



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

AUTUMN 2022, ISSUE 22-2

The Australian Brumby Alliance

President- Jill Pickering

Vice President – Justine Curatolo

Secretary - Pat Hoelmer

Treasurer - David O'Brien

Contact: hoelmerp@hotmail.com

*Dedicated to the recognition,
management, preservation and
welfare of Australian wild horses*

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Photo credit: HOOFS2010

Verity ready to find her forever home

Hope you enjoy the Autumn newsletter and please contact us if you would like to be involved in the ABA.

Brumby Bridges Editor

[#SupportBrumbyRehoming](#)

www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au



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PRESIDENT'S CHAT

A big welcome our latest member Angel J. Tanner's *National Brumby Rescue* (NBR). We now have ten Incorporated and two non-Incorporated member groups; with objectives that align with the Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA) Constitution.

Inc. ABA member groups:

- Coffin Bay Brumby Preservation Society (SA)
- Heritage Brumby Advocates Australia (Vic)
- Victorian Brumby Association (Vic)
- HOOFs2010 Brumby Rescue (NSW)
- Save The Brumbies (NSW)
- Australian Brumby Horse Register (National)
- National Brumby Rescue (National)
- Bluewater Brumbies (Qld)
- SEQ Brumby Association (Qld)
- Kaimanawa Heritage Horses (NZ)

Non-Inc. ABA member groups:

- Friends of Wild Horses (SA)
- White Alpine Equine (NSW)

Visit www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au for more information on the ABA's constitution and membership form. Email info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au if you have questions.

We have received more requests to be interviewed by Ph.D. study projects as well as the usual inquiries we receive. The more members we have to grow our collective knowledge, the more informed we become about advocating for the retention of sustainable Brumby populations in their homelands for up to 200 years. This also increases hands on advice to share across our rehoming groups as they prepare wild Brumbies for domestic life.



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We now have continual Brumby trapping in Kosciuszko (NSW) and Parks Victoria's plans to trap, all rehoming groups are bursting at the seams. The great sadness rehomers feel when they do not have room for Brumbies increases the temptation to overload their resources, leading to frantic calls for feed and a high burnout risk.

The governments of NSW and Victoria need to step up and begin providing assistance to assist rehoming groups manage the significant increase in Brumbies needing homes. At a minimum, park authorities could pay for transport, gelding and insurance costs.

The Brumbies thank all those volunteers working so hard to give them a new life direction by smoothing their transition from wild to domestic living.

Jill Pickering, ABA President



Jill Pickering at a Brumby Gentling Clinic



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Introduced species are animals too!

Why the debate over compassionate conservation is worth having

Wild horses roaming the Snowy Mountains have long been the subject of fierce debate. Some say they're feral pests destroying Kosciuszko National Park's fragile native ecosystem. Others argue they're national icons and an important part of Australia's colonial heritage.

This issue was the subject of last night's [ABC Four Corners](#) episode. But the current debate misses one crucial perspective: that of the wild horses, whose fate is being decided.

This is a perfect example of why the new movement of [compassionate conservation](#) raises the question of the animals' interests in debates about conservation. Compassionate conservationists ask whether it's ethical to harm and kill animals to preserve others. They believe ecosystems, species, and individual animals all have [significant intrinsic value](#).

To read more, open the article [link here](#).





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MEDIA ARTICLE Brumby reserve in KNP

Brumby reserve mooted as solution to Kosciuszko's wild horse problem

The ABA was recently asked to talk on radio and for another article aired 22-march-2022 (see link: [Brumby reserve mooted as solution to Kosciuszko National Park's wild horse problem - ABC News ABC Riverina](#))

The discussion began with a Snowy Mountains resident encouraging the NSW & Victorian governments to purchase one 20,000 - 30,000 acres property on the border for Brumby supporters to financially support and manage as volunteers to “solve the problem”.

The ABA responded by pointing out while conceptually an interesting plan, in reality there are considerable logistical issues to work through, such as significant costs to fence, repair fencing repairs, feed and water Brumbies in drought years, gelding for the domestic market and double fence to separate stallions and their mobs from competing stallion fights.

It's not clear from the talk whether the sanctuary would take all Brumbies from Kosciuszko (KNP) and EastVic Alps, or act as a holding area while Brumbies are gentled and moved on.

The ABA raised concerns about how volunteers could pay for farriers, horse dentists, vets, feed, training yards etc. We also doubt that people who love to see brumbies living wild in their homelands would want to see them in a semi captive state managed by humans.

The item reported ecologist David Watson saying but *“please don't talk about this being some last-ditch effort to save a rare heritage breed ... genetic work has been done, they are not a rare heritage breed”*.

You are so wrong Mr Watson; a Brumby can only stay a Brumby by living in a truly wild and free life where they are raised in family mobs to learn wild Brumby survival skills.



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The article reported the ABA saying *if the idea is to have a holding spot where Brumbies are trained and sold on, that's great and very much needed*. However if the idea is to remove all from Snowy Mountains parks, the survivors become like “domestics” reliant on humans.

Brumby reserve mooted as solution to Kosciuszko National Park's wild horse problem

ABC Riverina / By Melinda Hayter, Sally Bryant, and Simon Lauder
Posted Wed 23 Mar 2022 at 8:18am



The NSW Wild Horse Management Plan aims to reduce the brumby population from 14,000 to 3,000 by 2027. (ABC: Ginny Stein)

What David Watson fails to understand is that an Australian Brumby is *unique* because it has returned to living by “rules of the wild”; being raised in family mobs and learning essential social survival skills. The *only* way to keep social living *independent* Brumby populations is to let them stay where they have evolved for 200 years alongside fragile alpine native species.

The second vital point Mr. Watson has missed is that all current domestic horse breeds have been artificially created by human design for the tasks needed at the time to enable humans to survive. Breed ‘designs’ like machinery, built/ designed to pull carts, fast travel, heavy ploughing, thrive on little feed or water that experienced in harsh Australian conditions.

The Brumby is a breed that reflects pre-domestication wild horse survival traits, smaller, sturdy, sure footed and socialised; all qualities needed to survive independent of humans. The Brumby breed is unique as it based on qualities needed to survival not smart looks.

Jill Pickering



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ABA RESPONSE TO FOUR CORNERS

Media hypocrisy used to promote the anti-Brumby agenda

4-Corners used to pride itself on responsible reporting, however viewers would have been bemused to see a 4-Corners “feral” program (aired 22-Feb-22) that kept silent on damage it showed caused by human construction, trout fishing, car tracks and rabbits.

The ABA questioned 4-Corners on the hypocrisy we saw – their reply was to say they would “not engage in a detailed dissection of the program”.

Some glaring examples of hypocrisy in the 4-Corners program include;

- An Angler bemoaning damage from “introduced” species (referring to wild Horses) while he fished for trout which is also an introduced species.
- 4-Corners claimed that wild horses have reduced Stocky Galaxies to one mountain stream – but ignored the report that it is trout, not horses, that are the key reason the critically endangered Stocky Galaxias fish are limited to Tantangara Creek where they survive *alongside* a horse presence.
- See the Conversation’s article “Rabbits of the river: Trout are not native to Australia” web link; <https://theconversation.com/rabbits-of-the-river-trout-are-not-native-to-australia-14115>
- 4-Corners ended the program by filming wild Horses being run across an area where rabbits and vehicle tracks were evident in the foreground.

The ABA submitted a formal complaint to 4 Corners and was informed that;

- The “scientific evidence is clear” about horse impact in Kosciuszko, and
- (4-Corners) “Observed 20 conference papers that established feral horses have substantial impact on environmental values in Kosciuszko National Park”, and that
- These 20 papers were “published in a scientific journal “Ecological Management and Restoration and peer reviewed through the journal’s rigorous review process”.



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The ABA replied that these 20 papers that were *Peer reviewed* were actually;

- “Peer reviewed” by authors of those papers, and
- Robust peer review is conducted by independent people, not the study authors, and
- One of the study authors, who also conducted the “review”, was also Chairperson of the publishing journal “Ecological Management and Restoration” at that time.

The complaint process reinforced the program’s hypocrisy by its reply to the ABA saying that “this *Four Corners* report was specifically focused on the *newsworthy brumby debate*”.

So, while 4-Corners “feral” program focused on the “newsworthy brumby debate” its key take-home message became, introduced species such as; *large developments, introduced trout, rabbits and vehicles do not damage the Snowy Mountain environment!*

Jill Pickering



image: Four Corners

**Feral: The bitter clash of culture over
Australia's wild horses**

Screenshot from the 4
Corners episode.

No mention was made of
the environmental
damage caused by the
multiple 4WDs who enter
the park on a regular
basis for camping and
other reasons.

UPDATE FROM HOOFS 2010

A little Story about Twisted Sister Known to all as Tilly

A message I received from the desert Nurse who stepped in and saved 3 orphans the others are in wonderful homes, 2500 Kilometres to Docker River to collect these 3 after the nurses' supplement fed them with feed we provided just to make sure they were strong enough to travel. But Tilly has had two failed rehomings and she is just 3 y/o so she will stay with us for the near future.



TILLY - Then

Please read the message I received this morning:
Quote – *“I wish she could forget Her early days and chill.. I remember saving her. Breaking into the house where the ‘owner’ had left her for the weekend alone with not even water. Caged veranda.. with all the camp dogs nipping at the edges.. She was so limp, pale gum, eyes lifeless, only weeks old. She couldn’t stand. She couldn’t relieve herself. My daughter and I spent hours cuddling up with her in the lounge room bringing her back from her traumatised start of life.*

She had saline drip, penicillin shots for each occasion of unwell, milk, bath to remove the faeces, and we kept her hidden from community till she was well to go outside. Then the man came around demanding his horse back. I presented the bill to him of all our work he said keep her. So the community

stakeholders and local road crew helped build the stable in the back yard for her, camp dogs were a problem for a while but they became her protectors. She locked getting into the house. Lol sorry one.. Tilly- fire..yep so definitely correct name 🤔



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*She developed that personality streak very early. U r right it was her survival instinct..
Lyn u have done a wonderful job with her and all the brumbies. She looks bloody fantastic! I love her
form she has grown into ❤️ That blue eye ❤️❤️ my heart sings seeing her happy and free ❤️*



TILLY - Now

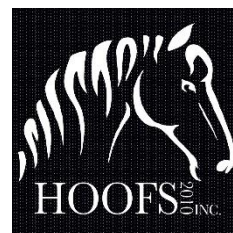
Contact HOOFS2010

W <http://www.hoofs2010incorporated.com/>

E hoofs2010@live.com.au

P 0401 527 991

FB /Hoofs2010





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UPDATE FROM SAVE THE BRUMBIES

Rain and more rain, flooded in at times at our Bellingen Sanctuary, lower paddocks under water, wet rugs, miserable horses, taking turns in the boxes to dry off. Feed is very hard to source and expensive, poor quality as well but we have survived. We fared far better than many others in Northern NSW, the stock loss has been horrific. We took a mob of horses from up north, bullets were on the agenda for them; they arrived after standing in water for days, our vet came out, treated several of them for sores etc. and gelded four stallions. One little colt has lost an eye but he's doing well with Lucy, NEBS manager and lots of TLC. Major damage has been done to fences and yards at both Sanctuaries and we are still in the process of cleaning up and trying to find the cash to pay for same.

Happier news, our registered Brumbies did us proud at Armidale show despite the rain. Lucy and Ann presented them beautifully, STB Sunshine was sashed Champion and STB Theo was Reserve. Both horses were a credit to their handlers and behaved so well, far better, we may add, than many of the domestic horses attending.



STB Sunshine and STB Theo. We will have more of our Brumbies competing at Bellingen show in May.



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With COVID restrictions now easing we hope to hold a big Open Day at NEBS before winter when our new arrivals have been handled and ready for inspection and Adoption to approved people.

Our 'oldies', the horses who live out their lives at NEBS in peace and safety, are all doing well and with the abundance of grass, due to the rain this summer, all are in fantastic condition and defy their advancing years.

Jan Carter President: STB Inc.



**save the
brumbies**

www.savethebrumbies.org



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UPDATE FROM WHITE ALPINE EQUINE

White Alpine Equine started in Brumby rescue and rehoming in late 2019.

Whilst I had experience with owning, handling and competing in show jumping and eventing with horses since a very young age, the first Brumbies I had ever seen were the first rescue herd coming off the truck from a capture in Blue Waterholes. The poor condition of the horses struck me first, closely followed by their pure innocence and trust. I took it as a huge responsibility to make sure neither I, nor anyone who adopted them, gave them their first 'bad' human experience.

We have since gone on to rehome a total of 48 brumbies (including babies on board) with another application pending delivery. We focus on taking in herds, and rehoming as many of them together as we can. Our preference is not to see them removed from KNP at all, but if they must be, then we will be here as a safe haven to provide the care and careful adoption to see them into life as a domestic horse.



KNP WAE Captain on arrival in 2019



KNP WAE Captain in 2022

Nikki Alberts / whitealpineequine@gmail.com / 0434 493 090



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UPDATE FROM KAIMANAWA HERITAGE HORSES

7 days until applications close. 111 wild Kaimanawas still in need of homes.

Your friend of a lifetime is waiting and there are many options available to help save a life from the 2022 Kaimanawa Horse Muster; tame one yourself, attend a workshop and get mentored through the taming process, or have a professional trainer do the initial handling for you! Horses of all ages are available, from foals or yearlings, right through to mature mares or stallions.

If you're not in a position to save one, but would like to help save a life, you can donate to:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/kaimanawa>



Our current crowdfunding is dedicated to the stallions: every \$1500 raised will place one with a KHH approved trainer for at least 6-months of training.

As always, our goal is to see every horse saved, so if you're in a position to rehome a wild horse from the upcoming muster (which will be held at the end of April), please visit our website.



www.kaimanawaheritagehorses.org

info@kaimanawaheritagehorses.org



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SUSTAINABLE BRUMBY POPULATIONS



Using Government guidelines to define sustainable Brumby Populations

I was asked how I might define sustainable Brumby populations that could result in healthy Brumbies in healthy environments that allowed co-habiting species to thrive with them.

Environments where change ratio/intensity is greater than that area can seasonally recover from (weather/grazing etc.) will become less robust and degrade. Too many of any species, including humans, is bad for the environment; we all need to be kept to sustainable levels.

Co-habiting species can benefit from positive Brumby impacts, i.e. (short fresh green grass, dung for insects to refresh the soil and rain in hoof prints for frogs to spawn within), where negative impacts from overpopulated Brumby numbers are minimised.

A species “footprint” also varies depending on the species size, density and how often it moves through an area. Before humans densely populated the planet, nature operated independent of human desires. Now we recognise our environment is finite.

However decisions on which non-human species survive long term is often influenced by different human views of what must be killed to help their favoured species survive.

Returning to “how would I define sustainable Brumby numbers” I turned to the Victorian government’s Deer Control Strategy (2020) which states their Long term vision for deer to be; “Deer are no longer significantly impacting on priority environmental, agricultural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values and public safety in Victoria.”



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Goals of the Deer Control Strategy (Vic) include;

- The impacts of deer on key environmental, agricultural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values and public safety are reduced, and
- Deer control is more effective through partnerships and community collaboration

The NSW Wild Horse Heritage Act (2018) sets out (5b) how;

- That heritage value will be protected while ensuring other environmental values of the park (including values identified in the plan of management for the park) are also maintained

Based on Vic/NSW themes, sustainable Brumby management requires that:

- Brumby numbers are no longer significantly impacting negatively on priority environmental, agricultural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values and public safety, and
- Brumby heritage values will be protected while ensuring other environmental values of the park are also maintained.

This can be achieved by:

- Management of Brumbies through funded community collaboration to deliver, fertility control, passive trapping and rehoming by people with the skills to ease previously wild horses into a new domestic lifestyle, and environmental studies.

Jill Pickering



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ABA MEMBER GROUPS

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- Kaimanawa Heritage Horses (NZ)

Non-Incorporated ABA member groups:

- Friends of Wild Horses (SA)
- White Alpine Equine (NSW)

To find out more, or to join, please contact Jill Pickering on pickjill@hotmail.com

NEWSLETTER

To contribute to the ABA newsletter, please contact Pat on hoelmerp@hotmail.com

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

PO Box 3276, Victoria Gardens, Richmond, Vic 3121

Phone: (03) 9428 4709

ABA Inc. Charity/ABN No: 9-784718191

info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

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END NEWSLETTER