



Brumby Bridges

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Vale

Clive Edwards

Snowy Mountains Bush Users Group

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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 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 was saddened to hear of Clive Edwards death a week or so after I visited Clive and Margaret Edwards in their Gold Coast apartment. I attended Clive's funeral, to represent both the Australian Brumby Alliance and all the Brumbies of Kosciuszko National Park in recognition of Clive's pioneering efforts during his time as President of the Snowy Mountain Bush Users Group.

Several Australian Brumby member groups attended the [3rd International Compassionate Conservation Conference](#) in Leura, just west of Sydney for 5 days. You can read more about the conference elsewhere in this edition of *Brumby Bridges* (p. 3,9,10,11). I was particularly interested to hear that the information we have been promoting on the value of extinct megafauna that died out across the globe around the time humans entered the scene is being better recognised in many countries, including Australia.

Colleen O'Brien (Victorian Brumby Association) arranged for Kimberly Frank and Kayla Grams from the Science and Conservation Center in Billings, Montana, to run some education session on the fertility control vaccine PZP (Porcine Zona Pellucida Vaccine) during the week immediately after the International Compassionate Conservation Seminar. Kim also presented a talk on fertility control and management of Mustangs at the Conference.

One PZP education session was held in Tumut with National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) staff, which is encouraging as we have been advocating for fertility control to be included as one of many tools for managing Wild Horse populations in NSW.

Another PZP day seminar was held at a separate venue in Tumut for both scientists and local Brumby

lobby/community groups. For me, it was most interesting to hear Kimberley and Kayla explain how PZP works, and the standardised system to identify each mare to be darted. Kimberly and Kayla also showed photos and video of Kayla darting their Mustangs.

I also dropped in to visit Kath Massey (Hunter Valley Brumby Association) to be shown around their very impressive upgraded facilities. There is a strong emphasis on catering for volunteer needs and safety in handling their Brumbies during the initial gentling phase.

We continue to lobby for both NSW and Victorian Brumby populations, however the Victorian scene is the most active for now. Any minute now we expect the Parks Victoria Wild Horse Management Draft Plan to be released, most likely over the Christmas and holiday season which is poor timing for public feedback as most respondents will be gearing up for Christmas and then school holidays.

On the topic of Christmas and holidays, I wish you all a



happy and safe Christmas, New Year and festive season. Enjoy the holiday break and return refreshed for 2018. I have a feeling that next year will be an important and active year for Wild Horse lobbying, especially in NSW and Victoria.

Jill Pickering

Vale Clive Edwards

On 9 November 2017, at the age of 75, Clive Edwards passed away after a long struggle with Leukemia. Clive was a past President of the Snowy Mountains Bush Users Group and a staunch advocate for the Kosi Brumbies. From 2009 and 2015 he was also the SMBUG representative to the ABA.



After Clive stepped down as SMBUG president, Jill Pickering presented Clive with a trophy to thank him for his:

long sustained and outstanding work to protect, and fight for heritage recognition of, Kosciuszko Brumby Wild Horses.

You can read more about Clive and ABA's trophy presentation in the [March 2016 edition of Brumby Bridges](#)

Third International Compassionate Conservation Conference

<https://www.ccsydney2017.com/>

Jill Pickering (ABA President), Sandy Radke (ABA Webmaster and Newsletter Editor), Collen O'Brien (VBA) and Kath Massey (HVBA) attended the 3rd International Compassionate Conservation Conference held in Leura, NSW from November 20-24.

Speakers from the UK, Germany, Israel, Sri Lanka, Nepal, USA, South Africa, Argentina, Canada, USA, NZ, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Australia presented information on novel ecosystems, wild animal welfare, predator friendly ranching, compassionate law and policy, ethics and land sharing and coexistence.

We learned much from the talks and workshops and made new contacts who share our views on humane conservation.

It is impossible to cover everything in this issue of Brumby Bridges but following are some highlights that have significant bearing on humane management of wild horses in Australia.

Novel Ecosystems

It was refreshing to hear others say that, while humans must minimize their overwhelming impacts on the earth, extinctions are part of evolution and "invasive/alien" species are part of the environment and lead to new and vibrant ecosystems.

“The categorically irrational ‘invasive alien species’ inspires fear and loathing, and impetus to punish unwitting organisms for being what they are, where they are. Barring a reprieve for displaying some economic or aesthetic value, surviving (and worse yet thriving) after human transportation, and especially beyond human control has become a capital crime against nature.” Mat Chew, Arizona State University

Matt Chew from the School of Life Sciences Arizona State University set the tone with his keynote talk *“Alien Invasive Species: Three Wrongs Don’t Make a Right”*. He made the point that there is little evidence that invasive species are the cause of extinctions and that many threatened species may have started declining prior to the arrival of invasive species. Successful invasive species, he said, are the pioneers where indigenous species are just not coping.

“Of 91 vertebrate species that immigrated to Australia, 32% are threatened, decreasing or extinct in their native ranges. These represent a significant proportion of the total population of several species, including wild dromedary camels now found only in the deserts of Australia.”

Arian Wallach, Centre for Compassionate Conservation, UTS

Arian Wallach from the Centre for Compassionate Conservation, University of Technology Sydney spoke of the Conservation of Australia’s Migrant Vertebrate Species. She points out that conservation in Australia is based on the paradigms of Invasion Biology, failing to recognize that many species that are threatened in their native ranges have found refuge in Australia and can be

thought of as refugees rather than invasives.

Eric Lundren (Centre for Compassionate Conservation, UTS) gave a wonderful presentation on Megafauna in the Anthropocene, focusing on introduced wild donkeys in the Sonoran Desert whose pre-domestic ancestors are critically endangered. These donkeys dig wells to access groundwater and in doing so substantially increase water availability for other species. A paper by Erik, including a

link to a video of the donkey’s digging their “ass holes” was posted on the ABA Website :

<http://australianbrumbyalliance.org.au/invasive-hippos-camels-and-elephants-offer-a-glimmer-of-hope-for-earths-megafauna/>

Or you can go directly to The Conversation:

<https://theconversation.com/from-feral-camels-to-cocaine-hippos-large-animals-are-rewilding-the-world-83301>

Predator Friendly Farming

Be it native or non-native, be it a wolf, fox, dingo or leopard, many of the top predators of the world have been the target of lethal culling during the Anthropocene (age dominated by humans). Competition with agricultural and other human activities has been the driver of this and yet despite repeated attempts to eliminate predators using bullets or poison this approach has been both a failure and a tragedy.

Top predators are a necessary part of ecosystems, helping to keep a balance down the food chain so that all species can compete and survive. More and more the evidence is becoming clear that killing the predators is not only inhumane it is destructive to the environment.

Unlike elsewhere in the world, Australia has been slow to recognize the importance of keeping predators. At the conference, there were many overseas people who were shocked to hear that we use 1080 bait to kill dingos; in the US, Israel and Europe poisoning wildlife is not sanctioned or legal.

Instead agricultural methods are being changed to use other techniques that repel predators and protect stock in

difference to lethal culling. This and the re-introduction of wolves in many areas has led to healthier ecosystems.

what neuroscience can tell us about compassion (see [page 10](#)).

Animal Welfare

Compassionate Conservation is the melding of conservation and animal welfare practices so it is no surprise that this topic was an important theme. Animal welfare was discussed from two main points of view: The Science of Animal Welfare and Integrating Animals Welfare into Conservation Science.

The first session shed light on various methods used to assess animal welfare, particularly in the wild. Of specific reference to horses,

Andrea Harvey from the Centre for Compassionate Conservation, UTS, presented a talk on the **Development of Methods of Assessing Welfare in Wild Horses**.

Andrea’s method was based on the ‘Five Domains’ model (Mellow & Beausoleil 2015) which uses 4 physical domains of nutrition, environmental conditions, health and behaviour and their relation to a fifth domain of mental health. Using a range of non-invasive assessments (observations, fecal samples, cameras, historical data, etc.), Andrea studied a population of wild horses, and in particular a mature non-lactating mare over 17 months to test and refine her methods.

The session on integrating animal welfare into conservation was both encouraging and confronting, covering kangaroos, elephants, pigs and pig dogs, trans-species learning and emotional behaviour of animals, and

Kim Frank, Director of the [Science and Conservation Center](#) in Billings, Montana spoke on the history of Mustang management in the United States and the recent push by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to slaughter and euthanise excess wild horses. The *Science and Conservation Center* is dedicated to using fertility control

as an alternative to lethal methods. The Center developed and produces PZP, providing it to users around the world from Zoos to Wildlife control programs. Kim spoke of the various NGO/Government partnership programs that currently manage wild horse herds in the USA and Canada.

“Whenever there is an anthropogenic impact on wild animals there is scope for impacts on animal welfare. It is important to understand these impacts in order to attempt avoidance or mitigation.”

- Sandra Baker, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford

Here in Australia, the ABA, VBA and STB are lobbying to get government authorities to implement at least trial fertility programs. In addition to attending the Compassionate Conservation Conference, Colleen O’Brien (VBA) arranged for Kim Frank and Kayla Grams to visit areas of Kosciuszko National Park, present talks to NSWNPWS using video and photos to explain how to use PZP in the field.

I hope this very brief synopsis of the conference provides a little insight into the emerging field of Compassionate Conservation.

- Sandy Radke, editor Brumby Bridges

Member News

Hunter Valley Brumby Association (HVBA)

Kath Massey of the Hunter Valley Brumby Association



attended the 3rd International Compassionate Conservation Conference in November.

Following the Conference, Sandy

Radke dropped in on the HBVA Sanctuary. HBVA has invested in some much-needed infrastructure such as a



storage shed, office and communal volunteer space as well as upgrading the yards and paddocks. In addition to taking

Kosi Brumbies, HBVA now has a few Oxley horses and is now raising Charlie, a young foal found on the Military Base nearby.

Kiama Heritage Horses



Winter Wonderland Photography Trip

When my friend asked if I'd like to go on a *Kiama Heritage Horses* photography trip in June, I hesitated. The idea of wandering around Army Defence land in Waiouru, taking photos of horses while my fingers slowly fused onto my camera, really didn't appeal. But it soon dawned on me that it would be an amazing opportunity to see the horses in their natural habitat, and to photograph some stunning Central Plateau scenery. I also concluded that if I had appropriate clothing, the cold would not be a problem. Done.

On day one, we hopped on our bus and drove to River Valley Adventure Lodge near Taihape to listen to Tommy Waara, one of New Zealand's top horse trainers, talk about the Kaimanawa horses, the mustering, and the training.

We sat by the banks of the Rangitike River as we listened to Tommy and watched him take one of the horses through its paces. It was clear that Tommy is passionate about the horses, and has a special bond with them. His calm and gentle manner was reflected in the behaviour of the horses.



We were then given one of the nicest cups of tea I have ever had. Tommy's billy tea was brewed at the edge of the river,

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over an open fire fueled by Manuka wood, and then served with delicious scones, jam and cream.

Later, we had lunch at the Lodge, and headed back to our accommodation in Ohakune to relax, and prepare for an early start the next morning.



We were told it was -4 degrees as we boarded the bus. It didn't feel that cold, but four layers of clothing might have had something to do with it!

Once at the Waiouru Military Camp, our bus was escorted by Army personnel along well used gravel roads in search of some of the estimated 400 Kaimanawa horses currently living there. We stopped to watch the sun as it rose, casting a delicate pink blanket across Mt Ruapehu.

Then we were back on the bus, stopping occasionally to admire the views, or when small bands of horses were spotted. Initially they were in the distance, but in time we



came across some that were closer to the road. Each time we would quietly step down from the bus and set up our tripods and

cameras, in the hope of capturing some great images.

For me, the highlight of the day occurred when we rounded a corner to find a band of eight horses quietly standing at the side of the road. We stopped about three car lengths away from them, and got off the bus. The horses lifted their heads and looked at us. I expected them to feel uneasy about the intrusion. But instead, they walked out onto the road towards the line of photographers, then stopped to look more intently. It was a hugely moving experience to come face to face with such gentle yet wild animals, seemingly happy to stand there, quietly observing us with possibly the same degree of fascination and



curiosity that we felt. After a couple of minutes, they slowly continued across the road and onto the grass where they paused for a moment to look back, then silently walked on.

The experience moved me beyond words, and was one that I will never forget. I feel very privileged to have been able to see the stunning Kaimanawa horses in their natural habitat.

My thanks to Kimber, Mary-Anne, Elder and Allan from *Kaimanawa Heritage Horses* for being such wonderful hosts, and making this amazing experience possible. Would I do it again? Wild horses couldn't keep me away!

Sara Spurr

Save the Brumbies (STB)

Spring rain was very welcome and brought relief from our overstretched bank account. It was the worst drought we have ever experienced.

Many horses were being fed mixed feeds daily, particularly the mares still with foals at foot. Hay was difficult to source; quality was poor and it was very expensive. However, we survived and the horses are now sleek and round with their new summer coats. The next item on the agenda is another large water tank; even the underground springs and creeks at NEBS were dry this winter resulting in us having to purchase water every few weeks.

All our available horses have now been adopted into approved homes and with a good summer season we hope to take in more horses in 2018 for rehoming.

Our fertility control trial is now complete and the results will be published in 2018. NPWS have expressed interest but it will depend on available funding from Government to commence a trial in possibly Guy Fawkes N.P.

Necessary repairs to the NEBS residence are now complete and the Sanctuary is looking good for our Open Day and Christmas social on Sunday 10th December. All are warmly welcome to attend, contact us for further details, direction map, catering purposes etc.

www.savethebrumbies.org ph: 02 6652224



For updates and available horses in 2018 refer to our website.

We work hard with our horses, all receive the attention and care they need before being offered for Adoption.

Jan for Save the Brumbies Inc.



STB Lulabelle on arrival from Guy Fawkes.



STB Lulabelle after a year in care now living with her new family.

Victorian Brumby Association (VBA)

VBA have been busy lobbying for fertility control as an alternative to a lethal cull of the Bogong High Plains Brumbies. See [President's Chat](#) and [Third International](#)

[Compassionate Conservation Conference](#) for more info on their activities.

Hoof Prints..... Other items of note

What is Compassionate Conservation?

Compassionate conservation is a multi-disciplinary approach that brings the practices and sciences of animal welfare and conservation biology closer together. It considers animals as individuals, not merely as objects or metrics to be traded off for the good of populations, species or biodiversity.

With a guiding principle of 'first do no harm', compassionate conservation also:

- Recognises that wild animals, whether free-ranging or in captivity, may be affected by the intentional or unintentional actions of humans as well as the natural processes within ecosystems and the wider environment;
- Is concerned that many human activities, including those undertaken for a conservation purpose, may directly or indirectly cause harm to individual wild animals, populations, species, or ecosystems;
- Recognises that both conservation and wild animal welfare should implicitly respect the

inherent value of wild animals and the natural world, and that both disciplines should try to mitigate harms caused by humans to other species;

- Believes that all harms to wild animals should be minimised wherever and to the extent possible, regardless of the human intention and purpose behind them;
- Proposes that the principles and actions that underpin Compassionate Conservation, by combining

consideration of animal welfare and conservation, will lead to a reduction in harm and in the suffering of individual wild animals, and will improve conservation outcomes.

Try Googling Compassionate Conservation or look at the following links for more information:

<https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/centre-compassionate-conservation>

<http://compassionateconservation.net/>

- Sandy Radke

Compassion Training – and protection from burn out

In her fascinating talk on *What Neuroscience tells us about Compassion for Conservation?* Dr Mariagrazia Bellio from Charles Sturt University presented a neurological view of what happens in the brain when we experience empathy and compassion.

Empathy is the ability to identify yourself with the feelings, thoughts or motivations of others. During empathy for suffering, some of the areas of the brain that become activated are also involved in experience of physical pain. This empathic feeling can lead to burn out, a common problem for people working in human or other animal welfare work.

However, if compassion is expressed, as opposed to empathy, a different part of the brain associated with the release of Dopamine and Oxitocyn (maternal love) is activated.

So, empathic suffering is a real experience of suffering while compassion is concern/feeling for others that

generates a reward of good feeling – this leads to action/motivation to stop the suffering.

Compassion training is a real science and one of the most prestigious places for Compassion study is Stanford University's [Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education](#). There are also many resources on the web that provide more information on Compassion Training.

Compassionate Conservation is not only about cute, charismatic animals. Snakes, insects and other less cuddly creatures are also sentient and deserve compassion. Compassion Training is often a step wise approach, first to someone you love, then a stranger, then an enemy.

A Buddhist monk once told Dr Bellio:

I engage my mind in Compassion, I am concerned for their suffering and want to stop it, I have been trained to engage in a feeling of love and a sense of caring for them. You do not want to stop, it is addictive.

- Sandy Radke

The Editor's Tail

2017 International Compassionate Conservation Conference

November 20-24, 2017 Blue Mountains, NSW

Why is the ABA so taken with the notion of Compassionate Conservation? It is not a field specific to wild horses but much of the underlying philosophy and research fits so well with what ABA has been saying about Australian Brumbies. Believed by some to be invasive aliens that are destroying habitat, within the realm of Compassionate

Conservation Brumbies have a place in the ecosystems they inhabit. They are part of the ever-evolving novel ecosystems on the planet. They, and other large herbivores such as donkeys and camels are now examples of wild populations where elsewhere in the world they

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rare or non-existent. Rather than decreasing biodiversity they are increasing it.

Of utmost importance is the incorporation of animal welfare into conservation practices and the principle of “do not harm”. Compassionate conservation recognizes the intrinsic value of individuals as sentient beings that are part of the environment.

It is early days for Compassionate Conservation. More traditional practices will continue for some time and it will not be easy to convince governments to change their stance. But this conference, and the people we met there bring welcome hope, not just to Australia’s Brumbies but to the world.



Happy Holidays!

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