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Derailing Kosciuszko's Brumby Review process

The anti-Brumby lobby is working overtime again trying to confuse and persuade us that passive trapping does not work. Like two environmentalists who photographed a dead Kosciuszko National Park Brumby (KNP), and concluded "trapping does not work and aerial culling will". Adding, if horse numbers are at the high end of estimates, the number to die this way could be 2,000 a year, which infers do nothing, they'll soon be gone!

The claim 2,000 a year will die in KNP, and the recent Sunday Telegraph KNP report fails scrutiny. Taking the National Parks and Wildlife (NSW) own figures last year we see that far from 'rapidly rising', in fact, horse density over five years of trapping shows a *decrease* of nearly 40% from 2.69 Brumbies per square km to 1.64 Brumbies per square km! [Submission to the Independent Technical Reference Committee]

Claims that Brumbies threaten native broad-toothed rats, alpine water skinks and sphagnum bog just waste management time. Until peer reviewed, scientific studies are conducted to compare all threats, it is too easy to blame the highly visible Snowy Brumby. Do anti Brumby lobbyist's naïvely think less visible species such as; rabbits, foxes, cats, dogs, goats, deer, humans and climate change etc. are *not* a threat to KNP?

Seeing just 300 Brumbies when flying over KNP is vindicated by many visitors and local reports of only seeing 10-15 Brumbies at ground level on day visits. Such low number of Brumby sightings indicate the real count is likely close to the low range of 4,000 than 6,000 [average of the 4,000-8,000 range].

Passive trapping clearly works, as evidenced by the 40% drop over five years and must continue to be the management of choice. The ABA believes most humane option always be used, while the anti-Brumby lobby at NPWS's 21st century town hall meeting in 2015 placed humaneness as the *lowest* consideration

Fertility control (temporary sterilisation) far from radical, has occurred in America for 30 years, costs about \$35 per shot and be administered by dart gun without trapping. Slow mustering (pacing to the slowest horse) occurs in New Zealand and euthanizing Brumbies not rehomed at the trap site is preferable to trucking them thousands of kilometres to die, provided relevant codes of practice for horse [euthanasia](#) are met.

The ABA applauds Minister John Barilaro for encouraging a "non-lethal" approach and for voicing what many in Australians feel, that Brumbies are strongly linked to our heritage. The ABA supports managing viable, sustainable Brumby levels in KNP and using fertility control to avoid euthanizing excess numbers.

I hope Minister Mark Speakman's visit to KNP includes the *many healthy* KNP ecologies where Brumbies live, not just Cowombat Flat with its narrow water access in-between two exclusion fenced areas frequented by rabbits, foxes, cats, dogs, goats, deer, humans from the 4 wheel track running close by and the nearby campsite where Brumby runners using dogs, rope and remove Brumbies under a Parks Victoria contact.

If NPWS and other comments continue before the Expert Panel's recommendations become part of the draft management plan, they risk being accused of unprofessional behaviour from appearing to manipulate the public ahead of the Independent Panel of scientists and vets findings. Such behaviour only serves to inflame an already emotional mix of differing views. Surely, the appropriate time for stating opinions is after the Independent Panel completes its work and the Draft KNP Management Plan is released.

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