



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

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*Happy Holidays
From ABA*

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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 News

President's Chat

As Christmas comes around again I reflect on progress ABA members have made over the year. I still remember the intense four months of Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) robust chat room discussions that closed a year ago.

Then there was the NPWS 21st Century Town Hall meeting late 2014 and the frustration of answering questions that forced a choice between valuing Brumbies vs valuing the environment!

This mutually exclusive approach failed to recognise that Brumby supporters can also value the environment, as evidenced overseas where Wild Horse populations are managed to add value to the landscape.

I vividly recall being horrified to hear at the NPWS 21st Century Town Hall meeting that while Brumby advocates require management programs to put the most humane option first, environmental conservationists put humane management last, with their first priority going to the quickest, cheapest method.

In March we presented three submissions (Maddison Young-HVBA-*population counts*, Colleen O'Brien-VBA-*fertility control* and myself-*how Brumbies help biodiversity*) to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Independent Technical Reference Group (ITRG). The feedback at that time was that ABA members had provided constructive material to the review that would be given serious consideration.

I came home feeling the review could be moving towards a balanced outcome able to reflect both environment and Brumby cultural values.

Subsequently newspaper reports have kept emotions running high. The latest news item *time is running out for*

wild brumbies made famous by The Man From Snowy River reported NPWS as saying that *passive trapping is not working* and that Brumbies *threaten sensitive areas* which again raise concerns that aerial shooting may still be 'on the table'.

While we voice the need for Brumby populations to be managed, until the draft plan is released for general feedback, we need to hope that NPWS also acknowledge the next plan must humanely manage Brumby populations living wild in KNP.

Once the draft KNP Wild Horse management plan is release (due late December) we have two critical months to provide strong, sound, feedback to keep managed, viable, sustainable Brumby populations in their national park habitat before the final plan is implemented.

I am impressed by how ABA members have broadened their understanding of Brumby and environmental issues. The skill based information members provide to national park and government authorities in Victoria and KNP is also recognised by WA and Qld park authorities.

It is pleasing to see the push by ABA member groups and other Brumby groups to have Brumby heritage values and the ways they add value to the environment increasingly considered in future national park management plans.

So on that positive note, I wish all members, their family and friends a pleasant time over the Christmas festive season. Enjoy as much of a break from Brumby work as responsibilities permit and enter 2016 with renewed energies to progress heritage Brumby management.

Jill Pickering

Australian Natural Heritage Charter (2nd edition)

The Australian Natural Heritage Charter (ANHC) contains 'best practice' conservation principles for places of Natural Heritage Significance. Along with the Burra Charter, ANHC needs to be recognised in National Park management plans. This 2nd edition strengthens Indigenous and historic cultural heritage values that co-exist with natural heritage values.

The ANHC and Burra Charters emphasise how, by keeping natural environments healthy we protect the essence of Australia's unique character and secure an *irreplaceable gift for the generations ahead*.

The ANHC stresses *Natural Significance* by recognising ecosystems, biodiversity and geodiversity for their existence value, or for present or future generations, in terms of their scientific, social, aesthetic and life-support value.

The ANHC emphasises that *conservation should consider all aspects of natural and cultural heritage* and recognises that natural and cultural heritage values can overlap.

The ANHC rightly supports Aboriginal values and presumably does not discriminate between the cultural values of Indigenous people and more recent settler arrivals. Assuming this is so, conflicting interests must be rationally addressed, because both cultures exist now.

ANHC values biodiversity and geodiversity and advises the least possible human intervention to ecological, evolutionary and earth processes. The Charter also understands the importance of consulting widely from the start, especially with local knowledge, as this helps *resolve any conflict prior to commitment to a management regime*.

Managing sustainable Brumbies in KNP may seem to conflict with the ANHC's view that introduced species are 'translocated or alien species occurring at a place outside its known natural range as a result of intentional or accidental dispersal'.

However there are strong grounds in the same document for national park authorities to balance these views and continue managing Brumbies as our living cultural heritage, whilst also conserving KNP's unique landscape - so both can be valued by future generations.

I urge everyone to read the full ANHC version (link below) and apply its principles to strengthen the position that Brumbies have legitimate place in our national parks.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/australian-natural-heritage-charter>

Jill Pickering



Member News

Australian Brumby Horse Register (ABHR)

The Australian Brumby Horse Register launched the **ABHR Showcase Brumby Of the Year Awards** in the 2013/2014 show season. Running each year from the 1st July until 30th June, all Brumbies registered with the ABHR have a chance to win this prestigious award for each State.

This award is not about winning, it is about recognising those that are willing to get out there and give it a go! The

ABHR awards a Brumby from each state who competes in the most classes at all agricultural shows and horse breed shows. This includes not only Brumby classes, but any classes - even in the Un-official rings! Winners are announced at the completion of the show season and the winning brumby from each state is awarded with an engraved trophy.

The 2014/2015 Winners are:



WA winner

Mt Weld Onyx Allure owned by Selena Cardilini



NSW trophy

Guy Fawkes Champ owned by Samantha Chapman

ABA congratulates all the winners and all the Brumbies and Brumby owners who competed in this event!

Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society (CBBPS)

WISHING EVERYONE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR !



From the Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society.

Save the Brumbies (STB)

It's been another progressive and productive year at STB. A group of beautiful paint mares from Oxley Rivers N.P.



arrived in August and all in foal, to date, two adorable new fillies have arrived and more are expected. We also accepted four Brumbies from the RSPCA that were the subject of a neglect case. These horses came from KNP.

All new arrivals have settled well and are now in good condition. Most will be added to our fertility control trials and we have the extra bonus of three separate groups of horses; i.e., Guy Fawkes N.P., Oxley Rivers N.P. and Kosciusko N.P. Brumbies from different areas of the country vary considerably in type and this could be of interest to the outcomes of the trials.

The fertility control trials to date are showing excellent results as we go into our second year of research. Treated mares have not fallen pregnant, groups are settled and

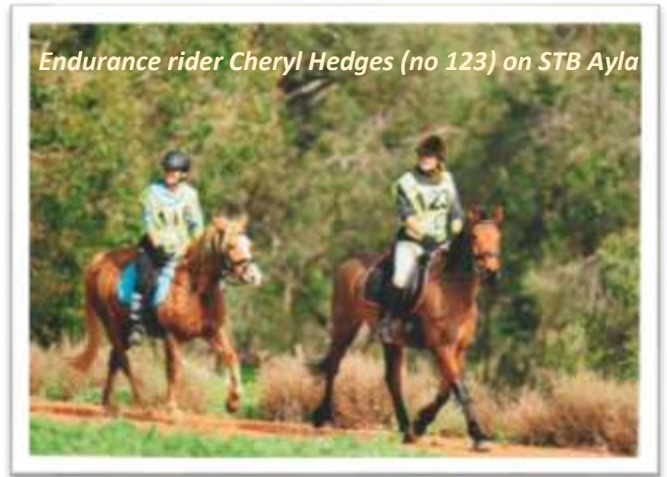
Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

contented and the stallions are not showing any interest in the ladies. Progress results have to go before the scientific community for approval before information is formally released to the public. We will keep you all updated in 2016.

There has been little trapping in Guy Fawkes N.P. to date. Local Parks will take direction from the KNP final Plan of Management; it will be interesting to see the outcome and just what Government intends for the future management of the Brumbies.

We hosted two visits from local TAFE students studying animal welfare and also environmental issues. Education and awareness is part of our policy; we cater for study visits regularly at both Sanctuaries. Young people love to meet the Brumbies and learn more about them.

Another interesting snippet from WA comes from Cheryl Hedges, proud owner of STB Ayla. Now competing in Endurance events Ayla is leaving those Arabians well behind. This game little mare passed all her vet checks with flying colours and finished a commendable fourth from a large field in her first event.



Congratulations to Cheryl and Ayla and thanks for showing horse lovers what our Brumbies are capable of given the chance.

For further details contact info@savethebrumbies.org
Jan Carter for STB Inc.

Victorian Brumby Association (VBA)

The Kosciuszko National Park catching season generally runs at some point between June and September – this year, it was quite a short season, but a lot of Brumbies were caught in only three weeks. We made three runs up to Tumut over the three weeks and brought home seven stallions, nine mares and seven assorted youngsters; a total of 23 Brumbies. Since then of course, five of the



mares have foaled and we have another one imminent. The remaining three mares may not be in foal, although we never

assume! All the mares are out in the maternity ward



paddocks where they will stay until the foals are around eight months old.

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

We were asked by the ABA to come up with numbers of Brumbies we have rehomed since we started in 2007 and found the exercise a really great one! In nearly eight years, we have taken in just over 375 Brumbies and rehomed 342 of those Brumbies to date. I know in that time, many Brumbies have also gone to slaughter, but our policy of saving one Brumby at a time is do-able for us and over time, the number start to stack up!

The Australian Brumby Challenge has been ticking along well, with trainer applications about to close (on the 14th of December). We have some great applications in so far and are looking forwards to a few more – you can read more about the ABC here:

www.australianbrumbychallenge.com.au

The shows down here in Victoria have finished up now, with the Beaufort Ag Show on the weekend – I couldn't resist including this pic of VBA Blondie with her owner



Grace taken at Beaufort last week. Shows are a great way to showcase our Aussie Brumbies and are run under ABHR rules – you can see more about them here:

www.abhr.com.au

The draft plan for the Brumbies of the Alpine National Park, after a lot of people (including ourselves) investing a lot of time, has failed to come to anything at this point. We were expecting a draft plan to be ready for public comment in November 2013. Given how many people provided advice, expertise and time, for Parks Victoria to drop the plan in this manner is incredibly frustrating. We have been given many reasons, but can't help but feel that perhaps Parks Vic realised that this was a highly emotive issue and just put it in the 'too hard basket'? On a planning front, the draft plan is also being prepared for the Kosciuszko National Park Brumbies. We feel it is likely that every other NP in South Eastern Australia is waiting to see what happens in Kosi, which makes this plan especially important.

One of the big lessons we have learnt through our lobbying is the importance of standing together as a community to advocate for our Brumbies. There is room for all values and a great need for further study. We KNOW that in almost every environment that Brumbies are found in our NPs, they are found in healthy ecosystems. Rather than relying on 'literature reviews' of studies undertaken overseas, using different environments and different wild horses, we must have regional studies to build our understanding of how our Brumbies contribute to the ecosystems in which they thrive. In the meantime, yes, we support their humane management in some regions, but only where there are higher numbers. Environments such as Bogong High Plains and the Barmah National Park here in Victoria are prime examples of healthy environments with smaller numbers of Brumbies. Removal of these Brumbies could be disastrous, leading to higher fuel levels and an ecological tipping point. Parks Victoria has even stated that Bogong High Plains is a healthy environment, so why remove the 120 large grazing animals that exist peacefully there?

Hoof Prints – Other items of note....

Stop Press! KNP Wild Horse Management Plan Update

Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) Wild Horse Management Plan Review Update 10 December 2015

NPWS is awaiting finalisation of the Independent Technical Reference Group and Cultural Heritage Values Assessment Reports now due late December before the plan can be finalised early 2016. NPWS expects the Draft KNP Wild Horse Management Plan, plus all supporting reports and documentation, will be **released in March 2016** and on public exhibition **for 60 days**.

During the 60 days, the draft plan can be viewed online or downloaded from the NSW Government 'Have Your Say' website: <https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/consult> and display hard copies of the draft plan can be viewed at local NPWS offices in Tumut, Jindabyne, Khancoban and Queanbeyan, and at the OEH Customer Centre - Goulburn St, Sydney.

In addition, people can provide feedback and submissions directly to local NPWS staff in an informal setting over a two day period at community 'open house' sessions being held in Tumut, Jindabyne and Queanbeyan. (Further details to be advised)

Submissions to the draft plan will be able to be lodged electronically or in writing.

If you want to discuss anything in regard to the KNP Wild Horse Management Plan Review or wild horse management program, please contact Rob Gibbs, Senior Project Officer, Kosciuszko National Park -Wild Horse Management Plan Review Project. Ph. 6450 5507. rob.gibbs@environment.nsw.gov.au

Blaming Brumbies in Queensland

A disturbing report recently from Townsville regarding a tragic accident which resulted in the death of a child due to the driver hitting a deceased horse on the main road

has again raised concerns about management. An aerial cull was conducted despite outraged protests from the locals and wide media coverage. There is no evidence that the horse was actually a Brumby. Queensland has many hundreds of wild horses roaming freely and management is non-existent. More bullets and little we can do about it. Our Queensland representative Shelly Cowan is in contact with the local authorities and our Liaison Officer, Jill Pickering from the ABA has released a paper advising methods of control for the attention of those in power, we can only hope they take notice. Our website will have further news as becomes available. *Jan Carter, STB*

2016 Australian Brumby Challenge

From the 17th to the 20th of November 2016, the finals of the Australian Brumby Challenge will be held at Equitana in Melbourne. Inspired by the American Mustang Makeover Challenge, the ABC is an Australian version that was initiated by the Victorian Brumby Association in 2013. From now until then, trainers will be selected and inducted before they have 150 days to take a wild horse to the finals of the challenge. The Brumbies will then be auctioned to approved bidders.

... this event is a spotlight on Australian Brumbies and what they can do.

While VBA selects the horses, trainers and bidders, **this event is not about one Brumby re-homing group**. To the "outside world" **this is a spotlight on Australian Brumbies and what they can do**. ABA encourages all of you to go to Equitana 2016 and help promote and support our wonderful Australian Brumbies. And, if there is enough interest, perhaps we can all share in information stall at Equitana to promote Brumbies across Australia. What do you think???

The Editor's Tail

The Editor's Tail is swishing up an ABA Website makeover. Why a makeover now? Well, it has been a few years and newer technology makes it important that the ABA website is readable and useful on tablets and phones as well as desktops. There are new features to help organize

the pages and generally "bling up" things. And it is always fun to have a re think and a new look.

Jill Pickering and I will be getting together next week to go over things and hopefully Santa will have the new site up for Christmas.

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

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ABA Member Groups

- ☞ Australian Brumby Horse Register
- ☞ Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society Inc. (SA)
- ☞ Hunter Valley Brumby Association (NSW)
- ☞ Kaimanawa Heritage Horses (NZ)
- ☞ Save the Brumbies Inc. (NSW)
- ☞ Snowy Mountains Bush Users Group (NSW)
- ☞ South East Queensland Brumby Association
- ☞ Victorian Brumby Association