



## ***Alpine National Park Brumbies.***

Victoria's Alpine National Park at 646,000 hectares is the State's largest and protects our highest mountains and varied alpine environments. The Alpine National Park has the greatest range of flora and fauna of any national park in Victoria. With adjoining national parks in NSW and the ACT, The Alpine National Park forms a protected area that covers almost all of Australia's high country. It's one of eight Australian Alps national parks that are managed co-operatively.

European pastoralists from NSW started moving south into the Alps in the 1830s, with grazing beginning around Omeo and up into the foothills in 1836. Summer grazing soon extended to the higher country, and huts were built there for shelter and storage during stock mustering. From the 1850s to around 1900, gold lured many people to the Alps. The only form of transport and of working the land throughout this time was with horses, so with these settlers and explorers came their horses: Clydesdales, Thoroughbreds, Stockhorses and Timor Ponies. Working horses and family horses both, they occasionally ran loose on the massive land holdings and were not always caught again. World War I also played its role in contributing to what we now know as Brumbies. When the men who worked many of the horses went to war, they ran wild until they returned and not all were caught. When the Depression hit Australia, along with increased industrialisation, many of the locals simply opened their gates and let their horses 'join the wild bush horses...' as Banjo Patterson described it.

The Brumbies, having been begun by man, were bred by nature. Those with poor feet or other unsoundnesses simply didn't survive long enough in the harsh Alpine terrain to contribute to the gene pool. The 'hot' or fiery tempered horses wasted energy and were also out of the race for survival, leaving the sound, the sane and the sturdy.

Alpine Brumbies are generally medium to stocky in build and mature between 13.3 and 15hh. Colours can range vastly from bays and browns to roans, the sought after 'creamies' made famous by Eleyne Mitchells Silver Brumbies series and the pintos.

There are an estimated 3000 Brumbies in the Alpine National Park from Bogong in the East to the Limestone Region of the West. Parks Victoria uses Brumby Running to manage the population, even though it has proven to be an inefficient and inhumane method. You can read more about Brumby Running in our *How are Brumbies Caught* information sheet.

The Victorian Brumby Association supports management of these Brumbies for their own wellbeing, however we are totally against Brumby Running. For the same reasons it has been banned elsewhere in Australia, including in the Kosciuszko National Park, we feel it must be stopped in Victoria. There are great examples of passive trapping, a humane method, being used in identical environments with far greater efficiency. Fertility control is another management tool which is currently not being utilised at all and has great potential for future management of Brumbies in our Alps.



*Pictured at right: a Mob of mostly Alpine Brumbies grazes at Brumbys Run Sanctuary*

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