

BRUMBY BRIDGES

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

Issue 13-1

December 2013



ABA Inc.

Charity/ABN No: 9-784718191

PO Box 3276, Victoria Gardens, Richmond, Vic 3121

Phone: (03) 9428 4709

info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

IN THIS ISSUE.....

- **ABA News and Member Reports**
- **The Australian Brumby Challenge**
- **Book Launch: Brumby – A Celebration of the Australian Wild Horse**
- **Postcard from New Zealand**
- **Bitless Riding**

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 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**

*ABA wishes you all a very
Happy Holiday Season !!!!*

ABA News

President'Chat

It has been almost a year since the last Brumby Bridges (BB) as our editor Greg Kidd has not been well. Sandy Radke has agreed to take over as BB editor – Thank you Sandy.

The ABA has not been idle during the last 12 months. We held a Face-to-Face meeting near Ballarat in Victoria, made progress with National Park staff in several states, been part of a new Fertility Control development, had international exposure with Colleen speaking to participants from across the world at the First Wild Equid Conference, in Vienna and now the Victorian Brumby Association is part way through the first ever Brumby 100 day Challenge in Australia.

There is so much still to do, so much to continue learning about Brumby behaviours and how we as potential new 'owners' can build on the Brumby Bond relationship.

The ABA has raised its profile to the level that authorities are now starting to contact us for ideas. The last few years developing dialogue and working to promote Brumby values and management to Australian authorities is starting to show results. As Key stake holders, we are responsible for promoting responsible Brumby management in sustainable numbers across Australia.

Jill Pickering

Parks Victoria Wild Horse Management Plan

As many of you know, Parks Victoria have been reviewing their horse management plan for the Victorian Alps. Over the last year, ABA have been actively involved in this process with Colleen O'Brien from VBA as member of the Roundtable Group chaired by Parks Victoria and ABA President Jill Pickering lobbying hard for the use of humane methods to manage horse numbers.

A series of Information Sheets and Background Papers were posted on the Parks Victoria (PV) website earlier this year with a call for submissions by 22 July. The papers and submissions are now on the PV website. Both VBA and ABA have provided submissions (submissions 61 and 62).

According to the *Analysis of Public Submissions* on the PV Resources page of their website, 84 submissions were received. Of these, 64 were from individuals with the remaining from interest groups. Sixty-seven submissions considered that wild horse damage was significant and should be a major concern in wild horse management. Fifty submissions supported removal or drastic reduction/control of the brumby population; 42 of these advocated complete eradication. A further 11 supported some level of control. While the consensus is that removal should be humane, almost half the submissions (40) supported some form of shooting as a control method, followed by passive trapping (16) and mustering (12). Shooting is opposed in 11 submissions while aerial culling is specifically supported in 15. *Clearly there is a lack of agreement on what constitutes humane control.*

Parks Victoria are currently preparing a draft plan which will be posted for public comment so there will be another opportunity to voice your views to Parks Victoria.

In a letter to members, ATHRA include a summary of the submissions received to date and a call to action among its members to redress the balance of non-horse interest views.

ABA applauds ATHRA's call to action and urges groups and individuals to take the time to comment during the planning process. Submissions and discussion papers can be viewed on www.parks.vic.gov.au/alphorseplan.

Meet the Team

ABA welcomes our new Secretary, Shalone Graham and new Editor, Sandy Radke.

Shalone Graham



I work 3 days per week at Maitland City Council as the Officer Governance (administration, policy writing, reviewing etc.) which is a temporary contract until 2 May

2014. I started volunteering at Hunter Valley Brumby Association in August 2013 as I missed being around horses. I enjoy helping Kath with the brumbies. My husband and I are hoping to put our house on the market in the near future so that we can purchase acreage. Once we do I will be adopting some brumbies. Sometimes I take my 3 year old daughter to Kath's with me and she loves seeing all the horses and helping to mix the feeds.

Sandy Radke

I retired early from the Australian Public



Service in Canberra and came to live in Bellingen on the Mid-North Coast of NSW in 2002 on 15 acres. Having suffered from a disease known as

Ineverhadahorsewheniwasthirteen, I now own two Guy Fawkes Brumbies and a gentle Thoroughbred.

Between 2005-2010 I was a member of the *Save the Brumbies* Committee and Registrar of the *Australian Brumby Horse Register*. I am pleased to be able to continue to help - in a more modest way - to protect Australian Brumbies.

Member News

Australian Brumby Horse Register (ABHR)

The Register now has over 340 horses formally registered and show classes for Brumbies are gaining recognition throughout the country; it is one more way we can prove the worth of our wild horses and contribute to their long term survival and protection.

We have been invited to exhibit horses at the **St Ives and Castle Hill shows**. These are major Sydney shows and ABHR will have led and ridden classes for ABHR registered Brumbies. In addition to the standard show classes on Sunday, St Ives will be having a feature show on Saturday that will include Brumbies and other breeds.

It will be great exposure for the horses. The ABHR website will have more details in due course and we look forward to meeting our city friends.

Hunter Valley Brumby Association

Kath and the team enjoyed a wonderful day in August signing many copies of the "Brumby Book" for people that had driven from all over to get their copy.

There has been so much positive feedback, from children to grandparents, of the beautiful photography and wonderful stories in the book. The Brumby Book has also generated a lot of media interest, especially on ABC radio and newspapers. Kath and the team have been talking all things Brumby and about the HVBA to many journalists.

The book can now be found in all ABC Shops, many other book stores or you can purchase your personally signed copy by Kath at our HVBA Shop via our website.

With Christmas just around the corner, it makes a wonderful gift!

Brumby

A celebration of Australia's wild horses

Kath Massey from the Hunter Valley Brumby Association and Mae Lee Sun have teamed up to produce *Brumby. A celebration of Australia's wild horses*, comprising a collection of stories and photographs of Australian brumbies and their owners.

Published by Exisle Publishing in August 2013, the book is now available from ABC Shops and online. Check out the official website at www.australianbrumby.com.au.

The HVBA received a call from the Singleton Army base after they had found a young Brumby foal abandoned by his mother – there are approximately 150 Brumbies on the 15,000 hectare site.

The HVBA does not currently have a mare with a young foal at foot, so one phone call to our good friends at Horse Welfare Inc. was all that was needed to rescue the little colt. Horse Welfare Inc. currently have a mare with a foal the same age and Jo and the team are very experienced with tiny foals.

The HWI team were greeted by some very relieved Army personnel and “Ranger”, as he is now known, had a much needed drink of some formula. Ranger spent a couple of days at the vet receiving some fluids and he is now on the way to recovery.



Kaimanawa Heritage Horse



Chloe and two Kaimanawa Horses. Read her story in the Hoof Prints section of this newsletter!

Outback Heritage Horse Association of WA

Over the past twelve months the OHHAWA has been busy with several smaller rescues and with promoting heritage horses in the media and on radio. (Much like some of our sister groups, go Kath!)

Two heritage brumbies trapped near Esperance on the south coast - a two year old filly and her younger half-brother - were transported back to Margaret River around October 2012 after their mother was hit and killed on the road. Merrivale Hazel and Merrivale Woody were trained at Rescue Co-ordinator Dr Sheila Greenwell's property before Woody was sold to a lovely family home and Hazel was fostered to new OHHAWA President Sandy Hall, to give her time to mature and grow a bit. The OHHAWA is fortunate in that it generally sells its rescued brumbies on to good homes to cover partial rescue costs fairly quickly and at present the charity only has a small number of brumbies in its care.



This year, Lake Muir continues to be monitored along with several other groups of heritage brumbies living wild throughout WA. These "Watching Briefs" are important - the

charity networks with local contacts and ensures that any horses which may potentially come under threat are watched. If a situation changes and horses need to be rescued the charity steps in.

This happened in the case of a chestnut filly and mare which were trapped on Carnegie



Station up north. They were accidentally mustered in with cattle and in poor condition, so were given by kind station folk to a

family who took them to Mukenbudin but then, for various reasons, could not continue to care for them. The family surrendered them to the charity to ensure they would have a good future. Jodi and Jaz arrived at one of the rehab properties near Nannup around the second week in October and are currently being trained (voluntarily) and cared for by the charity's Secretary and Treasurer, Katherine and Kevin Waddington. Both horses will be for sale to suitable homes by the charity in the future.

Save the Brumbies

The *Care for Country* program that has been operating in Guy Fawkes N.P. has now been discontinued due to cut backs by the Federal Government. This is a backward step as park rangers are now responsible for trapping, along with all their other duties. NPWS Rangers across our region are heavily involved with bush fire control and there is no trapping being conducted at present. We do expect horses to come in early in 2014 but without continuous trapping and removal, horse numbers will undoubtedly increase again.

A large crowd attended an **Open Day at the New England Brumby Sanctuary** in

October. Most people gathered at the yards to watch our new Horse Consultant Philip Snell and NEBS manager, Megan Hyde put the horses through their paces. Philip has been training horses all his life, both here and overseas. When asked in an interview with ABC radio what methods he uses he replied, 'Just common sense and kindness, each horse is an individual and must be treated as such'. And that sums up our philosophy, what works for one horse can fail with another.



People were fascinated by the way the horses, at liberty, walk up to him when he beckons them, he points to the horse float and they self-load easily without fuss. That the horses coped with their first exposure to a large crowd yet were so calm and steady and completely unconcerned with whip cracking and other distractions is a credit to this relatively unknown hero of the horse world. Our thanks to Philip Snell, a welcome addition to our Team and one who works with the horses for us without payment, simply because he loves what he does. And those horses certainly respond to him.

The Sunflower Pony series of books for young readers is now featured on our website and people, young and old love the stories and antics of the horses. Special Christmas price of \$20.00 per copy is offered to Friends. Order from the website

The Sunflower Pony books are written and self-published by Jan Carter. Drawn from her own experience and stories of her life with horses, the books are charming for horse lovers of all ages.

or email direct to secure your copies in time for Christmas. All proceeds to STB.

Once again Cathryn Burgess wowed the audience with her glorious voice to the evocative strains of Jan's harp at an **STB Musical Fund Raiser** in Armidale in late November. All enjoyed the concert and the intimate interaction with the performers. There were several requests for a c.d. of 'Eleganza' and yes, that's on the list of 'things to do'. A big thank you to those who attended and the STB volunteers who helped with organising the Soiree.

South East Queensland Brumby Association

We have a small committee consisting of



Terry Wilson, *President*,
Anne Wilson, *Secretary*,
Tanja Gahler,

Treasurer, and members Angela Warren, Keryn Masters. The committee meets via email 3 times per annum.

Since our inception in August 2009 we have rehomed a total of 42 brumbies and we are currently caring for 4 brumbies - 2 mares, a foal and a filly. A gorgeous little chestnut filly, named Gypsy, has a home to go and is currently being halter trained. An older bay mare, Pearl, has been halter trained and needs a home; she is listed on the SEQBA webpage. Gracie, and her foal, Bo, are next on the list to train.

Brumby spotting tours were held in March and November. At the training display GT eyed off the afternoon tea!



Our Facebook page now has over 3700 friends and over 300 email friends and a new look webpage was developed earlier in the year - if you haven't had a look for a while please do - go to www.seqbrumby.com. The Website has a number of full page coloured articles that have been in magazines, as well as our new merchandise of T-shirts, caps and stubby coolers.

SEQBA sponsored brumby classes at the Noosa Show and Gympie Show, ABHR sponsored a class at the Mt Gravatt Show. Attendance at these classes has been very poor with only 2 competitors at each show. If you own a brumby in Qld we'd love to see you at a show in 2014.



SEQBA featured on Totally Wild (see photo). The episode can be viewed

on <http://ten.com.au/watch-tv-episodes-online-totally-wild-video.htm?vid=2575747976001>. We were on episode number TW21/85 at the very end.

SEQBA will be having a stall at the 2014 Horse Home Show at the Qld State Equestrian Centre in Caboolture.

Victorian Brumby Association

In July this year, VBA launched the **Australian Brumby Challenge**. In October selected trainers attended a compulsory induction day and chose their brumbies from VBA's sanctuary in Beaufort Victoria.

The passively trapped Brumbies will be trained by over 100 days in two sections:

- * Brumbies aged approximately four years or older to be trained under saddle; and
- * yearling Brumbies to be trained in hand and on the ground only.

Trainers will then present at the final competition weekend on the 1st and 2nd of February 2014, at the Victorian Equestrian Centre in Upper Beaconsfield.

Australian Brumby Challenge

Modelled on the US Mustang Challenge, the VBA has initiated this event to showcase the amazing versatility of our Heritage Brumbies as well a wide range of Australian professional and non-professional trainers.

For more info check out www.australianbrumbychallenge.com.au

and you can follow the progress of trainer's and their brumbies on the Australian Brumby Challenge Facebook page and YouTube Chanel.

VBA's annual **Brumbies Big Day Out** was held December 8 at Brumbies Run Sanctuary in Beaufort. It was an Open Day and included a Brumbies only Gymkhana. Great family day with lots to do and see for anyone who owns, loves or would just like to see Brumbies.

VBA's annual fundraising calendar is now on sale for \$20 plus \$2.50 p&p. The **2014 calendar** (*sample photo below*) has



Brumbies from almost every state in Australia. It is a great Christmas gift and also a great way to have

Brumbies on people's walls and in their homes for twelve months of the year!

To order a calendar email:

info@victorianbrumbyassociation.org
or call 0408 201 107

Hoof Prints – *other stories of note*

Postcard from New Zealand

By Chloe Phillips Harris

I seem to be gathering my own little herd of ex-wild horses these days. It was only fitting that I started the 2013 with a new Kaimanawa named Matariki. Matariki was named for The Seven Sisters - an open cluster of many stars in the constellation Taurus. The first appearance, before sunrise, of Matariki in the north-eastern sky indicates the beginning of the Māori year.

Matariki did not come straight from the wild to me. He was mustered two and a half years ago, and ended up much further south down the country from me. I don't know the exact details, but as a freshly mustered colt he was far too wild for the people who adopted him. I can only imagine what he must have been like; he's a horse with a lot of presence about him - the looks of a mustang and coming straight from muster, terrified of people, with a snort that sounds like a gun going off - I can see that for someone with less experience he would have been a bit intimidating.

It didn't work out where he was - there was talk of trying to tranquilize him and other means to tame him. Luckily others intervened and Matariki changed hands. Eventually he ended up with the wonderful people of the Kaimanawa Heritage Horses who took him under their wing. He got lots of patient love and care, and this is where I heard about him, so eventually he made his way up north to me.

The first time I saw him he was coming off the back of transport truck on my driveway. The thing that struck me about this horse is that he has presence, something that's hard to quantify exactly - an elusive x-factor that makes you stand up and take notice, and draws your eye to that particular animal even

when in a herd of others. Even his stance said "look at me, here I am" but had an edge about it, a wildness that showed any wrong move and he might decide to leave the area, quickly.

The truck driver handed me the lead rope and like every other wild horse before him, Matariki had to make the long first walk up the driveway onto the farm. For a horse that looked so wild, the whole way he stuck to me like glue, and anything that scared him, instead of turning and fleeing, he just snuck in closer to me and kept walking. Through a flock of the neighbor's peacocks, chickens and ducks, across the creek and up the hill he was great, mostly taking everything in his stride. Like a horse that been doing it his whole life he marched straight into his new stable and settled in for the night.

Mostly he's been a dream to be with, every so often you'll hear a sound of a gun popping but myself and every other horse on the property has now learned it's just Matariki letting the world know he's seen something suspicious.

At first I couldn't put my finger on exactly what the issues were surrounding this little horse. He galloped around the paddock like a completely wild thing at times before walking straight up to you and putting his head in your chest. From the moment the lead rope was on him he was by your side and the most attentive little horse in the world. To work with, he was highly intelligent, willing and quick, and seemed to really enjoy it. Again, when he did the right thing, he would let out a huge sigh of relief walk up to you and press his head against you. He wanted security and yet was quite bold and afraid at the same time. Terrified of things behind him, yet he would turn to face it and walk right up to investigate what ever had just previously startled him. Something about him was so familiar though.

When I thought about it, I realized that this horse was just like one of the stallions from last muster - Shy Boy, the wildest, spookiest and with that same presence. But when he was haltered for the first time, he melted and completely turned to humans for support and comfort, and became the most attached of all the stallions to people. Matariki would have been just like Shy, but unfortunately had a few bumps in the road to complicate things.

Horses are amazing animals, and Matariki is quickly adapting. Once he learnt the rules and got over some of his anxiety, he was happy being out with a group of kids and ponies all



going in ten different directions around him, calmly and happily allowing them to all come up and

pat him. He's had a visit from the dentist, been saddled, and got used to everything that goes on with running an equestrian business.

Although it has been a bit crazy around here I hope to get on with training and over the next few months Matariki will begin his career as a ridden pony. For all his quirky ways this is one Kaimanawa I absolutely love and think will be something very special in the future.

All the other Kaimanawa's are doing well and excelling in their new lives as riding ponies, Oscar who is still too young to ride, waited very diligently every morning by the gate while I had riding camps, for the kids to come pat, scratch and shower him in affection. One of the only young horses I'd trust to be sensible with a gaggle of girls fussing over him, he is turning into the sweetest pony I've ever come across.

All the Kai's are special in their own way, and hopefully in the future less and less will run into problems like Matariki did. As always it's only lack of knowledge on the part of people and not anything wrong with the horses that sees them end up in bad situations.

In addition to her involvement with Kaimanawa Horses, Chloe is a member of the **Kiwi Care Team**, a NZ based group providing voluntary care and animal welfare education to those in need around the world.

Last March she went to India "to continue to educate and help the working animals and owners over there, and hopefully improve the lives of all involved. "

www.facebook.com/KiwiCareTeam.wild

For more on the wild horses www.horseproject.blogspot

The Editor's Tail

Rising Bitless

Since the days of Xenophon, (and no doubt before) the question of *To Bit or Not To Bit* has been present. Whatever your own views, it is clear that the acceptance of bitless riding is on the rise. Most equestrian events now allow bitless bridles in competitions and the last bastion of bit-only equine endeavors, dressage, is softening – not just on their rules but on the horse's mouth.

Many owners of the “natural Australian horse” are interested in bitless riding, so readers may be interested in further information.

There are several different bitless bridles on offer in Australia and you can Google “bitless bridles” yourself. However, there are some emerging, lesser known groups and websites which are promoting bitless riding in Australia which may be of interest.

Bitless Inc. - Bitless Inc was formed in 2013 by a group of bitless riders and drivers who felt that by bringing together the bitless community, they could make a difference in the horse world, and campaign for rule changes in competition. Bitless Inc. offers Public Liability and Personal Injury insurance for Bitless Riders.

www.bitlessinc.org.au

Bitless and Beautiful for Dressage – a Facebook page established in 2013 that features a collection of articles, video and commentary on bitless dressage.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bitless-and-beautiful-for-dressage/322184784593678?sk=info>

Bitless Riders & Drivers Aust Online

Challenge Page – a Facebook page that is encouraging bitless riding through online comps and news.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bitless-Riders-Drivers-Aust-Online-Challenge-Page/280698902033377>

Happy Horses Bitless Bridles - Sue Maloney exclusively teaches bitless riding and specializes in transitioning horse and rider to bitless. Sue owns a Guy Fawkes Brumby and is an accredited supplier of Dr Cook bridles in Australia. Her website and Facebook page have heaps of info on what is happening on the bitless world.

<http://happyhorsesbitless.com/>

Newsletter Contributions

Contact Sandy

sandyradke@bigpond.com

0458 105 221