

**Submission
No 36**

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED AERIAL SHOOTING OF
BRUMBIES IN KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK**

Name: Ms Judy Medway
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Brumby Inquiry Submission

I support No ground or aerial shooting of Brumbies because both are proven to be cruel.

Current and previous population counts are flawed, proven by equine scientist Joanne Canning and biostatistician Claire Galea. Based on evidence to date it is reasonable that the government obtain a new population survey using different methodology.

The lower actual real numbers are likely to confirm, gentle rehoming may be suitable and adequate when an independent report on population and impact is prepared. Rehoming may not be warranted due to the lack of evidence about negative impacts, and low brumby numbers conveying removing brumbies will not change anything.

I refer to report “Assessment of animal welfare for helicopter shooting of feral horses”

(Jordan O. Hampton A,H, Glenn P. Edwards B Brendan D. Cowled C, David M. Forsyth D,E Timothy H. Hyndman A Andrew L. Perry F Corissa J. Miller G, Peter J. Adams A and Teresa Collins A).

The report raises questions about whether or not shooting horses from a helicopter is an effective tool to reduce populations and based on results, aerial shooting is found to be cruel and inhumane.

There is no guarantee all horses will be humanely euthanised with a single gunshot, (as required per SOP's) regardless of how skilled the shooter is. Many will be left to die from drawn out deaths in a cruel and inhumane way.

The research was conducted in Central Australia, in a flat no tree environment, bearing no resemblance to the terrain of high-level tree canopies and mountainous areas, where NSW or Victorian brumbies live.

The flat central Australian landscape gave clear visibility to shooters and although visibility was high the shooters still delivered 1 to 6 shots per horse with limited head shot or a head and chest shot being possible, as these shots deliver a quicker death. Brumbies were peppered with shots to legs, backs, flanks and spine causing prolonged suffering and pain. Pregnant brumbies often abort or go into labor delivering motherless foals that also endure cruel deaths.

The success rate of death was not a “humane death” and subsequent death was only 63%.

Fly back to ensure all horses were dead was not prompt. In a treed environment with limited visibility the fly back and check on death will have a longer time period and will lead to extended, prolonged deaths if all horses are able to be located in a canopied or mountainous area with wounded horses hiding.

This research has proven aerial shooting not to be a humane or an acceptable approach to wild horse management in Victoria and New South Wales.

The report confirms that aerial shooting cannot and does not satisfy standard operating procedures.

Aerial shooting is influenced by many factors, including shooter skill, shooter fatigue, helicopter pilot skill and capacity, on the day of shooting.

Standard Operating Procedures do not support ground shooting free roaming horses where a clear view of a single horse cannot be achieved to ensure a clean head shot.

Shooting a mob of roaming brumbies will result in horses running after the first shot, whether or not a silencer is used. The startle of a horse falling will cause other horses to run with fear with a resultant blood bath as shooters try to take head shots, which will be impossible and has led to horses being found with gut shots, shots to the neck and back, all of which will have suffered long agonising deaths.

Finally, I oppose brumbies being shot in traps. It is cruel and unnecessary to kill them when there are other options in wild horse management. Rehoming is preferred as a removal approach or with low brumby numbers allowing brumbies to remain in the native environment.

Globally horses are being re-wilded to help with forest regeneration with successful results. Horses being herbivores assist with native grass regeneration. Horses are not predators and live peacefully within the forest environment.