



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

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**More Kosi Brumbies rescued from
the sale yards...**

more in Member News, page 9

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 with regard to the humane management, welfare, preservation and promotion of what we consider to be a National Treasure - *The Australian Brumby*.

President's Chat

I am writing this Brumby Bridges chat from Kings Canyon, in the NT, in the low twenties, but heating up over the weekend to low 30's.

Still no news of the final NSW National Parks and Wild Life final Kosciuszko management plan which began nearly five years ago.

The first Wild Horse Management Plan for Parks Victoria has completed its pre-draft key stakeholder input phase and is due to be released as a draft soon for community feedback. It is expected to be finalised by the end of 2017.

Colleen O'Brien, President of the Victorian Brumby Association (VBA) and I met with the Victorian minister Lily D'Amboise and Dr. Mark Norman, Parks Victoria's Chief Conservation Scientist, to discuss several key issues, including Brumby Running and an alternative to the eradication plan proposed by Parks Victoria for Bogong High Plains Brumbies (BHP).

We are encouraging Parks Victoria to work as partners with relevant Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA) group members over a five-year period, on a broad ranging BHP research program to study the positive and negative impacts of BHP Brumbies. This research will also need to ensure all damage caused by deer, pigs, rabbits and humans etc. is not blamed on BHP's Wild Horses.

It is also vital to move beyond National Park studies that rely on one-off environmental snapshots to researching Brumby occupied ecological trends over at least a five-year period in order to determine if any of the damage claimed continues, changes, improves, deteriorates or remains stable, etc., over time.

The carrot we are offering Parks Victoria is that, as equal partners over the proposed 5-year review, both Parks

Victoria and the ABA would need to accept the results. There is a risk that our views may not be consistent with results, however, whatever the outcome we must be prepared to contribute to acceptable solutions.

The VBA has offered to manage the BHP Brumby population by fertility control which would address Parks Victoria's concern over ongoing trapping costs to maintain the BHP population.

En-route to Brumby Week in Central Australia I spent two days with Kym and Tania Schlink in Port Lincoln, SA. Kym, President of the Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society (CBBPS) took me on a tour of their Brumbies and promised to provide an update report for the next Brumby Bridges newsletter.

Brumby Week with Brian Hampson, Anna Uhrig and Chris Pollitt in central Australia was a fascinating experience, see more following President's Chat.

Our claims that moderate Wild Horses populations bring benefits to the areas where they live continue to be resisted by National Park staff.

However, the Context 2015 report to National Parks and Wild Life services (NPWS) importantly concluded that Wild Horses in Kosciuszko's National Park and the Victorian Alps are in fact a **Heritage Attribute to the region**.

Recognizing Alpine Wild Horses as a Heritage attribute is a significant step in the right direction for these Wild Horse populations, especially as both NPWS and Parks Victoria were directly involved in the Context 2015 review.

Jill Pickering

Brumby Week in Central Australia

I have just returned from “Brumby Week”, organised by Brian Hampson and Professor Chris Pollitt (Vet Science Queensland University) and an excellent team all focused on providing a fascinating range of activities to accompany the daily Brumby Gentling sessions put on by Brian Hampson and Anna Uhrig at Kings Creek Station.

www.brumbyweek.com

<https://www.facebook.com/BrumbyWeek/>

Kings Creek Station is next to Kings Canyon (Watarrka National Park). Lyn and Ian Conway came 40 years ago with nothing and now run a cattle, camels and a tourist oasis which includes meals, fuel, camping and canvas Safari Cabins <http://www.kingscreekstation.com.au>.

After a delicious but early (6.30am!!) Bushman’s Breakfast, we watched Brian and Anna rotate 3 Brumbies through their handling steps. From 10am to 4pm we headed off as a group for a range of day trips in the desert. Then more Desert Brumby handling sessions from 4.00 to 6pm when dinner was served. After dinner, were 3 hours of talks from Australian and international speakers and a preview of Chris Pollitt’s spectacular *Desert Brumby* film.

The Brumby Week team had spent the prior week trapping 100 Brumbies from which they selected three 2-4 years old colts. The three colts responded very differently to Brian

and Anna’s handling work which gave us an understanding of the need for varied approaches to training.

The handlers first moved the horses around the yard, using a stick and flappy cloth at the end, teaching the Brumby to respond to body and vocal commands and to ultimately face up and focus on the trainer.

Brian emphasised the need to repeat training steps on both sides of the Brumby, including frequently touching the Brumby on the opposite side from where the handler stands, so they do not get worried if they feel touch on the side where the handler is not standing.

It is important to gradually desensitize the horse using pressure and release. As the horse starts to accept actions such as jumping up and down (photo1), hat waving high and low (photo 2) and responds positively, it is rewarded by the trainer stepping back and reducing pressure (photo 3). When the horse does not respond positively, for example by turning away, pressure is again applied by moving the Brumby round the yard.

Plenty of safety procedures for the horses, handlers and audience were built into the days.



1



2



3

Ropes were used to apply pressure and to also safely desensitize and teach how to flex, lift feet, etc. (photos 4, 5, 6)



4



5



6

Ropes used as girth pressure (photo 7), flexing (photo 8) and blanket and saddle flapping (photo 9)



7



8



9

All this training went on with tourist helicopter flights several times daily and camels, other horses and one donkey visiting the round yard rails for a close-up and occasional “chat” (photos 9 & 15).



10



11



12

Brian and Anna removed the stirrups for initial saddling (photo 10), then introduced them later, flapping stirrups and leathers to desensitize to noises and touch (photo 10) associated with saddle and rider. Photo 12 shows yanking on the stirrups in preparation for a rider stepping up.



13



14



15

Adjusting the Brumby to having a rider in the stirrup and rising above him (photo 13) is gradually extended to fully sitting on the Brumby (photo 15), with all these actions being performed on both sides of the Brumby (photo 14).

Neither Anna nor Brian got to ride the Brumbies around the yard, but they impressed me by not taking short cuts and having a feel for when each training session has gone far enough. Brian repeated many times that it is important to set the Brumby up for success, not failure. Too much pressure and training session length can result in negative learning for the Brumby.

Day trips

There are very few watering holes for these Desert Brumbies and in drought times they go up to 4 days without drinking while searching for food. We spent over an hour in hides overlooking water-holes and saw three bands of around 8 Brumbies, including foals, arrive one after another to drink.

The natural environment that these Desert Brumbies have lived in for over 100 years varies greatly from season to season. After good rains, the green grass, shrubs and flowers return rapidly, but severe drought drastically cuts the feed. Around 75% of Desert Brumbies can die during harsh periods, but enough survive to spring back in the wetter periods.

Evening talks

Topics such as Wild Horse behaviour, population fluctuations in wet or dry seasons, ecology variations and plant growth in this region were presented in the evenings as were other topics including laminitis, the reintroduction of Prezwalski horses to the wild and my talk on ABA

lobbying and rehoming work and the current Parks Victoria Wild Horse review. Discussion also highlighted the need for long term research in identifying which Brumby densities most benefit their environment long term.

Chris Pollitt treated us to a premier of an amazing film he has produced with Brian Hampson titled "*The Desert Brumby II*". Filming the nearby Desert Brumbies, it included many breathtaking action shots and insights to mare and stallion behaviour.

Christine Breaden and Peter Abbott took us on a very well presented experience of indigenous foods, traditions, and storytelling at the Karrke information centre nearby.

David Berman, entertained everyone around the camp fire with bush poetry and songs as well as explaining the local native flora and fauna on several bush walks.

The round yard was surrounded by soft earth, but the team and on-lookers soon devised a sheet metal temporary path for me to travel on.



We ended the five days with a two hour workshop to form a basis for a "white paper Desert Brumby management"

draft, then later a Brumby trivia exercise requiring us to make a Brumby replica that could stand upright using five sate sticks and one foot of sticky tape in 7 minutes in 4 teams. My most unusual Desert Brumby replica....

All in all, a very rewarding 5 days and well worth attending



in spite of the distances to travel to the red centre.

*Jill Pickering
Australian Brumby
Alliance*

Member News

Australian Brumby Horse Register (ABHR)

ABHR congratulates the winners of the 2016-17 Showcase Brumby of the year!

Showcase Brumby of the year is.....



**NSW
TONELLE STORM
(Samantha Chapman)**



**WA
MT WELD ONYX ALLURE
(Selena Cardilini)**



**VICTORIA
GUY FAWKES DASHKA
Tanya Perry**

Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society



ABA President Jill Pickering (front centre) visited the Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society on her trip to Central Australia.

Hunter Valley Brumby Association (HVBA)

The HVBA has spent the past several months focusing on pasture improvement. Kath attended a free workshop by our local Norco store which set plans in place. Our soils were tested (a must before anything else can be attempted) and a yearly plan was developed by agronomists.

We started off with just rye grass as we were not sure just how successful it would be. After many years of our soils being compacted and our paddocks being depleted, no one expected our paddocks to come back as quickly as they have - but this also included 22 truck loads of turkey manure which meant for a very smelly few weeks around here!

It has taken a lot of hard work and money, but our paddocks are looking beautiful and our Brumbies health has improved as well as our feed bill dropping from an average of \$1500 per month, to less than \$100!

As we have learnt, animal health starts at the soil level. If the soils are lacking, then so will the pasture and in turn the manure produced by the horses will not be putting the nutrients back in to the soil - it is all about getting the cycle correct.

We are looking forward to sowing our spring pastures that will give us lots of grass throughout the seasons for many years to come!

Bottom Paddock

Middle Paddock

Top Paddock

BEFORE



AFTER



Save the Brumbies (STB)

We've had a very dry, cold winter at both Sanctuaries and the hay account has broken the budget. Grazed well down now and we hope for good spring rain, so far, that's not promising. All except three of our available horses have now been adopted which has eased the pressure on the paddocks a little. Extensive repairs to the residence at NEBS has been an expensive outlay but much needed. Our new manager, Leonie is just great with the horses, calm and takes her time with them, excellent results so far.

We have been busy with our annual visits from TAFE students, three groups this year and this is all part of our education program regarding not only the horses but also the environment.



STB Pumpkin had first dibs at the birthday cake

The horses all had a great birthday to celebrate August 1st, and many supporters came and enjoyed the day. The horses tucked into their huge birthday cake and we had to restrict the treats otherwise colic would have eventuated. The horses have all wintered well both at

NEBS and Bellingen, also the many rugs so far have survived.

We will take more horses in but not until we have good regrowth in the paddocks, probably around December.

Our next Open Day and Christmas social is scheduled for Sunday December 10th at NEBS. All warmly welcome.

Note: our bank has changed its BSB number

which has caused us much inconvenience. For the record, old number was 704328, new number is: 533-000. Our website also has details.

Over and out.

Jan for Save the Brumbies Inc.



STB Juliet will NOT go up that race, even though she can plainly see the open gate at the end and a heap of hay, do other frustrated horse people have days like this?

Victorian Brumby Association (VBA)

Winter is our busiest time of the year, as the National Parks services we work with conduct all of their trapping in a quite concentrated season. This year has been no different, with National Parks and Wildlife Service trapping extensively in Kosciuszko through July and August. We were also contacted by the State Forestry Corporation, regarding taking some of the Brumbies trapped and removed from Bago State Forest, which we were happy to help with.

We initially took in 15 Bago Brumbies, with 5 of those expected to be in foal. The Bago Brumbies are really lovely types and it has been heartwarming to have so many conversations with locals to the Bago region who have been photographing and enjoying these Brumbies in their State Forest home for many years.

Our plans were to take in 28 Brumbies (three in foal) from the Kosciuszko National Park program, which we did and then advised NPWS that we were full.



However, only a week later, even though there were rehammers waiting to receive

Brumbies, 9 Kosciuszko Brumbies appeared at a local saleyards. Although they were advertised as 'unhandled Pony x, in foal to Clydie x', we were confident of their origin.

We got in touch with photographers to see if it was possible to find out when they had been taken out of the National Park and were sent photos of this group, only two weeks earlier, in the Park! This indicated that NPWS had sent



these Brumbies directly to the sales, which is just unacceptable.

We were delighted to work with Photographer Michelle Brown as well as another Brumby Rescuer, Lyn from Hoofs 2010, to raise funds and make it possible for these Brumbies to come to our sanctuary. That brings us to a total of 37 Kosi Brumbies, 11 of whom are believed to be in foal!

The newest arrivals arrived exhausted, stressed and very flat, but have bounced back well out in the grassy paddocks. By comparison to the Brumbies we picked up direct who undertake one



truck trip to us, these Brumbies, 8 of whom were heavily pregnant, had endured a minimum of 6 truck trips and had found themselves standing in a knackery yard whilst we negotiated their purchase. This should NEVER have happened and we are working with NPWS to ensure it doesn't again.

We have had two gorgeous foals born so far from our new arrivals, both of whom are healthy and happy and a joy to watch!



Currently, we are preparing for a marathon few weeks of gelding surgeries as our 14 stallions and 12 colts all get gelded – it will be a busy time, but it is super important to get done as soon as possible to avoid issues through Spring and help the boys settle in to domestic life. Many of the older stallions are destined for the Australian Brumby Challenge 2018 – they are a stunning bunch and just so calm.

The Draft Plans of management for Kosciuszko and Alpine National Parks are yet to make an appearance. We have been waiting for the Alpine one since November 2013 and the delay surpassed ridiculous some time ago. In the meantime, with no plan, the old method of Brumby running continues unchecked and with very little effect on the population figures at all.

In only two weeks, we will have our Wild Brumby Gentling clinic, which is a great way to help us find new Brumby homes at the same time as educating the public about how our Brumbies operate and why we train them the way we do. It is always a joy to spend the five days with people who are keen to learn and build their relationships.

Hoof Prints..... Other items of note

The Ngarigo, Djiringanj and the Brumby

By [David Dixon](#)

An interesting story about Indigenous Australians and their links with the Snowy Brumbies was posted on the ABC Open website. It reveals the importance of brumbies to the Ngarigo and Djiringanj people and how they captured, trained and sold them on, sometimes as remounts abroad. This was all part of agricultural enterprise on the Blackfellows Lake Reserve. Below is an abridged version of the full story which can be viewed on <https://open.abc.net.au/explore/211497>

Our old people were animal lovers. They would have had great respect for these powerful horse spirits. Our people have always been accepting of visitors to our lands and quite capable of adapting to change so that our visitors can also belong, and have their place. Learning their ways and gaining true understanding. A caring and sharing culture. The ultimate communicators.

The connection between my family and the Brumby isn't that well known.

My great, great grandfather Jack Hoskins (born 1853, died 1900 in Bega, NSW), and great grand uncles via my Mundy family ancestry, were stockmen who drove brumbies from the Australian Alps down to Tathra to be transported upon steamer ships bound for Sydney, departing from [Tathra wharf](#).



This is a local story told to me by my mother Margaret Rose Dixon, nee Mundy/ Hoskins.

Blackfellows Lake is where one of the first Aboriginal reserves in NSW was established.

This Aboriginal reserve was established in the 1880s, nearly twenty years prior to Australian federation in 1901.

The Hoskins and Mundy family lived at this reserve.

The Mundy side of my ancestry also lived at Delegate Aboriginal reserve (gazetted 1892 - 1957) on the Monaro, and at Wollondibby within the Kosciuszko National Park. The Mundy's are Ngarigo people. Living at Wollondibby

close to the Alps would have been central to capturing the Brumby from the wild before the long and arduous journey driving the horses to the coast.

The Aboriginal reserve at Blackfellows Lake is where the brumbies were rested and tamed. [They were then taken to the old steamers at Tathra wharf](#). Agricultural works, for their own food and produce for external markets, was also carried out on the reserve. Our family also had interests in the fishing industry within the Bega River, and off the coast of Tathra. This was my family living between two cultures...adapting...surviving, trying to provide for kin via shared contribution.

This was a Ngarigo and Djiringanj venture that promoted, and enacted, self-determination. Answers to why this reserve was closed can probably be found within the same undermining tactics used at [Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve](#) in Victoria (1863-1924). The Blackfellows Lake area is prime real estate today within the Bega Valley Shire. It's sad to think that our family had access to land and agency within "settler" society back then at Blackfellows Lake, but fast forward a couple of generations and our people are

found [struggling to survive alongside Bega's waste facility](#) as "fringe dwellers".

First Nations people have a long history as contributors to the building of the Australian nation. Locally, our people have contributed to the livestock, fishing, agricultural, dairy and timber industries, and played a significant role in helping to build our community to what it is today... economically, socially, intellectually, culturally and spiritually.

However this important history remains unacknowledged at a local community level due to indifference and ignorance. Only for our Elders retaining, and sharing knowledge of our history, valuable insights into our past would have been forgotten, or lost forever.

Our family story about our interwoven history with the brumbies, as told by our Elders, is one that reminds us that reconnecting with our past can be a powerful connector to conversation, ideas and possibilities that can unify rather than divide. Which is, within itself, a giant leap toward justice and healing for everyone.

The Editor's Tail

2017 International Compassionate Conservation Conference

November 20-24, 2017 Blue Mountains, NSW

ABA President Jill Pickering and myself will be attending the 3rd International Compassionate Conservation Conference in November this year. As presented on their website:

Compassionate Conservation presents a morally grounded approach to resolving issues of land sharing by utilising the universal ethic of compassion to alleviate or prevent suffering in humans and other animals.

Compassionate Conservation is concerned with the protection and well-being of individual wild animals, reshaping the framework of traditional conservation

biology that has its roots in species, populations, and ecosystems.

Rather than being regarded as objects or metrics to be traded off for the good of populations, species, or biodiversity, Compassionate Conservation requires that society must protect animals as individuals.

Great progress has been made in developing the discipline of [Compassionate Conservation](#) in the seven years since the first Symposium was organised by the Born Free Foundation and the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at the University of Oxford in 2010, and the 2nd International

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

Conference at the University of British Columbia in 2015.

The 3rd International Compassionate Conservation Conference provides an opportunity to hear progress from experts from around the world and take part in setting the agenda for compassionate conservation into the future.

The theme of the conference is [Expanding Conservation Horizons](#) and the event will feature a mix of symposia, workshops, and field trips, and provides a unique opportunity to meet and collaborate with experts in science, law, ethics and environmental humanities.

Hosted by the [Centre for Compassionate Conservation](#) at the [University of Technology Sydney](#) and supported by the [Born Free Foundation](#), [Alley Cat Allies](#), and [Voiceless](#), the conference will be held in the spectacular Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area west of Sydney, home to an array of unique flora and fauna.

So dear readers –

*Watch This Space in the next issue of
Brumby Bridges to find out what we learned!*

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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