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ABN : 90784718191

The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio,  
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change  
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne, Vic 3002

18-Aug-2017

**[See second page for ABA Att.2 Bogong High Plains ABA/VBA and Parks Victoria 5 year research package - Discussion starter](#)**

Dear Minister D'Ambrosio, **Re: Parks Victoria 2017 Wild Horse management plan review**

Thank you for meeting with the Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA), along with the Victorian Brumby Association (VBA) and Parks Victoria (PV) on Wednesday to discuss why and how a small population of Bogong High Plains (BHP) Wild Horse could be retained on BHP as living heritage. Your patience and focus on the complex issues raised was very much appreciated.

There was in-sufficient time to request that the Bogong High Plains Wild Horse management plan be handled under a separate management plan, such as has been agreed to for the Barmah Wild Horse management plan. It is the ABA and VBA's firm opinion that BHP's cultural history, Brumby origins and population level and their environment are sufficiently distinct to warrant such a specific focus.

For example, Parks Victoria would approach managing a small distinct population very differently to managing the main Victorian Alpine region. Parks Victoria also separate their management units with BHP decisions based in Wangaratta and the main Alpine area managed from their Omeo unit.

Reviewing the BHP Wild Horse population and their environment as a separate section to the overall PV management plan would also help to focus on a BHP 5 year BHP specific research (*see att-1*).

Dr. Mark Norman agreed the research paper "Feral Horse mob north of Rocky Valley dam: Z.W. May 2017" lacked the scientific rigor required to enable an informed decision on BHP. We also agreed the ABA's information was in-sufficient and supported the view that the Z.W. May 2017 draft provides a starting point to develop agreed scientific protocols able to yield robust results.

Involving the ABA/VBA in 5 years of robust research will gain commitment to results on whether a small BHP Brumby population can be retained, without compromising BHP's unique biodiversity. To eradicate Heritage BHP Brumbies that represent irreplaceable, living cultural history (Context 2015 & Burra Charter) for future generations to experience, without due diligence, would be in-defensible.

If the decision is to retain a BHP population, we can then identify the most appropriate way to retain the population recommended by the 5 year research period. We look forward to your response to the enervative Australian conflict resolution process described above at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

*Jill Pickering*, Australian Brumby Alliance

Cc. Dr. Mark Norman, Dionne Eagleson and Colleen O'Brien

Att. 'Context 2015 Heritage review', 'Burra Charter' and '5yr research starter ideas'.

## Attachment 2

### Bogong High Plains ABA/VBA and Parks Victoria 5 year research package *Discussion starter*

The purpose of this 'discussion starter' for a Bogong High Plains (BHP) five year comprehensive, research program is to suggest *examples* of how a 5 year research package *could* look from our perspective, and a less nebulous concept for Parks Victoria to consider, per suggestions below..

#### **The studies would need to include, but not be limited to;**

- BHP wild horse movements, social interaction etc. and
- Brumby interaction with their BHP environment (Impacts - positive or negative),
- Map and monitor BHP flora and fauna bio-diversity, i.e. lowering, static, increasing.

#### **2018 suggestions to include, but not be limited to;**

- Develop BHP 5 year research package 'terms of Reference'
- Map BHP individual horses and their mob structures, location, movements etc.
- Assess the BHP area to be studied and provide a detail current environment status that is robust enough to then compare any status changes annually. For example impacts may come and go if the environment is not under pressure from high density horse numbers.

#### **2019 suggestions to include, but not be limited to;**

- Continue on study package schedule on BHP Brumbies and Environment
- Monitor population and if growing too fast, control numbers by trapping or Fertility Control.
- If Fertility control is agreed to, it should commence before foaling season in 2019. (If started after foaling, mares will already be pregnant and a Fertility control year wasted.
- PZP Modelling\* must be done early 2019, if approved by Parks Victoria

#### **2020 suggestions to include, but not be limited to;**

- Continue on study package schedule on BHP Brumbies and Environment
- Fertility control effects will be evident during the 2020 foaling season.
- Maintain detailed charting on which mares are darted each year.

#### **2021 suggestions to include, but not be limited to;**

- Continue on study package schedule on BHP Brumbies and Environment
- Continue fertility control application per PZP model and update monitor chart

#### **2022 suggestions to include, but not be limited to;**

- Finalise the 5 year research program results on BHP Brumbies and Environment studies
- Decide how or if a small population of Heritage Wild Horses can be retained on BHP, and
- If retained, what number/density does the 5 year research indicate is suitable, that
- Ensures a population density below which undesirable effects are acceptable.

#### **\* Fertility Control modelling strategies, such as, but not limited to;**

- Chart the percentage of mares to be darted, and each individual to be darted,
- Always leave a percentage of Mares able to produce foals in each mob,
- Use short term PZP treatments (i.e. 2-4 years) so they return to foaling post treatment
- Rotate the mares darted to maximise the gene pool.
- Do not dart stallions as it will not reduce the foaling rate, and risks lower gene pool quality if dominant stallions are targeted, i.e. those able to fight for and retain a mob of mares.

Jill Pickering, ABA – Ideas for further discussion