

**Supplementary
Submission
No 15a**

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

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I firmly believe that the NSW Government should not backflip on the aerial shooting of brumbies ban that was introduced in 2000. It is my understanding that following the infamous 2000 Guy Fawkes River National Park aerial shooting of over 600 brumbies, which left many suffering for days afterwards, the then NSW Minister of the Environment issued a ban on the practice. The aerial shooting of brumbies was revisited and refused in 2016, as it should be today. The current Plan states that “there is a significant risk that the implementation of an aerial shooting program will result in a loss of the social licence to remove wild horses from the national park”, and I could not agree more. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service also initially refused to consider resuming aerial shooting in 2023, and I support their original stance. The RSPCA also does not recommend aerial shooting, due to a lack of research in its ‘humaneness’ and due to the significant and adverse animal welfare implications and immense suffering it causes.

I firmly believe that aerial shooting is a controversial method and cannot be considered a “humane” death. Helicopters are affected by light winds, updrafts, and turbulence and do not provide a stable enough platform to be able to accurately or humanely shoot a moving target. It is incredibly difficult for a shooter to achieve a headshot and even if it is executed, it still does not guarantee an instant kill. Accounts from shooters admit their inaccuracy and the inhumane nature of shooting from helicopters. They recalled “often they [the shooters] ended up missing the horse’s brain, taking out its jaw or something else instead. The consequences of which was often seriously maimed horses escaping into tree cover where they would later die a slow and painful death.” Unweaned foals can also be left to fend for themselves and potentially starve to death or face attack from predators.

The last time aerial shooting was considered was in 2000, due to a drought and wildfires affecting the well-being of wild horses. In October 2000, over three days, 606 horses were shot in an infamous program in Guy Fawkes River National Park. Even though a review of the shooting found it was carried out appropriately, it shocked and outraged the Australian public, myself included. One horse was found alive days after being shot twice. This event caused significant public distress and anger and resulted in the complete NSW prohibition of using aerial shooting as a lethal control method for brumbies.

I am concerned that the killing of brumbies will increase the lethal control of other animals, particularly the native and ecologically important dingo. The NSW Government proposal states that some horse carcasses will not be removed and that they will undertake “enhanced and targeted” control of dingoes. I am aware that 1080-baiting programs are already used to target dingoes in Kosciuszko National Park. 1080 poison is known to cause severe and prolonged suffering, so the proposal to increase the killing of brumbies will also increase the suffering in other species, too. This is not how I want my public money used – to cause extensive and extended animal suffering.

1080 poison does not work. Despite continuously being targeted, studies from the 1980s on show that 1080 baiting simply isn’t working on dingoes. Two studies in KNP confirmed that non-target animals were taking the bait instead. One study found that out of nine dingoes, only one was killed in a 1080-baiting program. In another, only one out of eight dingoes was killed. Overall, baiting only reduced the number of dingoes by 22%. It is time for the government to implement other, non-lethal methods, and invest in research and development to humanely manage animal populations!