



FEDERAL COURT GIVES GO AHEAD FOR VICTORIA'S ALPINE BRUMBIES TO BE ANNIHILATED
Friday 8th May 2020

Timeline:

1. 01 June 2018: Parks Victoria released its "Alpine National Park - Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan 2018-2021", a plan that called for the eradication of all historic Brumby populations in the Bogong High Plains and proposed to remove significant numbers from Victoria's Eastern Alps where they have lived peacefully for 150 years or more (It must be noted that the ABA is not opposed to sustainable management of the Brumbies, but the ABA is opposed to Victoria's Brumby populations being exterminated as is Parks Victoria's clear intention).
2. In December 2018 the ABA initiated Federal Court proceedings against Parks Victoria, on the basis that the Brumby populations are an important part of Victoria's cultural heritage, and the contention that Parks Victoria would be breaching the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act by destroying those historical populations, unless they first seek approval from the Federal Minister for Environment [the Honourable Sussan Ley].
3. In July 2019 the case was heard before the Federal Court over 5 days, 15-19 July. During the proceedings, the expert witnesses exposed many flaws in the scientific report that had formed the basis for Park Victoria's plan to eradicate all Brumbies in the Bogong High Plains.
4. 8 May 2020 – after nearly a year of deliberation, His Honour Justice O'Bryan has released judgement with the Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA) losing its attempt to save Victoria's Alpine Brumbies in a landmark case against Parks Victoria.

Later on Judgement day 8-May-20 Parks Victoria announced it will start "ground shooting" Brumbies in (which Parks Victoria acknowledges is unpopular in the community, and that its current plan of management expressly promises will not occur.

The ABA contends that Parks Victoria's intended eradication of Victoria's Brumby populations, which have lived in the same areas for 150 years, is based on flawed science, for example; during the proceedings, the expert witnesses exposed many flaws in the scientific report that had formed the basis for Park Victoria's plan to eradicate all Brumbies in the Bogong High Plains, neither factor in the 300 or more deer for every Brumby in the Alpine National Park, and little to no effort was made by Parks Victoria to distinguish between the impact of deer, and the impact of Brumbies.

Background

At all times, Parks Victoria could have entirely avoided the need for those court proceedings, if Parks Victoria had simply agreed to request permission from the Federal Minister for the Environment before eradicating Victoria's long established Brumby populations in Victoria's Alpine National Park. Instead, Parks Victoria preferred to spend nearly two years tied up in litigation in the Federal Court.

Sadly today, entrenched views, flawed studies and misconceptions have determined the Brumbies' fate. We will continue the fight to shed light on emerging knowledge that documents how sustainable Brumby populations exist, interact and contribute to the environment *and* our cultural heritage, as they have for over 150 years

Ultimately, the slaughter of Australian wild horses without a comprehensive, unbiased knowledge of what is happening in the ecological habitat is a waste of taxpayers' money, will do nothing for the environment and will destroy an important part of our cultural heritage.

Victorian Alpine Brumbies

Brumbies have been an important part of the cultural history of the Bogong High Plains and Eastern Victorian Alps for over 150 years. The current population is only about 100 horses in the Bogong High Plains and approximately 5,000 during the 2019 population count, minus severe losses during the recent fire in the Eastern Victorian Alps, meaning it is vital a new count is conducted across the east VicAlps before extreme measures are taken by Parks Victoria.



PLATE XXIII - Horses Destined for India Pictured in Sale yards at Myrtleford 1890'S (SLV). Source: Peter Cabena's MA. Thesis, Grazing the High Country: an historical and political geography of high country grazing in Victoria, 1835 to 1935: sourced from the High Country Heritage Hub

Jill Pickering, Australian Brumby Alliance