



PO Box 3276  
Victoria Gardens  
Richmond, Vic 3121

Mob : 0400-558-772

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

ABN : 90784718191

## MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Parks Victoria's draft Horse Strategic Action Plan to remove every single brumby from their historic home range on the Bogong High Plains and drastically reduce wild horse numbers across the Alpine National Park – appears to be based on a flawed impact study.

Ms Jill Pickering, President of the national body for brumby preservation and advocacy, the Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA), said the Plan's Bogong High Plains Impact study uses highly selective 'evidence' and shows a lack of scientific rigour.

"It contains photos showing hoof prints more consistent with cloven deer prints than horses – while increasing Samba deer numbers – there are 320 Samba deer to one Brumby - across the Victorian Alps are ignored," Ms Pickering says. "Unable to explain how so few Brumbies can cause so much damage, the study uses 'cumulative damage' developed for farm practices and dung decomposition rates – 5 years - based on cattle dung while horse dung decomposes just over one year in Alpine conditions."

"We often have people ask where they can see Brumbies. Tourists are attracted to organised tours to see Brumbies living wild. But with only 60-80 brumbies left on the Bogong Plains and now 400 annually to be trapped in the Alps, it is becoming much harder to see any Brumbies at all."

Alpine brumbies are part of our heritage and national psyche; they are the direct links to the horses that pioneer settlers used to open up the country, carried our soldiers in wars and hold great cultural and social value as evidenced in our literature, ballads and folklore.

Ms Pickering said "We are especially concerned that the impact study advises that there may be no minimum number of horses suitable for alpine regions, and so bring about the loss of our unique social heritage to future Australian generations."

While the ABA applauds the plan for not using aerial or ground shooting, most Brumbies caught will still die as Parks Victoria has no holding facility for safe transfers, and few skilled re-homers to collect them. Those not collected will be euthanized on site. Although the ABA agrees this preferable to being yarded, trucked, then killed at abattoirs, it's a tragedy that so many family groups of pregnant mares, foals and stallions will die.

"We must, and can, do better. Wild horse populations overseas are successfully and humanely managed by fertility control. We need comprehensive robust studies to show beyond doubt both positive and negative impacts that result from a Brumby presence before

deciding on realistic numbers to retain in areas where they have evolved for 150 years to now live totally wild.

“National parks are for each of us to find their own value set,” Ms Pickering said. “Heritage Wild Horses represent the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that formed us. (The Burra Charter). We now fight for the right to retain our heritage Brumbies – they are irreplaceable, precious and to be conserved for future generations.”

Make your views clear on Parks Victoria feedback site [www.engage.vic.gov.au](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au) by **16-Feb-18**

For more information, visit [australianbrumbyalliance.org.au](http://australianbrumbyalliance.org.au)  
Jill Pickering is available for interview, ring 0400-558-772