



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)

ABN : 90784718191

6-September-2016

## ABA Press Release – 6-Sept-2016

### Alpine Brumbies used as Scapegoats

ABC Gippsland (5-Sept-2016) reported claims made by the Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio that thousands of brumbies are causing damage in the Victorian Alps. The latest count of 2,350 Brumbies in the Victorian Alps is tiny compared to feral pigs, deer and rabbit numbers. Furthermore, Brumbies do not foal every year, but pigs, deer and rabbits have annual multiple births. Multiple birth species can recover rapidly from a cull. Even our scientists have started blaming Brumbies, simply because they are in the area. Nocturnal pigs and burrowing rabbits are rarely seen, so to untrained eyes they are not even considered as the cause. The Brumby has become an **easily visible scapegoat**.

Ms D'Ambrosio claims many "*are inbred*". Is this based on advice from Parks Victoria? Brumbies are known and valued for robust genetics. A report to the NSW Minister for the Environment (2002) into the genetic viability of Guy Fawkes River National Park Brumbies concluded; "*On a scale going from zero (no inbreeding) to 100% (complete inbreeding), Guy Fawkes horses have a score of 5%*", or virtually no inbreeding.

The Minister adds that "*many of them are starving*" which is amazing, especially as the photos supplied by Parks Victoria to accompany the Minister's claims show healthy Brumbies, no ribs showing and mares with foals. It is well known that starving horses cannot produce a foal as their reproductive organs shut down.

The ABA has frequently expressed concern that Park managers still rely on outdated and biased rhetoric from non-peer reviewed studies. Prof Don Driscoll repeatedly claims that 20% of Kosciusko Brumbies will die of starvation, dehydration or poisoning each year - because his figures are based on data averaged from all Wild Horse populations, most of which live in *outback* areas that are *subject to drought and poisonous plants*.

Using this outback data Prof Driscoll then claims that up to 2,000 horse will die annually in the Alps from thirst or starvation. Surely, as a scientist, Prof Driscoll must see that the Alps are different to the outback? Or wonder why 2,350 Brumbies are still around? Or even why the Australian Alpine is not littered with dead or dying Brumbies?

If Parks Victoria's chief conservation scientist and the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio share Prof Driscoll's flawed views which 41 scientist also agree to, the Victorian Government risks being further misled, or even worse, using inaccurate studies to gain public support for *decisive action* (Brumby killing), while leaving our parks to suffer from the real culprits.

Jill Pickering, President, Australian Brumby Alliance [www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au](http://www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au)  
or contact [pickjill@hotmail.com](mailto:pickjill@hotmail.com), (03) 9428-4709, or Colleen O'Brien 0408-201-107