

**Submission  
No 48**

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

**Name:** Mr Peter Conroy  
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The damage caused by feral horses in NSW national parks is well documented. The 'victims' of the damage include native animals whose protective habitats are eaten down to the level of mown grass, and fish that need clear water to survive and are choking on horse-disturbed sediment.

The need for action to protect or native animals and the plants on which they depend, some nearing extinction, is urgent. The exact count (ToR 1) is not a big issue - the upwards trend in horse numbers is clear, and spending time arguing over counting methods is an evasion of Parliamentary responsibility.

The justification (ToR 2) for aerial shooting is also clear. The science on the need for population control is well-documented (T o R 3) . Members of the Animal Welfare Committee need only look to government publications such as the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Final Determination on Equus caballus Other methods are failing to halt the growth in the horse population.

Calling for public comment on the adequacy of "Aerial shooting of feral horses (HOR002) Standard Operating Procedure" (T o R 4 and 5) is unnecessary, when the NSW government has access to expert advice from its own scientists and organisations such as the RSPCA and AVA. The animal welfare aspect of control of feral horse populations should be based on science, not on an opinion poll.

T o R 6 - human safety concerns if Kosciuszko National Park is to remain open during operations - could have been resolved by a quick phone call to NPWS rather than a Parliamentary Inquiry.. It is my understanding that KNP will be closed if aerial shooting operations of horses goes ahead.

T o R 7 - Guy Fawkes. The Guy Fawkes cull occurred in 2000, with one documented case of unnecessary suffering. Standard operation procedures have been revised since then. The best answer to any lingering concerns about the Guy Fawkes Cull would be to recommence aerial shooting of feral horses with strict monitoring .

T o R 8 - the availability of alternatives to aerial shooting. As the Animal Welfare Committee is aware, there is a range of methods for reducing feral horse numbers in Kosciuszko NP. I would suggest the Committee members, if holding hearings to which animal welfare experts are called, ask the expert two questions about each method - 'Can it be done humanely?' and 'Can it be done inhumanely?' It is likely that the experts will reply Yes to both questions, for every method. Rehoming for instance, can be done inhumanely. The solution is straightforward - set the standards (e.g. maximum chase time of x minutes, maximum trucking time of x hours, maximum time between first bullet and loss of consciousness of x minutes). And then empower the agency tasked with managing the horse numbers to choose the most humane method in the circumstances.