

**Supplementary
Submission
No 66a**

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

Name: Dr Jill Brown

Date Received: 5 February 2024

Witness appendix to the submission on behalf of the Heritage Horse and Environment Protection Alliance

Contact: Dr Jill Brown

The Heritage Horse and Environment Protection Alliance is a group of concerned citizens, all of whom are both brumby advocates and committed conservationists. We have experience with wild caught horses and several members are currently the owners of such horses. We are also active members of Landcare and passionate about the protection of native animals and the environment with members having large sections of their properties dedicated as wild life reserves.

I respectfully ask that the Committee consider the following points.

- The extreme cruelty of aerial culling of wild horses is beyond question. The terror experienced by the horses in this process is indefensible. It is also demonstrably inefficient resulting in animals being left to suffer multiple wounds and die in great pain over an extended period of time.
- Wild horse advocate groups are ready and willing to work with government and national parks to resolve this issue in ways that are both humane and effective. This requires an openness to alternative views and the establishment of effective communication between groups. The current adversarial approach is unhelpful.
- The number of wild horses in the Alpine Region is open to dispute as is the impact of the horses on the environment. A growing body of recent research suggests that there are fewer horses than the estimate used to justify the culling and that the observed impact on the environment is, in the main, attributable to other species.
- There are alternative approaches to population management which are used successfully in other parts of the world. These include relocation, rehoming (with appropriate central management and financial support), fertility control, protection of sensitive environmental zones to exclude all invading species and the maintenance of sustainable and protected numbers in appropriate areas.
- The Australian Waler horse is currently classified as rare and endangered. It is our heritage horse, the Australian equivalent of the American Quarter Horse, and must not be allowed to disappear. The bloodlines of this rare breed are held within the brumby population. Once gone, they can never be replaced. A study is currently being conducted by the University of Sydney under Dr Brandon Velie to establish the genetic status of wild brumbies. This work will support

and extend the current work on DNA collection being done through the University of Texas as part of the Global Equine Genome Project.

- Wild horses are a potential tourist attraction and an irreplaceable part of our our history and heritage. Elsewhere in the world such horses are valued and protected. I ask that the same be done here.

Points from transcript of previous hearing:

1. Steven Coleman (Chief Inspector RSPCA NSW) expressed concern for the welfare of wild horses being transported. If this is done appropriately, wild horses are able to cope with transport. In bringing foundation bloodline Walers in from the wild, over 200 horses have successfully transported from the Northern Territory. For example 66 horses have been successfully transported from a property bordering the Tanami Desert, about 300 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs with some travelling as far as Tasmania. In terms of personal experience when my stallion, who was part of this group, was brought back to the mainland from Tasmania, the horse transporter said he was astonished by the calmness and compliance of the horse.
2. Scott Meyers (CEO RSPCA NSW) made the statement that ‘there is no particular foaling season’ for horses in the wild. This is factually incorrect. The Centre for Invasive Species Management website states that ‘feral horses breed in spring to summer and have a gestation period of about 11 months’. As an experienced breeder Mr Meyers must be aware that mares start cycling ‘when daylight hours become longer, when temperatures are higher and nutrition improves’ (Huntington, Meyers & Owen, *Horse Sense: the Guide to Horse Care in Australia & New Zealand*, p.237) and that foaling rates in the paddock (ie in the context most similar to that in the wild) are ‘lower than those achieved using other mating methods’ (p.244). My own observational experience with my wild caught foundation bloodline Walers is that the mare is very much in control of mating and that this only occurs when she is ready and if she finds the stallion a desirable mate.
3. I found the variation of 10,000 between the lower estimate of 12,000 and 23 and a half thousand deeply disturbing. This cannot be considered in any way as an accurate ‘count’ and I urge the inquiry to return to the comments of Claire Galea and her suggestions for an alternative approach.
4. That up to 15 shots are being used with a median of 7.5 is staggering. The recommended method for shooting a horse is by a rifle shot using the frontal method. The ideal site is slightly above (1cm) the intersection of two imaginary

lines drawn from the eye to the opposite ear. A head shot is more possible with on the ground shooting but obviously impossible using aerial shooting.

Thank you for your consideration of the above points. If clarification or additional information is required, please contact me on _____ or _____