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## Parks Victoria's plan relies on non-peer reviewed studies

### Examples of Non Peer reviewed statements:

Critical gaps remain in our understanding of the ecological effects of feral horses on native environments, particularly for Australian ecosystems. (Nimmo 2007)

We (Nimmo) agree with Linklater (2002) that the peer-review process is the best mechanism for illuminating the quality of research to the public, by exposing it to criticism from an independent and international audience. In the case of feral horse management, to our knowledge, this standard is yet to be achieved in Australia for both ecological and human dimensions research.

"We highlight gaps in the literature and suggest that **more peer-reviewed** research would be beneficial in reducing the current public controversy surrounding management of feral horses". (Nimmo & Miller 2007)

Nimmo & Miller (2007) state: "*Further confounding results is the fact that past research into the effects of feral horses have typically included only a small number of response variables*" (Beever et al. 2003), "*usually measuring direct effects of disturbance on a few plant characteristics, ignoring both direct effects on other taxa*" (Beever and Brussard 2004), and indirect effects occurring concurrently and subsequently from the formation of feedback loops (Beever and Herrick 2006).

*"it may seem as if the ecological effects of feral horses are well established. We contend that this is not strictly the case, particularly for Australian ecosystems"* (Nimmo & Miller (2007).

Most research on the ecological effects of feral horses has occurred at single, small, spatial scales (Beever et al. 2003)

The small number of feral horse studies that have paid credence to the importance of factors such as scale (Beever & Brussard 2004), feedback loops and indirect effects (Levin 2002; Beever & Herrick 2006) were undertaken in semiarid & marshland environments, hence their applicability to similar disturbances in other ecological systems may be limited.(Nimmo2007)

**We (Nimmo 2007) are not aware of any peer-reviewed research that analyses the effects of feral horses on native environments in Australia.**

Sites investigated may not be representative of the system in general, which means that broad management regimes derived from such research may be erroneous (Bestelmeyer and Wiens 2001; Beever and Brussard 2004).

#### **Proof of association vs proof of cause**

Any thinking person should easily understand the difference between proof of association and proof of cause, but many academics and bureaucrats do not. [*Firestick Ecology Vic Jurkis*]

Unfortunately, modern research often begins at the fourth step by testing a preconceived hypothesis or, just as bad, bypasses the scientific method and uses data collection and statistical gymnastics to search for insights into perceived problems. This invariably gets people into trouble because they focus on association and neglect logical cause. [*Book-Firestick Ecology by Vic Jurkis*]

It is very difficult to separate factors that cause erosion or what looks like degradation and assign a cause. Some of these changes are natural. Damage & impact are assumed wrongly to be the same in the Bogong High Plains (BHP) impact report. For people who hold strong beliefs that horses should not be in National Parks because they are introduced, hard hooved animals that did not evolve in Australia, any sign of Wild Horses is seen as damage.

We know that long ago Megafauna (*one species with a hoof like foot*) roamed the Australian continent, including alpine areas. J. Flood's PhD. Thesis on the Bogong Moth explains "large game such as the diprotodontids, macropodids (Sthenurus, Macropus etc), Thylacoleo and Sarcophilus might have been found roaming alpine shrub and herbfields of the tablelands."

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