

**Submission
No 160**

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

Name: Miss Ellesmira Heath

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To dear Animal Welfare Committee,

I am grateful for the opportunity to express my opinions on the aerial shooting of brumbies in Kosciusko National Park and hold particular concern regarding the following terms of reference:

a) The methodology used to survey and estimate the brumby population in KNP

Minister Penny Sharpe's press release of 22/5/23 saw her emphasise that the brumby numbers were estimated to be around 18,000 in the park. She insisted the legal obligation that NSW NPWS held to reduce these numbers to 3,000. The counting methodology utilised to estimate these numbers; Cairns, is significantly flawed, leading to a widely inaccurate estimation of brumby numbers. Not only were there no considerations made as to the 2019/20 bushfires that decreased the brumby populations in the Park by 35%, nor the biologically impossible nature of the brumby numbers. Joanne Canning, BSC Equine Sports Science, HND Equine Sports Coaching, BHSII, wrote in her submission; "Draft Kosciusko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management 2021-" ... the Distance software (applied by Cairns) have produced estimates that are biologically and scientifically impossible for brumbies. For instance, the supposed annual increase of 37% which in actual fact is 41% after accounting for removals) in the North Kosciusko area between 2014 – 2019, is approximately DOUBLE the accepted scientific maximum! This was pointed out in the peer review by St Andrews. Yet no feasible explanation was ever given, because there isn't one."

c) The status of, and threats to, endangered species in KNP

Brumbies are nomadic herbivores, and as such are a keystone species, indicating that they actually benefit the surrounding natural environment, working with it rather than against. Rewilding and regeneration through species introduction is becoming an increasingly popular and effective method, and given that Conservation biologists have indicated the critical role equines have in regenerating the earth, emphasising species destruction due to the brumbies, particularly in relation to reference a) is a bold and inaccurately founded claim. The link below gives more information regarding this concept: <http://theveonline.com/ecological-impact-horses-keystone-species-critical-regeneration-earth/?fbclid=IwAR06IFYv11jPSCwbT8eG2dnQirprASM4UKPolqnR8ngg-H3eJbflAdZRVB8>

Not only this, but seemingly the largest and truer environmental destruction of the park, man-made at that;

- Continued building of Alpine ski resorts
- 4WD tracks
- Hundreds of camp sites
- Bike and hiking trails

- Millions of tourists walking through the park a year
 - The Snowy Hydro project in KNP
- , are ignored.

With regards and concern,

Ellesmira Heath