

Submission  
No 104

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

**Organisation:** Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Association

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# SNOWY MOUNTAINS HORSE RIDERS ASSOCIATION

Keeping Our Heritage Alive...

The Animal Welfare Committee NSW Legislative Council  
[animal.welfare@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:animal.welfare@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

## Inquiry into the proposed aerial shooting of brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park

The SMHRA was established in 1985 and is a cohort of long-term local residents & horsemen who surround or adjoin the KNP including descendants of the first settlers and occupiers of the mountain region who have a wealth of generational as well as personal history, knowledge and experience in controlling the brumbies.

It was SMHRA that KNP first called on in 2000 to assist with the original Alpine Horse Management Plan. It was SMHRA who in good faith now regrettably, showed how to and demonstrated passive trapping to KNP staff in 2000-2003.

**The following points are the reason for this mountain community's total rejection of the introduction of aerial shooting. We vehemently oppose ANY shooting for control!**

1. In 2000 NSW Attorney General and Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus stated on 16 November 2000;
  - a. *"I have listened to the community on this issue and I have **permanently** banned all aerial culling of all feral horses in all national parks in this state **permanently**"*
  - b. **PERMANENT = Existing or intending to exist forever!** – Collins Australian Dictionary
2. In 2000 the RSPCA stated that it had evidence of cruelty against NPWS for helicopter shooting brumbies *"We believe it was a cruel operation and that's why we took it before the courts"* RSPCA CEO Steve Coleman. Clearly there was enough grounds for a prosecution against NPWS in 2000 regardless of the plea bargain later and it is most unlikely that the operating procedures of cruelty could be any better today.
3. The Australian Veterinarian Association (AVA), immediately after the 2000 aerial shooting stated that their policy on helicopter horse culling applies;



us, they refused further offers of assistance, instead opting to pay private contractors for removal.

Local communities remained committed to assisting with search and rescue operations, fire management, and controlling feral animals and noxious weeds when they cross park boundaries, despite NPWS's disregard for their expertise. The attitude of NPWS, as expressed by Atticus Fleming, now dismisses the intimate knowledge of the local community, undermining the contributions and heritage of generations of mountain people and we are now treated with contempt.

8. NPWS have engaged two separate panels of expert & independent scientists in the last 8 years. Both groups recommendations were of removal of horses only based on adverse impacts instead of numbers. However, NPWS continue to arrogantly ignore their own expert advice.
9. Independent surveys using other methodologies combined was promised by Mick Pettitt but has never been implemented.
10. NPWS breaching the (HOR001) SOP Standard Operating Procedures:
  - a. (HOR001) SOP states that *“Culling programs should be timed to minimise the risk of orphaning dependent foals or **causing abortion when females are in late pregnancy**”*
  - b. The aerial (HOR002) SOP further states *“To minimise the animal welfare implications of leaving dependent foals to die a slow death from starvation, it is preferable not to run aerial shooting programs when mares have dependent young at foot. **Foaling is concentrated over spring and summer**”*

There is a mountain of evidence that pregnant mares in late pregnancy have been shot. More recently it has been open slather and foals are also being shot.

**NPWS can never be trusted again!**

Any shooting taking place in areas that will not be closed to the public is outrageously dangerous! Will someone need to be killed for NPWS 'law unto themselves' attitude is held to account?

All the above is nothing less than an arrogant act of bastardry by NPWS. They have arrogantly defied all of their own experts advice and continue to refuse to engage with the local community.

A major recommendation from the Community and Advisory Panels in the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan was to include the local community for their knowledge and wild horse expertise which would help to gain social licence.

Again all advice has been ignored.

The Minister for the Environment AND the current National Park staff involved in this abomination will forever be remembered as the people who slaughtered our iconic Snowy Brumbies.

Sincerely

Stephen O’Ryan  
For SMHRA

SMHRA working with KNP staff and vet during trapping trials in 2002

