

**Submission  
No 139**

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

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I would make two points and make them simply and very quickly.

Firstly that there is very strong reason to suspect that the number of brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park has been grossly inflated. Stuart Cairns' application of his counting software has been strongly criticized by its own designers at the University of St Andrews in Scotland as liable to produce significantly inaccurate figures. His use of that software estimating kangaroo populations in NSW has certainly done so (see my essay 'The Number Game: Counting Kangaroos', *Animal Studies Journal*, 2022 [online, open access]). To determine, knowingly, the fate of the brumbies concerned based in any way upon such suspect figures, now that you have been made aware of the questions surrounding them, would be seriously delinquent.

Secondly, in whatever kind of discussion of the fate of these horses there may be, the lethal option should be off the table. Conservation killing is something of a disease in Australian wildlife care, but is an intellectual laziness (we can design and deliver the Snowy Mountains Scheme, etc., but we can think of no other way to manage animals than bullets??), an embarrassment – the world is watching – and a moral failing. Relocation is possible (just too expensive? let those who wish them gone contribute to the cost of dealing with them humanely [and there is no 'humane slaughter']); so too are sequestration/limitation of range, and chemical castration. Shooting is cheap and nasty. Is that the way we want to be seen?

Instead of an Extermination Program we should be instituting Humane (non-lethal) Management Programs.