

**Submission  
No 154**

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

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Thank you for launching this inquiry.

I strongly oppose the use of aerial culling on horses. This method has been proven time and again to have unacceptable welfare outcomes - a study in flat arid terrain of NT showed that at least 37% of horses shot did NOT receive a humane death. This figure would only increase in terrain such as the Snowy Mountains. Such cruelty can never be justified. RSPCA submit that only head (brain) shots should be used to ensure a humane death - this is extremely rare in aerial shooting operations. The suffering would be immeasurable and cannot be allowed.

Ground shooting operations to-date have also failed to deliver humane deaths to a great many brumbies. The method of favouring shoulder/chest shots to immobilise rather than aiming for an instant kill has been questioned by the RSPCA and urgent review was recommended. If such "highly trained professionals" can't follow a SOP and deliver a humane brain shot to an animal whilst it grazes peacefully, how shall they manage whilst chasing a galloping horse in a moving helicopter?

The slaughter of horses at the knackery or abattoir is also unacceptable.

The number of horses in KNP is under dispute with the Cairns Surveys being shown to have significant flaws in the methodology and statistical modelling - indeed, the figures have been shown to be manipulated in a way that produced an extreme spike in the horse numbers which is both physically and biologically impossible. If you look at a graph, you don't have to be an expert to see that there's something seriously wrong. There has been no population explosion - not for horses, anyway.

Until a credible, evidenced, account of the population can be established, no further removals of any kind should be taking place. A moratorium on removal and shooting operations should be established.

Brumbies have been loaded with the collective damage of humans, deer, pigs, rabbits, 4wd and ATVs. If the Government truly wants to mend the environment, it must first consider the true culprits, rather than the easy target. Removing brumbies will achieve nothing if they are not a major contributor.

The snowy mountain brumbies hold significant heritage value to the Australian people. They are magnificent, hardy, resilient horses and have been part of the fabric of Kosciuszko National Park since it was declared such with the brumbies in it. The population has never exploded and does not require further reduction. With seasonal removals, the current population should remain stable into the future, and the wild horses will continue to provide their unique bushfire mitigation service to the plants and animals within KNP as they have done for over 150 years. To remove them en mass could well be seriously detrimental to biodiversity and health of the park and its inhabitants.

We cannot allow the Government of the day, nor extreme lobby groups to dictate the fate of Australia's iconic horses in such a cruel manner.

I truly hope common decency prevails.