

Brumby Bridges



The quarterly newsletter of the ABA
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Keeping Brumby fertility control on the front page!

ABA contacts and other people interested in the issue of the fertility control of wild Brumby populations may be aware of recent initiatives that President Jill Pickering has been monitoring and circulating via email.

While Brumby Bridges does not want to recycle stale news, viable fertility control is definitely worth keeping on both our front page and high on the agenda of Brumby welfare work.

Perhaps it comes down to Squeaky Wheel Syndrome!

If so, we need to keep the wheel squeaking to drown out the echoes of gunshots in Australian national parks! The survival of sustainable numbers of Brumbies in such vulnerable environments as Carnarvon National Park in central Queensland are at stake. Survival is, of course, only the first stage of the quest to enhance the well-being of heritage horses world-wide, so the least Brumby advocates can do is keep spinning the wheel until it reverberates in

the ears of influential Australian bureaucrats and researchers.

An ideal starting point may be the ironic discovery that England is importing fertility control vaccines from Australia when we still push uphill to get Australian officials to further develop this humane option.

Bizarre isn't it! And maybe a tad hypocritical. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the particular vaccine, i.e., Improvac, left Australian shores for specific use with a herd of Dartmoor semi-wild ponies, whose ancestry reputedly extends back to at least 1488.

A Guardian newspaper article entitled Dartmoor ponies to go on the Pill outlines the contraception trial concerned. The link is: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/mar/03/dartmoor-ponies-contraceptive-jab-devon?newsfeed=true>

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Newsletter Contributions

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A few words from Jill Pickering on fertility control

Great to see the recent interest amongst the ABA's email contacts in the Dartmoor Ponies... Having a drug that stops foaling is the first step. The issue is that a drug of sufficient duration via single-dose applications is needed. As is a more flexible application method than injection or darting (not viable from a helicopter) because the shoot distance to mares must be precise for the dart to penetrate enough to deliver the dose. Too far and the dart will bounce off, too close and it will go straight through the 'target'... We have to be in for the long haul.

ABA involvement in Brumby research

Frances Dinn is a student at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, who is completing her Honours in Equine Science. Frances has invited ABA members to participate in her research project via phone or mail and will be visiting two Brumby re-homing locations, namely, those of Save the Brumbies in New South Wales and the Victorian Brumby Association in Victoria.

Frances' project is titled A survey of techniques for re-homing of brumbies as a method of controlling the feral population.

Through surveys of Brumby homing organisations and owners who have purchased Brumbies, she will investigate the methods used by different organisations to capture, train and re-home Brumbies, and try to gauge their success. In identifying the differences in methods, and possible reasons why certain methods tend to succeed, Frances aims to develop a document that adds to the current information available in this area.

Frances is working under the guidance of Heather Ip, with whom many ABA members will be familiar. For more information, contact Heather on hip@csu.edu.au

STOP PRESS: News from New Zealand

Just received: A call for re-homing opportunities for 170 Kiamanawa horses to minimise the number that will be slaughtered. See the link: <http://horsetalk.co.nz/2012/04/18/homes-sought-for-170-kaimanawa-horses/>

National events calendar

4-6 May – Tocal Field Day. Tocal Agricultural Centre. Paterson. New South Wales. <http://www.tocalfielddays.com/>

18-21 October – Royal Geelong Show – Geelong Showgrounds. Victoria. Breakwater. <http://royalgeelongshow.org.au/>

17-19 May – Gympie Show – Gympie Showgrounds. Queensland. Brumby Classes Sponsored by the SEQ Brumby Association. Champion Brumby Exhibit; Reserve Champion Brumby Exhibit; Led male exhibit any age; Led female exhibit any age; Brumby under Saddle. All horses must be registered with the Australian Brumby Horse Register and provide proof of registration on request.

<http://www.Gympieshow.org.au/>

President's chat

As I contemplate the content of this 'chat', I am filled with appreciation for not only the wonderful creatures that Brumbies are, but the commitment of the various people who are working conscientiously on their behalf.

In particular, I am grateful for the ongoing efforts of the ABA member groups that have been busy over the summer re-homing Brumbies; raising funds; attending Brumby show classes; and liaising with their State park government authorities.

Whatever their role within the fabric of our endeavours, everyone contributes in their own ways to the tasks at hand. Those ways range from finding the wealth of information about Brumbies and wild horses throughout the globe, to sharing that information in a range of forms, to gentling and preparing Brumbies from the wild for domestic activity. This newsletter provides a snapshot of where we all are!

Website

Our transition to a new web host is progressing well under Sandy Radke's capable direction. Sandy is currently arranging the background program codes that will give the new website the necessary flexibility.

We will soon be able to update the web content, links to Australian and overseas initiatives, protocols etc., so I encourage each member group to brainstorm news items, issues, photos, history, and new items then forward them to Sandy for web posting. This way, they won't become out of date by the end of each quarter when the next edition of Brumby Bridges goes out.

Research

In November 2011, Heather Ip, of Charles Sturt University in NSW recruited Frances Dinn, a student, to take over a Brumby research project. The ABA is pleased to have been involved in the initial liaison, and urges

our supporters to offer positive input into Frances' efforts. See the article on Page 2.

Clemant National Park

The Qld Government's release of the expression of interest (EOI) for the proposed Brumby Trap for Re-homing trial in Clemant National Park has stalled. The latest information indicates the April deadline for the EOI will not be met. Rest assured though that the ABA will not back off; letters have been sent to Andrew Powell, Minister for Environment and Heritage, and Steve Dickson, Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing.

Kosciuszko National Park

Unfortunately, several of the people who collected Kosciuszko Brumbies have indicated that they may not be able to take as many as they did last year, preferring to wait until after June before deciding on numbers. Kosciuszko National Park authorities ceased trapping during the April school holidays, but expect to resume at the end of the month.

I encourage people who are interested in taking some fantastic Kosciuszko Brumbies to contact Colleen O'Brien of the Victorian Brumby Association at:

info@victorianbrumbyassociation.org.au

or me, Jill Pickering, at:

info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au)



Australian Brumby Horse Register (ABHR) in focus

Charter: To preserve the heritage of the Brumby in Australia

The Australian Brumby Horse Register brings to all Brumby owners and groups the formalization of the Brumby as a unique breed, helping to preserve their bloodlines and heritage, developed through natural selection in the wild over many decades. It acknowledges the Brumby's historical significance and promotes it as a valuable all-round horse.

The inaugural meeting of the Register was in 2004, attendees being A. Packer, M. Brennan, J. Erby, J. Carter, E. Jessup, G. Baldwin, D. O'Brien, J & D Wallis. Since its 2005 inception, 276 Brumbies have been registered, and there are almost daily enquiries from members of the public.

The membership includes Brumby welfare groups in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory, also individuals and families.

A very successful avenue for promoting Brumbies is the ABHR's sponsoring of Registered Brumby classes at local and royal shows. Excellent examples from shows held in 2012 can be seen in competition results, along with photographs, on the ABHR website. The calendar on the website indicates the shows still to be held and that results will be published there as they come to hand.

Apart from ABHR's sponsored classes, many other show committees are including Registered Brumby led and ridden classes in their schedules. The Hunter Valley Brumby Association successfully approached the Stroud Show committee to include such classes in their 2012 show, with resultant excellent entries. The program included a unique "Brumby Challenge", much to the delight of the crowd.

Show classes in the flesh are one thing; online ones are quite another, especially seeing authentic Brumbies throughout the country are eligible! ABHR held its first online show in 2009, featuring three halter classes, one ridden, and four novelty classes, the latter being decided by public vote. The second show was held a year later, and both represented a fun way to highlight the Brumby preservation cause.

Brumbies are talented, versatile and trainable – for pony club, endurance, dressage, droving, harness horse, camp drafting, trail riding, or pleasure, to name just some disciplines; all age groups can usually find a Brumby to suit them.

For further information, please see www.abhr.com.au

Margery Boylan
ABHR Registrar



STB Honey Girl shortly after her rescue from Guy Fawkes National Park (Left)

Then in her new life being ridden by seven-year old pony club enthusiast, Summer Ryan (Right)



Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society (CBBPS)



An unsold (and still available) gelding

A small crowd at this year's Annual Easter Brumby Auction, the fourteenth one! However, their interest in these heritage Brumbies was huge.

Many of the visitors from interstate as well as from the local area had not known that Brumbies even existed, let alone that those from the Eyre Peninsular are descendants of the only herd Australia-wide that has been eradicated from a national park!

Many certainly did not know that this herd has been part of the Eyre Peninsula for over 150 years!

A Mr Henry Hawson delivered two boatloads of these Timor ponies to this area in 1838. Since then, they have taken children to school, worked on farms, been ridden in the pony club, and worked in harness. They were even pack horses during the war years.

Even though only three Brumbies were sold, the Society is very happy with the overall results. We had 16 Brumbies to find homes for, and we have only four left to place, that is, two fillies and two geldings left for sale.

The sold Brumbies have gone to Darwin, Bendigo, Victor Harbour, Adelaide Hills, Elliston, Wangary and Port Lincoln.

The Society will now concentrate on the next batch coming through. There are 14 foals at foot that are ready to be weaned. All have been handled, and one has already been sold.

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How about this for service? The local paper wanted a write-up also so there you are!

As a result, we have our first sponsored mare and foal!

A little girl is unable to have her own pony, so her parents thought sponsorship could be the next best thing. More work for me, sending photos and info to her but it lets more people know about our Brumbies. The lass sent me an email, and she reckons she hasn't stopped talking about Brumbies since I took her out to see our Coffin Bay Brumbies.

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Anyone wishing to help in any way is very welcome. All you need to do is become a member. Contact can be made through our website, www.coffinbaybrumby.org.au or by **phoning the secretary on 0408 540 405.**

CBBPS is a not-for-profit, tax deductible volunteer society. All donations and help are greatly appreciated.

Hay is desperately needed, so if anyone can help out, we would love to hear from you.

The Society would like to thank all the businesses that have helped us throughout the last year.

Cheers for now

Wies Roberts
Secretary/Treasurer

Hunter Valley Brumby Association (HVBA)



On the Easter weekend, I was taken on a tour of part of another park by NPWS. This park, which is not open to the public, is in a hidden valley where the Brumbies there are tucked away safe. The Brumbies are a small and well-conformed horse rather than a pony at between 12-13hh with deep golden coats and flowing white/cream manes and tails. There is plenty of feed and rivers so they are all in good condition.

Brumbies competed for the first time at the Upper Hunter Show at Muswellbrook (23 & 24 April). Five Brumbies, including a stallion, competed in the led classes with HVBA Gundagai winning a respectable third place after only being captured from the wild a few months ago. Jindabyne's Boomerang Banjo took out first place for his owner, Karen Davis. Her other Brumby, Jindabyne's Winfield Willow ridden by Natalya Bretherton won a swag of ribbons in the hack classes.

We spotted two main groups, one of which was so unused to seeing people that they were so curious I had to gently shoo some of them away when they came a bit too close.

The trip was not only to see these Brumbies for myself but to look at the logistics of getting them out safely through the winding bush tracks. This won't happen for a couple of years, so we took plenty of photos to identify them.

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The HVBA information and merchandise stand was kept very busy with lots of enquiries. We and the other participating Brumby rescue organisations are looking forward to bringing Brumbies back next year.

Upcoming events will be Tocal Field Day in the first weekend of May. It is always a very big exhibit for the HVBA, last year attracting almost 30,000 people.

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Brumbies from various parts of New South Wales descended on Stroud for the show on 13 and 14 April. Australia's wild horses were a special feature of this, the 90th anniversary of the show. The Brumby events kicked off on the Friday with led and ridden classes, and Saturday afternoon Brumbies and carried the Australian flags during the grand opening and national anthem.

This year we will showcase Kosciuszko Brumbies for the first time and be joined by an equine muscle therapist, who will be using our Brumbies for her demonstrations. This will mark the end of our promotional commitments and fundraising to enable us to travel down to the Snowy once again to bring back more Kosi Brumbies.

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The new HVBA website has been very successful with over 6,000 hits since its launch in mid January; it now averages 500 hits a week! We have received great feedback.

We have received enquiries from another horse rescue group that is keen to take some Brumbies, so we will be looking at a joint rescue to split the costs.

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Kath Massey
President

Victorian Brumby Association (VBA): Young Horse Training Clinic



worked with some of the youngsters that we have here.

In the course of the day, these young horses, some of which had had only a week or two of training, progressed to wearing capes made of tarps, playing with balls, and tying up quietly and calmly.

In the glorious sunshine on Sunday the 15 April, the VBA ran a Young Horse Training Clinic at Brumby's Run, Beaufort.

One of our organisational aims is to run clinics that are affordable and relevant to people who may offer a home to our Brumbies, so we were particularly pleased when we sat down and added up that between the people who attended the clinic, they owned nine Brumbies!

The day was full of anecdotes that demonstrated the wonderful temperaments of these Brumbies, and most of all, the love that their owners have for them.

We had seven participants and ten fence-sitters for our clinic, which covered the philosophy behind our training methods, i.e., desensitising; tying up; float loading; introducing new gear; and long reining.

One participant brought her own Brumby (It was lovely to see young Dreamer now looking very grown up!). The other participants

They took everything in their stride.

The last activity was float loading – we felt that with seven horses who had never been on the float at all, we may have the chance to demonstrate some different methods of loading. However, all seven of the students led calmly onto the float, and they stood there quite happily whilst their handlers chatted and then they walked down the ramp like pros!

The theme throughout the day was trust, respect, confidence and fun and I think that we can say that it was a great success!

We all enjoyed the clinic, passed on and learned some great skills. In addition, the clinic raised some much needed funds for the VBA, and three of our youngsters found their forever homes.

A really terrific result all round!

Colleen O'Brien
President

Two more successful days for the VBA

The VBA mounted a well-received information stand and Brumby demonstration at two events held in regional Victoria last month, namely:

25 March: Deans Marsh Festival, Deans Marsh (a 40-minute drive west of Geelong)

31 March: Ballarat Rural Lifestyle Expo. Ballarat Showground

Have you seen this stolen pony?

As many news watchers in Victoria and ABA supporters who are on President Jill Pickering's circulation list throughout Australia will be aware, two ponies, Benny and Bozo, were stolen from a locked paddock at the Officer centre of Riding Develops Abilities (RDA).

The theft of these donated ponies is the latest in a series that has deprived it of a lot of valuable equipment. More important though, the people with disabilities who benefit from their horse experiences are being jeopardised.

Brumby Bridges is pleased to report that Benny has been recovered, thanks to the vigilance of a well-wisher.

However, Bozo is still missing. And who knows whether he is being adequately cared for!

We publish this notice to encourage our readers to be on the look-out for him.

"Bozo is a liver chestnut Australian Riding Pony [gelding] with a flaxen mane and tail. He is in his late teens or early twenties."

If anyone suspects that a pony they see in the community, they are encouraged to immediately contact **Senior Detective Colin Beard of the Pakenham Police on (03) 5945 2559**

or, if anywhere outside Victoria, the nearest police station.

Good news on the Goulburn River Country Rail Trail

To the very great relief of the interested parties present at the Mitchell Shire Council Meeting of 11 April, the councillors voted unanimously in favour of the petition against the proposed prohibiting horse riders' access to the Goulburn River High Country Rail.

It was a long haul for everyone who supported the cause, whether by building a website, handing out hard copies of the petition, attending council meetings, riding parts of the trail, and gaining local support politically and in the outer communities. In

particular, Casey Radio generosity in conducted interviews, Vic Horse Council as well as the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA) offered solid support. The support of cyclists clubs, property owners, and local businesses is also appreciated.

However, advocates of the perpetuation of the bridle path acknowledge that they We still have a way to go with regard to the necessary ongoing maintenance that will ensure that the shared trail will continue to provide enjoyment for all members of the public.

Australian Animal transport standards

New national animal welfare standards for the transportation of livestock will come into effect from 1 July 2012. Unlike previous Codes of Practice, the Standards are now the same across all Australian States and Territories, bringing consistency to the way livestock are transported nationally.

The Standards aim to ensure good welfare practices for all livestock journeys.

The Standards cover:

- Planning and preparation for transport
- Fit to load
- Time off water

For more information on the new Standards, visit:

www.livestockwelfarestandards.net.au