ago at Ootralantra, near Berridale, and was reared by the late Mr Alexander Robertson. He came to Paupong at the age of nine, being one of the earliest settlers in that centre, where the rest of his life was spent.

Billy's fame as a horseman and "rounder-up" was well known on the Snowy, amongst whose hills wild cattle and horses were plentiful in his early years.

In due time he selected at Paupong, and gave attention to sheep-raising. Where travelling was concerned, he held strong opinions (like Mulga Bill after his wild bike ride) that "the horse was good enough for him."

He married in 1876 a daughter of the late John Elliott, and established the home in which he lived and eventually passed away.

Mr Kidman's health began to fail definitely about nine months ago and he finally took to his bed on November 9.

His widow survives him; also six sons—John, Leeton; Alexander and Samuel, Moonbah; Simon, James and Edwin, Paupong—and four daughters—Mrs C. Kelley, Jimenbuan; Mrs D. McPhie, Paupong; Mrs W. Thurbon, Gunning; and Mrs C. Thurbon, Peak View. There are also seventeen grand-children.

His only brother, Samuel, predeceased him by some years.

36.—The Run known as "Bidi," estimated to contain 10,240 acres. The Bidi run which is situated on the east side of the Snowy River, is bounded on the south by a range called the Wall, which abuts on the Snowy River, nearly opposite to the junction of the Pinch River; on the east by spurs of ranges; on the north by a range which abuts on the Snowy River nearly opposite to the junction of Reedy Creek; and on the west by the Snowy River.

FORFEITED AND VACATED RUNS. (1850, June 8). The Goulburn Herald and County of Argyle Advertiser

An obituary (private collection) of William "Billy" Kidman who lived at Paupong above the lower Snowy River and across the river at the Bidi run most of his life. His area of wild horses was from Matong to Jacobs ladder and across the lower Snowy River into Byadbo Wilderness. William's wife was Margaret Elliott who as a child lived in a hut at Bidi on the Snowy River now known as Byadbo Wilderness in KNP.

(William Kidman 1848 to 1923 buried in Boloco Cemetery personal collection)

Myles Dunphy (doyen of the early bushwalking fraternity and later lobbied for the National Parks and wilderness movement)

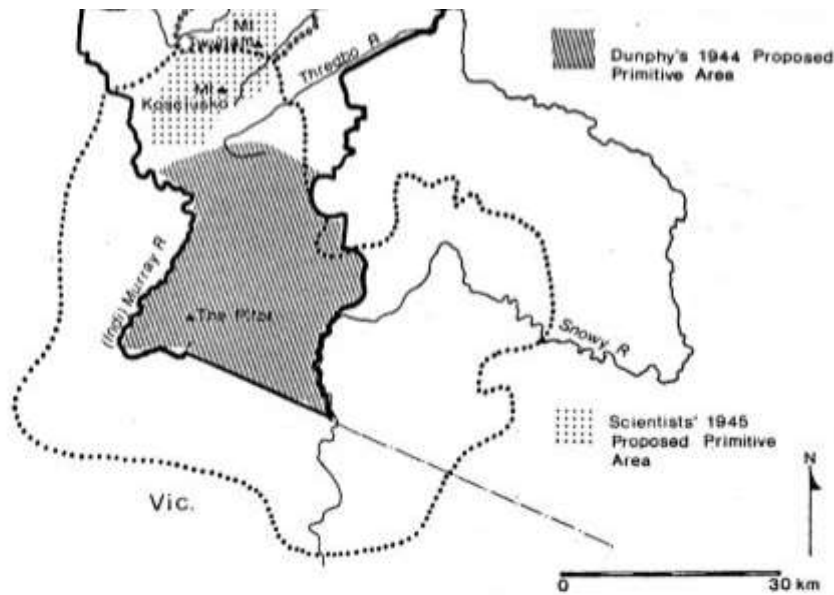
In 1932, the New South Wales Federation of Bush Walking Clubs was formed, followed in 1934 by the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council (N.P.P.A.C.).

By the time Kosciusko State Park was established in 1944, there were several groups lobbying for the declaration of national parks in New South Wales. The N.P.P.A.C., under the direction of Myles Dunphy was responsible for the first documented proposal to establish a national park in the Snowy Mountains.

Another difference of opinion occurred between Dunphy and the Wild Life Preservation Society (W.L.P.S.). Dunphy argued that dingoes should be protected in the proposed primitive area because they were native animals and part of natural ecosystems, while the W.L.P.S. believed that dingoes should be eradicated because of their alleged depredations upon small mammal populations. The opposite view was taken on brumbies (wild horses). Dunphy proposed that all the brumbies within the Park should be driven into the primitive area for sanctuary. (**Pilot Wilderness**) He claimed that they caused no environmental damage and were part of the romance and history of the Snowy Mountains. (M McDonald 1981. The Influence of the National Park Concept on KNP)

“All through these wild and cold highlands wild horses roam free in innumerable mobs, matching their horse-sense against their deadly enemies, the Freebody rifles. There is a scheme afoot and started, to wire fence the summit of the Great divide; so soon the poor harried beasts will be unable to change their grounds to accord with the seasons, and henceforth icy winds deep snow and that awful barbed fence will spell the doom of the thundering mobs. It ought not be so, it does not seem right that the last of the Monaro brumbies be wiped out ... Surely posterity would care to view their running free in land which had been theirs so long. The ‘Man from Snowy River’ will never die, why then the horses?”

(Dunphy, M.1934. Myles Dunphy Selected Writings. Compiled and Annotated by Patrick Thompson 1986 ed. Ballagirin, Sydney).



MAP 3.1 PRIMITIVE AREA PROPOSALS 1944-1945
SOURCE: N.P.P.A.C. 1943; N.P.P.A.C. 1945.

M McDonald 1981. The Influence of the National Park Concept on Kosciusko National Park

Heritage practises

Managing the brumbies could also be recognised as a significant heritage skill by the Mountain horsemen. Besides their knowledge of horsemanship and their knowledge of handling wild horses this also parallels their skills in bushcraft and bush lore as well as the local horsemen are renowned for their landscape memory. For example; on a few occasions they have been praised by Police and State Emergency Services for their involvement in search and rescues because of their remarkable knowledge of the bush and their abilities to cover such large search areas thoroughly and quickly on horseback in all types of terrain and weather. This is all done without using any modern GPS or compass devices and they are totally self-reliant.

There is no other local community to equal the recognition in the Australian psyche as the Snowy River Riders.

Mustering - Brumby Running

Similar to moth feasting being recognised in the National Heritage Listing as holding significant value to the local Aboriginal people, the same could be said of these brumby activities.

The Australian Brumby - as the basis for past annual gatherings of different mountain communities for local events sets the gatherings apart from any other community gatherings and has captured the Australian imagination, making it exceptional in Australia.

The Minister's assessment (NHL 2005:17) noted that bush skills and horsemanship of the High Country community remain valued despite the absence of pastoral practices in the KNP. The Minister suggests that the continuation of social value is derived from the long history of pastoralism rather than the presence or absence of contemporary pastoral practices. The activity of 'brumby running' is a pastoral practice still valued by today's

High Country community and associated with the KNP wild horse population; it is regarded by some as a desirable way to remove wild horses from KNP.(Walter 2002).

Involving the local community and giving them some guided responsibility and ownership of an issue that is important to them will engage better relations as well as better management.

There appears to be very little, if any, research on people-management issues in the Australian Alps. Like some of the other issues, this is a contentious issue, but people are in the parks just as are the flora and fauna. So are the resorts... When activities are banned rather than being managed, they frequently become illegal ones undertaken in widespread and inappropriate locations. It was claimed that there is massive united opposition to aspects of park management by horse riders, yet they could be used to tackle the wild horse problem. If the people are managed, they will protect the resource. These are controversial views, but, for example, they appear to accord with aspects of management processes of Parks Canada (Banff-Bow Valley Task Force 1996; Parks Canada 1997). They certainly merit investigation.⁵⁶

Conclusion

There is a further mountain of history to be gathered and drawn on stating that the brumbies have existed in large numbers throughout the whole KNP for nearly two centuries. Their numbers have fluctuated throughout that time due to various factors.

The horse habitats have mostly been geographically consistent although some non-horse areas today, did in fact also carry many horses at some period, particularly the main range.

There is clear evidence which demonstrates that most people feel that the brumbies are without any doubt considered an integral part of our heritage in the Snowy Mountains.

The mountain horsemen clearly controlled the wild horses for most of the horses' existence in the Kosciusko region up until the last few decades.

In 2001, the first ever formal horse survey of brumbies was completed. It identified that there were approximately **3000** horses in the spatial area that was surveyed of **1600km²** (M Walters).

Today's surveys in KNP tenure only are double the spatial area of approximately **3000 km²**.

Worth noting is (Walter survey 2001) **North Kosci = 795 km²** and (Cairns survey 2014/2019) **North Kosci = 1,549 km²** a vast difference.

Michelle Walter's survey plainly stated that it did not survey some known brumby habitats including the massive area of Byadbo wilderness and a large area in the northern end. It would be reasonable to assume therefor that there could have easily been a further 1000 or more brumbies in the unsurveyed horse areas at the time taking the overall numbers to an estimate of at least **4000 – 6000 in 2001**. At that time this region was also in the grip of extreme drought

⁵⁶ (Managing the Australian Alps: a history of cooperative management of the Australian Alps national parks Peter Crabb

which culminated in the widespread 2003 fires and consequently the numbers then should be considered on the lower scale in hindsight compared to previous good seasons.

Again back at that same time in 2001, there was not any campaign from National Parks or the anti-horse groups to remove horses from any areas below the tree-line elevation, so the populations below 1800m were not deemed an issue. Therefore, it should be a reasonable conclusion that a total population target of up to at least 4000 brumbies should be contemplated as an appropriate population estimate goal to retain in the total park again as it was 20 years ago.

Discussion started the same year about removing 10 only horses from Ramshead Range and then keeping true Alpine areas horse free from then. The local horse riders were invited to discuss and assist. The locals were very willing to help out and were praised by the supervising vets in trials of removal of the Alpine horses by trapping and then leading them out to trailers.

(KNP Wild Horse Steering committee minutes 2001)

Purists would claim that brumbies are not truly wild and unimportant as they are all descended from domestic animals. That is true as there were no horses in Australia before white settlement. However, to argue beyond this that the brumbies of the Snowy are any less than wild is to have no knowledge of the equine species at all, for they are as wild as any creature in the mountains.

Almost no other domesticated animal adapts to the wild with such ability as the horse and it takes only a few generations for the descendants of the most blue-blooded thoroughbred to revert back to having the wild survival genes of their ancestors. This is because they breed via 'natural selection' and not artificially as in domestic life.

So far, the situation has been lacking the defined knowledge of such complex management issues of wild horses that decision makers need. Until now the basis of management has been absolute and uncompromising. Other philosophies and methods have been refused trial and discussion.

It is consequently no wonder that the powers that be can be easily caught off guard by a sudden and unexpected community uprising in defence of the brumbies.

There is a deep sense of attachment with the Snowy Brumbies which up until now has not been attempted to be adequately defined.

Many people with longstanding connections to the Snowy Mountains including our local traditional owners have made many sacrifices over time to their way of life including losing their homes and connections to the land, losing special and spiritual places including our towns & history which were flooded for Hydro or destroyed by National Parks.

In contrast, they see that there are many other massive concessions regularly made for other people and other values in the park like major tourist resorts and connected infrastructures for activities or Snowy 2.0 for example. They are tired of their heritage being ignored and they are tired of being ridiculed by some for making a stand for their own ideals.

The attachment to the brumbies is fundamental to our unique heritage that is all but lost in the Snowy Mountains. It may even be unconscious to many in our daily lives until it is threatened which changes the paradigm. The response to such a threat is charged with emotion and will be met with resistance. The inter-connection is real and will not be forsaken.

(The Horse Community and National Parks working together below Dead Horse Gap 2002)



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Images copyright:

- Michelle J Brown, Snowy Brumby Photography
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- Personal communication Maret Rose, Great Grand Daughter of John McDonald Peppercorn May 2020
- Personal communication Milton Golby Great Grandson Thomas Goldby Snowy River June 2020
- Personal communication Garry Caldwell Great Grandson James Spencer/William Kidman
- Lisa (Jardine) Rowbotham collection Jardine family diaries 1929 Snowy Plains

Attachment 10 – Copy of MOU. SMBUGS, SMHRA and AHA



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE NSW LIBERAL/NATIONALS COALITION

AND

A COALITION OF NSW HORSE RIDERS

20 November 2006

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition recognises that the management of our National Parks Nature Reserves, Wilderness Areas, Regional Parks, State Recreation Areas, State Forests and other public land ("all referred to as reserve areas") requires a sensible balance of conservation and public access, and should contribute to enhanced appreciation and understanding of our natural environment and our cultural heritage across the community.

Any decisions about the management of our natural environment and cultural heritage must be based on evidence and science, and involve the community in transparent decision-making.

This Memorandum of Understanding between the NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition and the Australian Horse Alliance (AHA), Snowy Mountains Bush User Group (SMBUG), and Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Association (SMHRA) sets out a positive approach to providing the opportunity for broader access for horse riders to reserve areas, and any prohibition of access to reserve areas and the management of these areas must be backed by an improved and scientific evidence based approach.

The Memorandum also sets out undertakings by the AHA, SMBUG, and SMHRA underpinning this agreement and sets out a range of benefits to the NSW community including a strengthened voluntary partnership between horse-riders and park staff on issues including fire trail maintenance, and additional care and stewardship of accessible areas.

Principles

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition:

1. Recognises horse riding as an appropriate 'self reliant' activity for reserve areas;
2. Recognises the importance of horse riding in our Australian cultural heritage and the value of encouraging and promoting safe and responsible horse riding activities in reserve areas;
3. Endorses the Bicentennial National Trail, which was founded by RM Williams as a national horse trail and, launched during the Bicentennial as a multi use non motorised recreational trail, run by a not-for-profit volunteer board;
4. Understands the importance of horse riding to our tourism industry;
5. Understands the broad appeal of horse riding to thousands of NSW families;
6. Supports the notion of promoting and encouraging public access by horse riders to our reserve areas;
7. Recognises that many areas have been shut off to horse-riders for reasons other than scientific evidence;
8. Believes that conservation and cultural heritage awareness and engendering broad community support for conserving reserve areas is best developed through encouraging individuals to experience and appreciate natural areas for themselves;
9. Supports the principles of Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management(AEAM) as a management approach for reserve lands; and
10. Recognises that existing policies of restricting areas for horse riding have the potential to concentrate the activity, which may lead to unacceptable impacts to reserve areas.

Accordingly the NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition will:

1. Amend and sponsor necessary legislation, regulation and policy to ensure horse riding is accepted as a 'self reliant' activity and is an appropriate recreation in reserve areas;
2.
 - a. Remove the blanket prohibition against riding in Wilderness and Nature Reserves within three months of coming to government.
 - b. Within six months of coming to government, adopt new Plans of Management to reinstate horse riding to all reserve areas where it had been permitted prior to the classification of those areas as Wilderness or Nature Reserves or the Adoption of a Plan of Management.
 - c. Provide that horse riding may be subsequently modified if there is expert scientific evidence to suggest that there will be serious or irreversible detrimental impacts if horse riding is permitted, and following an AEAM process.
3. Ensure that all new Plans of Management are drawn up on the basis that horse riding is an appropriate activity unless scientific based and appropriate evidence shows that there will be serious or irreversible detrimental impacts if horse riding is permitted, and such impacts are not manageable by AEAM techniques, and that input from the AHA and local horse riding interest groups on potential riding trails is transparently and expertly considered;

4. Reform the way consultative committee decisions are made to ensure that departmental committee representatives are limited to expert advisory, rather than voting, roles;
5. Secure the route of the Bicentennial National Trail where it crosses public lands;
6. Undertake investigation of opportunities to route the BNT through public land where possible, to ensure the connectivity of the route is not dependent on private land-owner goodwill;
7. Work with private owners where appropriate to try to secure permanent access arrangements through private land on the BNT where public land alternatives are not possible;
8. Ensure that recruitment policies for the Department of Environment and Conservation seeks a broad range of skills including tourism and recreation;
9. Ensure that advisory and consultative committees under the National Parks and Wildlife Act include as many representatives of recreational organisations as there are representatives of "conservation organisations" to ensure public access interests are properly heard; and
10. Ensure that through appropriate Government Departments and ministries that "Brumbies" are recognised as part of the cultural heritage of New South Wales and through Statutory instruments and Plans of Management and in consultation with the AHA and local horse riding interest groups this heritage is recognised and protected and appropriate viable populations are protected in reserve areas. Shooting will not be permitted as a management tool.
11. Endorses the concept of identifying for use by horse riders heritage tracks, trails and places within reserve areas. These would include but not be limited to former and current stock routes and reserves, old mail, coach and other historic routes.

The Australian Horse Alliance and other signatories:

- Are not seeking indiscriminate access to all reserve areas;
- Support the need to develop and implement scientific, evidence based plans of management in reserve areas;
- Support the use of AEAM techniques and tools in the management of reserve areas;
- Will undertake the production of educational information for its members on the responsibilities of riders in reserve areas;
- Agrees that all riders in Alpine areas will abide by the " Horse Riding Code — Horse Riding in the Australian Alps National Parks" Code of Practice;
- Will promote the benefits of a partnership relationship between riders as 'volunteers' in the management of reserve areas, and park staff as partners in a cooperative arrangement

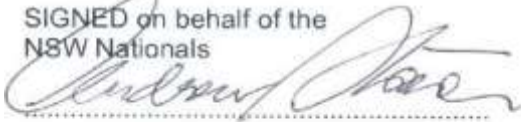
- Will develop, in cooperation with the national parks service, protocols to ensure that relevant information collected by riders is passed back to park managers, and activities such as clearing fire trails or other minor maintenance is guided by expert advice.

SIGNED on behalf of the
NSW Liberal Party



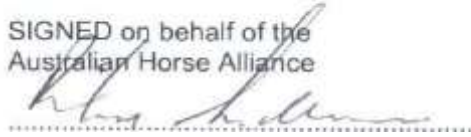
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SIGNED on behalf of the
NSW Nationals



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SIGNED on behalf of the
Australian Horse Alliance



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SIGNED on behalf of the
Snowy Mountains Bush Users Group



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SIGNED on behalf of the
Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Association



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Date: .. 20. 11. 06 ..