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## **Australian Brumby Alliance Media Release 26-January 2021**

**Don't scapegoat Brumbies when Humans primarily impact the Alpine ecology**

The Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA) agrees with Clive Hamilton's opening words<sup>1</sup> in the Canberra Times highlighting human and climate damage across our land and that if Zoos save the corroboree frog, broad tooth rat, stocky galaxias, alpine skink etc. for re-wilding; they still face a "frog-killing fungus of mysterious origins as one threat" and "climate change heating up its sub-alpine habitat".

Our native species survived alongside wild horse populations for 200 years. But now Brumbies are touted as a key threat. Any wild horse impacts pale into insignificance compared to altered water regulation from Snowy 1.0 and now Snowy 2.0 which Dr Lintermans<sup>2</sup> says "wilfully ignores the destructive impacts on two threatened fish species, the Stocky Galaxias and Macquarie Perch".

The 2020 count shows wild horse numbers have dropped 25% in 1 year, along with many other native species casualties. Now is the time to increase fuel reduction burns to keep fuel levels low.

Environmentalists already lament that Brumbies lower grass species richness (i.e. eat grass) so it makes sense to harness the Brumby's grazing as a cheap "fuel reducer" to lower park fuel levels. In addition, Brumby grazing does not produce any of the negative smoke effects that fuel burns cause.

If ungulate hooves worry environmentalists, don't pick on the horse. Deer and pigs with their cloven hooves outnumber Brumbies by the 100s of thousands. For example, in 2014 the East Victorian Alps contained 750,000 to 1 million deer versus 2,350 Brumbies, a ratio of 300 or so deer to ONE Brumby.

Six years on from 2014 (with it's ratio of 300 deer to ONE Brumby), the higher deer birth rate than the Brumby, minus bush fire losses, projects a ratio of well over 400 deer to ONE Brumby in 2021.

While Park staff aim to manage deer sustainable and cull by the 100s they insist on killing horses by the thousands. Such disproportionate targets cannot even dent the rising numbers of deer that have annual multiple births versus a Brumby mare averaging only two foals in three years.

The article ends by reflecting on the future of endangered species like the corroboree frog "if this feral horse protection law is not repealed and the horses removed from Kosciuszko National Park".

Did the writer forget he began by acknowledging that if Zoos did save the corroboree frogs they still have to contend with "frog-killing fungus" and "climate change" – yet Brumbies are still blamed?

Authorised by Jill Pickering on behalf of the Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.  
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1. <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7086787/why-brumbies-go-where-other-invaders-fear-to-tread/>
2. <https://npansw.org.au/2020/05/22/top-scientists-resignation-demands-snowy-2-0-rethink/>