

**Submission
No 39**

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

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This submission seeks to oppose the proposed aerial shooting of brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park. It argues that this method is both inhumane and ineffective, proposing instead alternative management methods that are more aligned with the principles of animal welfare, biodiversity conservation, and responsible governance.

Introduction:

The proposal for the aerial shooting of brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park has stirred substantial public concern. While the environmental impact of a feral horse population is not to be dismissed lightly, the current proposition is wanting in both ethical and practical terms. Put simply, shooting horses from helicopters is an approach that warrants scrutiny, it's fraught with uncertainties and begs ethical questions.

Points of Concern:

1. Flawed Counting Methods: Existing population estimates for brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park are based on methods that have been subject to considerable scrutiny and criticism. Without accurate data, any action taken—especially one as drastic as aerial shooting—poses an unnecessary risk of unjustifiable animal loss. Erroneous counting could lead to aggressive culling based on inflated numbers.

2. Inhumaneness: Aerial shooting risks wounding rather than killing the animals instantaneously, leading to undue suffering. This method does not conform to established standards of animal welfare.

3. Public Outcry: There is a growing body of public opinion opposing this method, questioning its morality and the image it casts on Australia's governance standards.

4. Environmental Impact: Aerial shooting creates stress among other fauna and risks ecosystem imbalance. Disposing of the carcasses is an additional environmental challenge.

5. Cost-effectiveness: Not only is aerial shooting an expensive operation, but it's also a short-term solution to a long-term problem, thus failing the test of fiscal responsibility.

6. Questionable Efficacy: Past initiatives suggest that aerial shooting is not particularly effective in controlling feral horse populations in the long term.

Alternative Solutions:

1. Fertility Control: Adoption of humane fertility control methods such as immunocontraceptive vaccines.

2. Relocation: Capturing and relocating horses to more appropriate environments where they pose less of an environmental threat.

3. Adoption Programs: Facilitating the adoption of brumbies to qualified individuals or organisations who can provide proper care.

4. Ecosystem Restoration: Adopting natural methods to restore the ecosystem, thereby reducing the areas where feral horses can thrive.

Recommendations:

1. Immediately halt plans for the aerial shooting of brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park.

2. Conduct an independent and rigorous review of existing counting methods to ensure accurate population estimates.

3. Conduct a transparent and comprehensive review of alternative management strategies.

4. Engage stakeholders, including animal welfare organisations and environmental experts, in the decision-making process.

5. Reallocate funds designated for aerial shooting to the research and implementation of humane and effective management alternatives.

Conclusion:

The aerial shooting of brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park is a proposal that not only shocks the conscience but also defies logic. It is an approach that is both ethically and pragmatically flawed. We urge the Committee to reconsider this method and engage in a broader consultation to arrive at a solution that is humane, effective, and worthy of the 21st century.