



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

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*Kaimanawa Horses in the Argo Basin
near Auahitotara Peak, New Zealand*

Photo from

<https://perissodactyla.wordpress.com/>

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The ABA

The *Australian Brumby Alliance Inc. (ABA)* was established in 2008 to help facilitate the efforts of like-minded wild horse interest groups throughout Australia. We do this by sharing information and expertise as well as providing a collective voice in regard to the humane management, welfare, preservation and promotion of what we consider to be a National Treasure - *The Australian Brumby*.

ABA News

President's Chat

While Australia's winter takes hold, I am in England searching for sun. In between visiting family and friends, I am spending time with Charlotte Faulkner, Dartmoor Hill Ponies Society in Devon and with Dartmoor National Park staff, at a meeting arranged by Charlotte. I am keen to hear how the quota of Ponies, cattle and sheep that live on the moor are calculated and how Parks, farmers and the Hill Pony Society work together on a range of issues.

My visit to the Kaimanawa horse home range in New Zealand provided good insight into ways the Department of Conservation works effectively with key interest groups to manage Kaimanawa horses living wild, see more on page 4.

The Outback Heritage Horse Association of WA (OHHAWA) has now distributed its remaining funds to the ABA for use by ABA member groups. Allocation of OHHAWA funds

across member groups will be discussed in the next ABA meeting to be held - Thanks OHHAWA for your work for Heritage Horses in WA and the funds recently passed to the ABA.

It is encouraging to see the increasing number of Brumby advocate groups providing formal input to their State Park management plans. We need to increase written information documenting the benefits Wild Brumbies provide. Increasing the public's understanding of *positive values* that Brumbies offer to national parks is essential to eventually achieving a balanced, acceptable and sustainable management plan for national park Brumbies.

Hope you are finding some relief from the storms, rain and floods that were in full swing when I left for England.

*Jill Pickering,
President, Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.*

The little talked of – but vital - Burra Charter

(Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013)

Background

The *International Council on Monuments and Sites* (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental professional organisation formed in 1965, with headquarters in Paris. The Burra Charter is a document under the umbrella of the Australian arm of ICOMOS which serves to value, protect and promote conservation of places of cultural significance

The full reference is *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013*. Initial textual references should be in the form of the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013* and later references in the short form (*Burra Charter*).

The Burra Charter was first adopted in 1979 at the historic South Australian mining town of Burra. Minor revisions were made in 1981 and 1988, with more substantial changes in 1999. Following a review this version was adopted by Australia ICOMOS in October 2013. The review process included replacement of the 1988 Guidelines to

the Burra Charter with Practice Notes which are available at: australia.icomos.org

The Burra Charter

The Burra Charter provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance (cultural heritage places), and is based on the knowledge and experience of Australia ICOMOS members. Conservation is an integral part of the management of places of cultural significance and is an ongoing responsibility.

The Charter can be applied to all types of places of cultural significance including natural, Indigenous and historic places with cultural values.

The Charter stresses that places of cultural significance enrich our lives and give a deep and inspirational connection to community and their landscape and to past and lived experiences.

Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, tell us who we are, the past that formed us, irreplaceable, precious and must be conserved for present

and future generations in accordance with the principle of inter-generational equity.

The Charter advocates caution to change: do what is necessary to care for the place and to make it usable, but change it as little as possible so cultural significance is retained.

Burra charter Conservation Principles

2.1 *Places of cultural significance* should be conserved.

2.2 The aim of *conservation* is to retain the *cultural significance of a place*.

2.3 *Conservation* is an integral part of management of *places of cultural significance*.

2.4 *Places of cultural significance* should be safeguarded and not put at risk or left in a vulnerable state.

Cautious approach

3.1 *Conservation* is based on respect for existing *fabric, use, associations and meanings*. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.

3.2 Changes to a *place* should not distort the physical or other evidence it provides, nor be based on conjecture.

The Burra Charter Process

Collecting and analysing information *before* decisions are made is critical to understanding the *cultural significance of a place* and issues affecting its future.

Where the *use of a place* is of *cultural significance* it should be retained.

Conservation requires retaining appropriate settings which include visual and sensory setting, as well retaining spiritual and cultural relationships contributing to the *cultural significance of the place*.

Co-existence of cultural values should always be recognised, *respected* and encouraged. This is especially important in cases where they conflict.

Article 13 of the Burra Charter, states cultural values refers to those beliefs which are important to a cultural group, including but not limited to political, religious, spiritual and moral beliefs and is broader than values associated with cultural significance.

Change may be necessary to retain *cultural significance*, but is not desirable where it reduces cultural significance. Retaining, modifying or reintroducing a *significant use* may be appropriate and a preferred form of *conservation*.

Community consultation

Groups and individuals with *associations* with the *place* as well as those involved in its management should be provided with opportunities to contribute to and participate in identifying and understanding the *cultural significance of the place*.

Where appropriate they should also have opportunities to participate in its *conservation* and management.

It may be necessary to *modify proposed changes to better retain cultural significance*.

The Burra Charter is a key document

It is vital that each of us, working to conserve sustainable Brumby populations in National Parks constantly remind Authorities to meet their obligations under the Burra Charter, such as respect, value and retain *co-existing cultural values* and where necessary to *modify proposed changes* to better retain cultural significance.

Cultural significance is an important expression of Australian identity and experience and the Charter's *conservation* aim is to *retain the cultural significance of a place*.

Check the full charter on the ABA Website (<http://australianbrumbyalliance.org.au/the-burra-charter/>) or visit <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/> as it supports our values, for example, where cultural values conflict, the Charter requires that *Co-existence of cultural values should always be recognised, respected and encouraged*. It is not one culture above another; both have equal value and need to be in balance.

Kaimanawa Heritage Horses Visit March 2015

Being warned of cold weather and sudden temperature drops I parked behind the Waiouru Army Museum Wednesday 11 March 2015 complete with 2 jackets, rain wear and boots. Major Patrick (Pat) Hibbs, Commandant of the Waiouru Military Training Area arrived, followed by Leith Rhynd & Bill Fleury from New Zealand's *Department of Conservation* (DOC) to take me to see the horses living wild inside army territory.

Major Hibbs took us first to their "Marae", which is a special complex of carved buildings and grounds belonging to a tribe or family and is seen by Māori people as tūrangawaewae - their place to stand and belong. Marae are used for special tribal events. The Army is recognised as a Tribe by Maori (being multicultural and multilingual) which allows the Waiouru Military to welcome all soldiers regardless of their ethnic origins and allows them to be equal members of New Zealand's culture. New army personnel are welcomed onto the Marae with a Powhiri. The ceremony has a challenge (whero), then a call to come to the Marae (karanga), followed by speeches, protocols and culminates with everyone sharing the breath of life (hongi) and prayer (karakia).



The total training area is about 63,000 Ha. The horse management area is about 25,000 Ha. The highest point we reached on the tour was about 1100

metres above sea level. The area cleared of horses in 1997, now the buffer zone, rises to about 1500 metres.

For the first 2 hours all three 'hosts' described how the Kaimanawa horses came about and the complexities of the biennial helicopter *slow* muster. The following information is a summary of what especially stood out to me. For more information, check the Kaimanawa Heritage Horse website www.kaimanawaheritagehorses.org

The army land was described in 3 areas:

1. One third has flora that was vulnerable to horses grazing,
2. One third adjacent to private properties that functions as a buffer zone, and
3. One third that had been grazed previously that the horses can now live in.

The mountain ranges provide a natural barrier separating the horse populated third from the other two 'no go' areas. Family bands, or mobs and colt groups prefer to graze in the area allocated to them, unless their numbers



increase to a level that spills into the buffer zone. Experience has shown that by aiming for a horse population

level of 300, that the buffer zone remains almost free of incursions. The horses are counted annually in March and the results determine how many to be removed at each muster to bring the population back to 300.

The biennial muster uses 3 helicopters that operate alone to remove specific numbers of horses from any prescribed area. One helicopter will find and move a band/s of horses at a time at walking pace towards the collecting area adjacent to the yards. Priority is given to remove any horses in the buffer zone. The trap area is surrounded on three sides with steep high hills sides with a river running close to the trap yards. Each helicopter directs its band/s slowly down tracks into the basin, and hessian lines are used to fill potential escape gaps, and to close off the collection yard once the band is inside. The helicopter then departs to find the next family band.

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

Ground handlers then work the horses into different yards using low pressure techniques and keeping handlers and noise minimal. The horses are separated into yards of stallions, mares with foals and others, in readiness for the next band to be brought in by another helicopter.

Vets, handlers and KHH rehoming group representatives check the horses and identify those considered unsuitable for rehoming. Earlier musters focused on rehoming younger horses; however more of the adult horses are now being rehomed. Those not rehomed are sent to a local abattoir that will process them within 2 days of arrival.

The horses are trucked to one of four approved holding yards across North Island to deliver to people previously vetted by rehoming groups as having appropriate yards and skills to take horses direct from the wild. Although the sub collection point results in double loading stress for the horses, the time from wild to new home is within 2 days.

The new owners then begin gentling the horses and helping them adjust to living amongst humans. The KHH rehoming group is always available for handling advice as needed and likes to hear periodic updates from the new owners on their Kaimanawa experience.

The KHH rehoming process requires:

- A prolonged effort to visit and vet the property and skill level of each person who applies to take Kaimanawa horses from a muster,
- Precision coordination to ensure new owners are on call to receive their allocation on a specific day,
- Flexibility to change pick-up times if bad weather delays the scheduled muster, and
- Follow-up by the KHH rehoming group to ensure the vital initial period is running as smoothly as possible and to continue to be available for future advice as needed.

Kaimanawa horse management decisions are now made by the *Kaimanawa Wild Horse Advisory Group*

(KWHAG). The KWHAG includes representatives from a range of key interest groups, including the Army Base, DOC, KHH rehoming groups and conservation groups. Together, the KWHAG develop and remain involved in the resulting management plan that DOC both implements and funds. The 2014 muster gathered 162 horses, of which 147 were rehomed, leaving 300 horses to continue living wild on 25,000 Ha.

They key message I came away from my visit with was the knowledge that differing

values *can* be sensitively worked through to produce a well-coordinated management process that clearly has the welfare of Kaimanawa horses central to all plan decisions. Well done to the Army, DOC, KHH and other key parties, hopefully Australia can build on your work.



*Jill Pickering,
President, Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.*



Member News

Save the Brumbies (STB)

We are progressing well with the fertility control trial at NEBS with a further ten horses coming into the program shortly. We have three separate mobs now and the trial



meets all the requirements of the Ethics Committee under the supervision of our specialist vets.

To date all is very positive and a preliminary trial should

commence in a selected national park in mid-2016 pending approval of the first research paper due at the end of the year.

The horses being treated are all unhandled and wild thus giving a fair overview of what we can expect when conducted in an approved national park. STB, with the assistance of generous donations, will be in a position to finance such trials if costs are rejected by NPWS.

We are currently unable to take many horses for rehoming due to the costs of fodder throughout the winter months and having available paddock space however we will still take what horses we can and our Adoption program will continue.

Jan Carter attended the Horse Reference Committee meeting relating to Guy Fawkes recently. A new plan of management is on the agenda however Parks are waiting until the Kosciusko Management Plan is finalised and Guy

Fawkes will take direction from this when released in June. Trapping and removal is still current in Guy Fawkes.

We have three superb, well-handled and registered horses available for Adoption at present at our Bellingen Sanctuary, contact Jan for further details.

Bellingen Show was well represented this year with a total of nine ABHR horses competing. It was heartening to see horses coming from the Hunter Valley and Armidale to boost numbers. All horses were well presented and a fine representation of the breed.

Jan is travelling to Northern Qld. in July to liaise with our Qld. Rep. Shelly Cowan on matters regarding management of the horses in the Top End. Shelly now has contacts with Parks Qld. which we want to follow up.



The Animal Justice Party gained a seat in the recent NSW election; this augurs well for future improvements in wild horse management. STB has forwarded draft legislation re protection for the horses as a positive step forward.

For further updates and news go to our website:

www.savethebrumbies.org

Jan Carter STB Inc.

Victorian Brumby Association

As usual, we have been busy! April generally marks the commencement of Parks Victoria's trapping program on the Bogong High Plains and this year was no exception. Over about five weeks, five Brumbies were caught. First, we welcomed VBA Oliver and VBA Adelaide to Brumby Junction. Ollie is a 5-year old stallion and Adelaide was his child bride, at only just under two years old! Next came VBA Solo, a 3-4 year old bachelor stallion and then lastly,



teeny, tiny VBA April and her weanling age colt foal, VBA Ben. April is the smallest Bogong Brumby we have ever had here, but just a perfect little package and she is also heavily in foal! The boys have now been gelded and the mares turned out to have their foals in peace. We decided to keep Ben with his Mum until we wean the other foals (from mares caught last year) in a few weeks and they've been a great consolation to each other as they settle into our permanent family groups here. The Bogong 'catch season' has now finished for this year, so we breathe a sigh of relief for the dwindling number of free Brumbies up at the High Plains!

June marks twelve months since we moved to Brumby Junction and our fencing is an ongoing (never ending?!) project! We have most of our smaller paddocks as well as our major creek crossings newly fenced. We've added tree planting to fencing now, with 300 trees planted in the last six weeks. The yard and training facilities are really coming together, with the new yard surface going in in late June – we can't wait to be a little more 'mud free'!

We've been excitedly preparing for our next **Australian Brumby Challenge** and have opened trainer applications. The first few applications have arrived with us and it feels like we're off to a flying start! We've also launched the

new website for the Challenge, which you can check out at www.australianbrumbychallenge.com.au

It's almost time to wean the foals – last year, we took in



ten pregnant mares, so we have lots of wild and wooly babies running around in the two family mobs. It's getting to the point where we have to look twice to see who is Mum and who is Baby, some of them are getting so tall!

We have two clinics coming up, a **Wild About Hooves Trimming Workshop** with Jeremy Ford and Jen Clingly from Tasmania on Saturday the 20th of June. It will be a fabulous day of hands on training for all participants! Then, on the 11th and 12th of July, we will have a **Wild Horse Gentling Clinic** here at Brumby Junction. In this clinic, our participants will each be partnered with a wild youngster for two days of immersive training – both for the youngster and the trainer! We will also demonstrate our methods on some of our older wild ones to give an idea of how we build on the skills taught in the clinic. It'll be a huge weekend, but we can't wait!

The **Kosciuszko Brumby 'catching season'** starts this week, so we are preparing for our annual arrival of beautiful "Kosi Brums" – we are planning on taking in around thirty this year, mostly older stallions as well as a few older mares and some youngsters, just to 'fill in the gaps'!

In our spare time, we have also been developing our own **new VBA website** and we would love it if you would check it out! You'll find us at the same address:

www.victorianbrumbyassociation.org – we are still developing it, but we think it is super so far!

The Editor's Tail

Rethinking Conservation Approaches – Prioritising Solutions Rather Than Threats

I recently read an article on the ABC Website called [Why picking our battles helps save our species](#) which, to me, brought sensibility to the issue of preserving biodiversity.

Written by conservation ecologists and twin sisters, Viv and Ayesha Tulloch, the article argues that the current paradigm of prioritizing threats and then focusing on eradicating them is not effective in protecting biodiversity. On the contrary, *“...focus on threats can be wasteful, inadequate and may even push threatened species closer to the brink”*.

An example given is what happens with foxes. Current conservation strategies rely on Threat Maps which prioritise where and what native species are under most threat from foxes. This determines where efforts in eradication of foxes are carried out.

But on focusing on the threat, it blinds the effort to a single goal – killing foxes – rather than seeing the bigger

picture. Killing foxes also has unwanted consequences. The feral cat population may rise and this will become the main predator. Rabbit populations will increase and destroy habitat.

In fact, the aim should be to boost long-term survival of small marsupials, rather than simply decreasing fox numbers and this allows more options than just killing foxes. It might even be cheaper to restore habitat or set up enclosures than using baiting programs at all.

Clearly there is an argument here for changing the current strategies on managing wild horse populations. I encourage you to read the full article on the ABC website which provides more food for thought.

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2015/04/30/4226211.htm> .

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ABA Member Groups

- 🐾 Australian Brumby Horse Register
- 🐾 Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society Inc. (SA)
- 🐾 Hunter Valley Brumby Association (NSW)
- 🐾 Kaimanawa Heritage Horses (NZ)
- 🐾 Outback Heritage Horse Association of WA
- 🐾 Save the Brumbies Inc. (NSW)
- 🐾 Snowy Mountains Bush Users Group (NSW)
- 🐾 South East Queensland Brumby Association
- 🐾 Victorian Brumby Association