



# Brumby Bridges

*The quarterly newsletter of the ABA*

MARCH 2015

ISSUE 15-1

ABA Inc. Charity/ABN No: 9-784718191



## IN THIS ISSUE.....

Page 2....[Vale Wies Roberts](#)

Page 3....[ABA Website](#)

Page 4....[Member News](#)

Page 10..[Hoofprints: Dispirited by "Spirited"](#)

### **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

Hi everyone,

The last three months have been a chance to consolidate some of the information gathered during the Kosciuszko Chat Room review without a rush of new challenges. I hope you all had a pleasant break over the Christmas and New Year period, and feel refreshed for 2015.

Our new Secretary, Sharon Peterson has been working on a few projects she is keen to develop:

1. gathering overseas wild horse information for the ABA website,
2. Cataloguing the wild horse information documents we have found to date, and
3. Reviewing the considerable information generated at our 2013 Beaufort face-to-face meeting which had fallen by the wayside.

One of the frustrations about the positive ideas our members generate is that each member group is already time strapped with their own group workloads. So if any groups or their members know of people who are keen to advocate for Australian Brumbies that could have some spare hours, please contact Sharon Peterson [cypresslodge@skymesh.com.au](mailto:cypresslodge@skymesh.com.au) or myself to advise how you can assist.

## Vale Wies Roberts

As many of you know, Wies Roberts of the Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society passed away on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 after a 12 month battle with cancer. She was a stalwart of the CBBPS and served as Vice President of the ABA from the start of the Australian Brumby Alliance in 2009 to late 2013. Wies and I enjoyed several 'robust' conversations during the earlier days, before

The concept of running a 'National Brumby Week' from 19 to 25 October has been suggested by Colleen O'Brien (VBA) since the weather is comfortable at that time and holding it in March, as in the past, does not seem to be taking off. Maybe 'letters to the Editor' on an October National Brumby week? Maybe a chance to fund raise?

I continue to respond to inquiries for Brumby information to assist, for example, students on school projects and email initial information to them then forward their contact details to the relevant ABA member group to follow-up.

My next task is to begin working up a series of 'Information sheets' on Brumby issues, so if anyone would like to take on one of these feel free to contact me to advise which chosen topic they can develop. The more of us generating information sheets, the sooner ABA website readers will have ready access understanding just how Brumbies do contribute to Australia's environment.

So read on ... and enjoy ...

*Jill Pickering, President ABA*

becoming friends. Personally I shall miss my regular phone chats with Wies, her initiative comments and her never ceasing support for CBBPS and all Brumbies. I suspect Wies is already sorting out any park staff and misplaced Brumbies that made it to the great Brumby National Park in the sky. Good on you Wies, *Jill Pickering*

*Read on about Wies in the [CBBPS Member News section](#).*

## ABA Website is a Minefield of Information

The ABA Website was established around 2009/10 and since then quite a bit of info has been added behind the scenes. Many people, however, may not be aware of all the search capabilities of the site and therefore, not realise the full extent of its usability.

There are the usual suspects of course – the Pages themselves, the Links and documents behind them, the News Items, etc. – which are the “bricks and mortar” of the site.

But another dimension is the increasing number of posts that are both categorised and tagged. This means that a user can search for all posts under a particular category, say **Wild Equine Research**, and get all the posts in this category. You can try this by selecting a [News and Events Category](#) in the right sidebar of most ABA webpages.

Another useful function is the “[Tag Cloud](#)”. Tag Clouds allow you to search for a particular word or phrase (the tag) and all items with this tag will be retrieved for the user in date order. Tag Clouds also indicate the relative number of posts that have a particular tag, for example in the ABA website some tags are:

adoption **aerial culling** Africa

Quite simply, the larger the tag the more posts it has. The size of the tag, however, does not always equate to the importance of the topic. So why not, and how is tagging done?

Tagging is up to whoever is adding and managing the posts which adds a bit of bias, if you will - one person may tag differently to another person. *Disclosure!* - I manage the posts on the ABA Website. However, I do not *entirely* control what to post.

When a member group (or our President) asks for information to be put on the website I find an appropriate spot, or spots, to place it on the site. I also often create a

**Post** that either has some or all of the info, or links to it elsewhere.

When I create the Post, it initially appears under [Latest News & Events](#) but even older posts are still on the website and behind the scenes they are categorised as either

- Australian Brumby Challenge
- Events
- News
- Wild Equine Research
- Wild Equines Around the World

Which is why you can search for all posts under a category. Categories can be added easily but it should be kept in mind they are meant to describe the *type* of post rather than reference specific information

I also **tag** the post with one or more key phrases or words. Most posts have a location tag: NSW, Qld, SA, Tas, Vic, WA, or if applicable a country or region (we will come back to this later) and one or two tags that best encapsulate the content of the post, for example

**environmental impacts** or **species competition**

and this is where individual judgment is most reflected.

In reality, the number of posts is a factor of what information is given to me and often reflects issues that ABA is focused on at the time a person searches the Tag Cloud. For example, ABA’s recent involvement with the Barmah Forest Brumbies has bumped up the number of posts on that subject. In a year or so it may be something else that gets the larger Tag.

Some Member Groups may provide more information than others, bumping up number of posts for that state. Also, New South Wales (NSW) has three member groups, making it more likely to get more posts.

And that gets us back to the Home Page which features a map of Australia. If you click on a state, you will get to a page that attempts to draw together all information on that state. At the bottom of these pages are all the posts that have a tag for that state.

You can also just Search the site by entering any text you want at the bottom of the right sidebar. For example you can enter **Jill Pickering** to retrieve all posts that have Jill's name in them.

So why bother with Tags then? Because the Tag feature offers a more "controlled vocabulary" and, when properly used and managed it is more likely to get the specific

information you need. If, for example, a word is spelled slightly differently, or if a similar but different word is used in one post but not another, you may not get all the posts you want.

So the next time you are searching for information don't forget to check out our own website. And if you find something that you feel is wrongly or insufficiently tagged, or a link doesn't work – whatever- please let me know and we can continue to improve our website.

Sandy Radke

[webmaster@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au](mailto:webmaster@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au)

## Member News

---

### Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society (CBBPS)

#### *Wies Roberts – a tribute well deserved*

Wies began her full time dedication to the preservation of Brumbies around 2004, but had bought many ponies prior



to this time, breaking and selling and giving away for children to ride. Wies was secretary/treasurer and photographer of the CBBPS from 2004-2015. Wies and husband Reg were presented with Life Memberships in January 2015 for the dedication to CBBPS and a plaque

was erected at the society's club rooms in Wies's honour namely called "Wies Roberts Memorial Plaque".

Wies was a big, strong lady. Not only in stature but in heart and soul with a life-long passion for horses. Her determination to get things done was clearly defined by this, taken from her Eulogy: "*Wies Roberts was a doer, never a gunna and I think we can all take a leaf out of her book in life*".

We as members will make sure that all of Wies's hard work and passion will continue for the preservation of the Heritage of the Coffin Bay Brumbies

Wies passed away on 8th Feb. 2015

Cheers to you Wies Roberts!

*Thanks to Rod and Vicki Fraser of the CBBPS for the tribute to Wies and to the Port Lincoln Times for the photo.*

## Hunter Valley Brumby Association

### *Singleton Brumbies*

We received a call from the Singleton Army Base on the 13th of December that an orphaned foal had been found and was in a bad way.

We grabbed what we needed; especially foal formula, and raced straight out there. It was imperative we got there before dark due to the many wild dogs on the base. At 7pm we arrived in the middle of the base, amongst the bush, and found this little guy sheltering behind a toilet



block.

Severely malnourished, dehydrated and covered in bull ants, he enjoyed some much needed formula. We rang our vet straight away and made the trip to Dungog Veterinary Hospital where the little guy was assessed and given fluids. His blood tests

and vital signs were perfect and he was given the all clear to come home.

The name choice was obvious with his facial markings – Phantom.

In the first week Phantom increased his weight



dramatically. He was kept in the backyard and given plenty of blankets and “pony” to cuddle up to at

night for comfort.

All of the team chipped in to help look after Phantom and keep the constant milk formula to him - especially committee member Lynn. Thankfully after a couple of weeks, Phantom was able to be given a bucket of milk and get himself up during the night and put himself back to bed, he is a very smart boy!



But after a few weeks, Phantom grew much bigger and stronger and it was time for him to graduate and start sleeping outdoors – with a gazebo on top, we couldn't be that harsh!

Phantom was also found with a twisted left front leg and we hoped that with some much needed weight

this would correct itself. The leg did improve but in the end, surgery was needed.

Phantom was taken to the Newcastle Equine Centre for a minor procedure on his left knee to help stimulate more growth and improve his leg over the coming weeks. We have seen a big improvement in his leg since then, which is great news.

After his operation, Phantom needed to be kept in the backyard to restrict his movement, which meant no more play dates with Isabel for a while. Poor Phantom looked so miserable. So it was decided to introduce the cluckiest gelding we know – Pallano!



You would be forgiven to think Pallano is Phantom's mother, he just dotes on him like he was his own – and even allowing him to try and suckle! This is not usual behavior from geldings, especially as Pallano was captured as a two year old, but we are not complaining! It is wonderful that Phantom now has his own "mother" to follow around and teach him how to be a horse.

Phantom is now in the big paddock with Pallano, Jasmine and her foal Isabel. Isabel was born in November and sadly



after nine days and an accident and injured her left eye. After the stitches were removed, it was found that Isabel

has lost her sight to her eye but, as you can see, it certainly doesn't stop her!!

If we had to have an orphaned foal this is definitely the best situation for him. He is still drinking many litres of formula a day, enjoys his yummy dinner and being with his "herd".

### *Meeting with the Army*

We scheduled a meeting with the Defense Environmental Officer at the HVBA Sanctuary to discuss the Singleton Brumbies, in particular, how their training was going, our costs in comparison to Kosciuszko Brumbies and any future plans to trap anymore from the base. At this stage it is not likely that we will be receiving anymore Singleton Brumbies until almost winter, if their trapping program resumes.

### *Apsley Brumbies*

The HVBA was contacted last week by NPWS in Walcha. The Rangers will be trapping a few Brumbies in the Apsley Gorge and Oxley River NP that are around some camp sites.

Since the Oxley Heritage Horse Association is no longer in operation, we have been asked to take the Brumbies or they will all head to slaughter.

Of course we said yes! The Brumbies from this area are absolutely beautiful. Our paddocks are very full, but thankfully our new neighbours do not have any livestock and an abundance of lush green grass in their paddocks and we have been offered to put some Brumbies in there to help graze it down.

We will manage, like we always do. The new Brumbies are set to arrive in the next few weeks.

## Save the Brumbies Inc. (STB)

We had a much needed Christmas break after a worrying year with the drought. Paddocks have now been revived with good rain and the horses are all in prime condition.

The **fertility control** trial is progressing well with excellent results so far however it does place a strain on our resources as we are maintaining two control mobs and more mares coming into the program before Easter. Our first research report will be issued mid-year.

We have some quality young horses available for



Adoption, all registered with ABHR, well-handled and ready to go on with.

Readers, please inform interested people as due to the high cost of caring for the horses in the fertility program

we need to find good homes for these youngsters before winter. Website has more details.

**Our social day** in January was a time to relax with friends old and new and all who attended commented favourably regarding the ongoing improvements and infrastructure at NEBS.

The next **Horse Reference Committee** meeting relating to Guy Fawkes will be held in March. Trapping has now recommenced however there is serious debate regarding horses in inaccessible areas and ground shooting is being discussed. It is our sincere hope that results of our fertility program will induce NPWS to begin trials in these areas of Guy Fawkes. We continue to work with management to the best of our ability and are adamantly against any plans to shoot. We are restricted this year regarding the number of horses we can take due to resources going to the fertility program at NEBS however the Committee firmly believe that fertility control is the way to the future and a viable tool in controlling numbers. It remains to convince NPWS of this fact and that's the difficulty we face.

As well as our website we now have a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-Brumbies-Inc/105691046171475>)

for further updates and news.

## South East Queensland Brumby Association (SEQBA)

Anne Wilson is heading off to Darwin to work for five months and will not be available to care for the brumbies kept on her property at Cootharaba where she lives with her husband Terry. With help from volunteers being thin on the ground, and few brumbies being trapped at the current time, the Association is going to be put on the back burner for a while. Whilst Anne is in Darwin, Terry will continue to care for Grace, Toolara and GT, until good homes are found for them.



Toolara Grace is a lovely 14.1hh chestnut mare, approx 12 - 15 years old. She is halter trained, very gentle, bottom of the pecking order, and would make a great companion horse, \$600, ph (07)5485 3369.

Grace is currently sponsored by Ian McKenzie who is really keen to see Grace go to a caring home, he would love to



take her himself however he already has 5 horses of his own to care for. Ian is a truly dedicated sponsor who drives for 3 hours one way to visit Grace. It is this type of dedication and love for brumbies which helps a brumby association become successful. Thus a huge thank-you to all those wonderful people who provide kind words of support and financial donations to those who care for and train these beautiful animals throughout Australia.

## Victorian Brumby Association (VBA)

Christmas has been a great time for the team here at the VBA to catch up and reorganise our group. We've really hit the books and developed a written description for each role within our organisation. The aim of this is that if any one of us is struggling to keep up, for example is unwell, has personal issues, the role can easily be transferred around the committee for help. It also allows us to start to record the hidden effort that goes into any group - the long hours of bookwork are boring, draining, but so very important, as well all know!

Fencing at the new sanctuary continues, with more than half of our 2km completed. The new yard set up is starting to take shape as well. We were lucky enough to receive a State Government grant for the yards, so have to keep careful budgets and records to provide on completion. More than anything, we are looking forwards to having all weather handling and training facilities where our Brumbies and our trainers/ volunteers are safe and happy!

We've commenced our **monthly volunteer days**, which are held on the first Saturday of each month. Our February day was well attended and we have lots of interest in future days. As the picture shows, we managed to get a lot of old fence pulled down, which lets us all appreciate the new fences much more!

Since July last year, in conjunction with setting up the new



place, we have rehomed 18 Brumbies from Kosi and Bogong to wonderful families, many of whom stay in regular touch. It has been wonderful to see 'our' Brumbies being loved and even running into them out on the trail occasionally!

Zorro's mob came into the yards to commence their basic



training. Zorro is one of our resident gelded stallions. He was caught from Bogong High Plains in Victoria as a

thirteen plus year old stallion, gelded and now, aged around 19 years old, a full time employee of the VBA, running our north paddock, caring for mares that arrive and need to foal, playing with their babies and keeping the two and three year old spelling Brumbies in line.

Having long term turn out like this is invaluable to us - the new property allows us to run two paddocks in this way, each is around fifty acres and houses a mob of around eight or nine adults really well. It also allows us the chance to give Brumbies like Zorro and his lead mare Thora, and Teddy and his lead mare Melee, a future where they can continue to be as free as possible. The first picture shows Zorro's mob in one of the laneways as we were baiting them into the yards - baiting is a slow process when you've got this much feed!



The second pic is young VBA Ghost, a 2yo grey filly from Kosciuszko getting to know one of our wonderful volunteers, Bettina.

Both the **Kosciuszko National Park in NSW** and the **Alpine National Park in Victoria** are in the process of drawing up plans to manage the resident Brumbies, so we are spending a lot of time lobbying and meeting with different officials to further our aims of keeping our wild horses wild. In some areas, some level of management will be required and this of course will also require lobbying to ensure that it is done humanely and kept to a minimum.

## Hoofprints - Noteworthy Tracks

---

### Dispirited by “Spirited”

Jan Carter (STB) and I travelled to Canberra specifically to view the 'Spirited' exhibition at the National Museum of Australia. This is an exhibition of the horse in Australian history. Jan had been approached earlier last year and provided detailed information and a photo.

At the exhibition we found a reference to Brumby Running just inside the entrance where a video of wild horses was playing with no dialogue, and the attached statement nearby. We had to search and finally found a manual slide-show on which we found the STB photo Jan had sent.

We were quite disappointed on behalf of all Brumbies.

*Margery Boylan, ABHR*



## The Editor's Tail

---

As the Editor's other hat is managing the ABA Website, I have decided to report on some features of the website this month (see ABA News: [ABA Website a Minefield of Information](#))

I also think it is time to give the ABA website a makeover and I will be looking at this around August this year.

I will not change content significantly, unless directed to by you all, but I have some ideas on improving

functionality and look. So this is an opportunity for you to give me any suggestions, photos, material that you would like to see on the website. Email me if you do: [sandyradke@bigpond.com](mailto:sandyradke@bigpond.com)

---

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

**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

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

PO Box 3276, Victoria Gardens, Richmond, Vic 3121

Phone: (03) 9428 4709

[info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au](mailto:info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au)

[www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au](http://www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au)

**Newsletter Contributions**

Contact Sandy

[sandyradke@bigpond.com](mailto:sandyradke@bigpond.com)

0458 105 221