



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

The Australian

Brumby Alliance

President- Jill Pickering

Vice President – Sue Rivers

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

**Australian Brumby
Alliance Inc has
commenced proceedings
in the Supreme Court of
Victoria against Parks
Victoria.**

**If ABA is successful in
the case, PV will have to
stop the inhumane
shooting and killing of
Brumbies.**

Welcome to the SPRING edition of the ABA newsletter. We lead with the main story that the ABA has commenced legal proceedings against Parks Victoria to stop shooting.

However, this good news is somewhat muted given the ongoing horrendous shooting of Brumbies in Victoria and now by in NSW as well.

The ABA will continue to advocate humane population management strategies which work towards sustainable populations.

Whilst the fight seems endless and is disheartening, we encourage you to take spirit from the victories when they come.

www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

If you would like to support our legal action, you can donate here <https://gofund.me/2a4f0580>

We encourage everyone to take care, look after yourself, it's a long fight, but the ABA will be here every step of the way!

Brumby Bridges Editor

[#ProtectOurHeritageBrumby](https://twitter.com/ProtectOurHeritageBrumby)



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

PRESIDENT'S CHAT

Parks Victoria (PV) is intensifying its mass Brumby shoots across Victoria's 3 wild Horse populations. Once again, our heritage, sentient, family orientated Brumbies across Victoria are being cruelly shot and left to endure slow, painful deaths.

Parks Victoria are confident they can do anything they want, including slaughtering our valued social Brumby heritage, and that until a miracle occurs and the current government lose their majority, we have limited ability to bring PV to the negotiating table to listen to reason and work *with us* to retain *sustainable* populations by fertility control and Rehoming.

With upcoming elections in Victoria in November and NSW in March next year, it is crucial Brumby supporters do their research on candidates.

The ABA is not aligned with any political party, we work with any member or representative we feel will advance the protection of our Heritage Brumby.

PV and environmentalist are so convinced killing Brumbies is needed to "save" native species, that they ignore how Brumbies and

Native species have survived together for over 200 years, even falsifying evidence to validate their flawed claims that were exposed in open court during our first case against PV.

National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) are constrained by the Wild Horse Heritage Act from killing all Kosciuszko Brumbies, but now NPWS appear so confident that even KNP heavily trapped Heritage Brumbies listed in their management plan are being mass ground shot.

It is vital we continue to write, email, and spread the need for ALL Australians to pressure NPWS and PV to retain sustainable Brumby populations and in a manner that ensures each Heritage Listed Wild Horse group remains genetically viable. The recent tragic shooting of Arrowboys family group of 11 demonstrates once again overconfidence or stupidity and total disregard for the need to uphold the Wild Horse Act's intent; NPWS must immediately be held to account for such dismissive arrogance.

Basic common-sense dictates that if KNP Brumbies are to be reduced to 3,000 (including 5 or more plan listed special wild Horse



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

populations to be retained in designated areas; must first identify what minimum “breed” numbers must be kept, such as 300 per Kiandra population and 300 for each plan listed heritage group. This suggestion leaves 1,500 for other Brumby groups, to attain the overall minimum total of 3,000 to live in KNP.

From then on work to keep each Brumby group at its identified number using fertility control and rehoming. Unfortunately, NPWS mistakenly thrive on secrecy, instead of transparently working with local Brumby communities, leaving us to rely on local Brumby advocates to report what they see.

Too often we see easily accessed, well known populations such as the Kiandra Greys being trapped, and no other Brumby management. A cynic could claim Currango Brumbies are left to increase to persuade politicians and media that the plan is not working and numbers are “exploding” leading to calls to aerial shoot from environmentalists and angering everyone – this approach is *not* best practice.

It is vital we maintain polite pressure on relevant authorities to report annually on a *count* of each heritage group to ensure each is retained at a genetically viable level – starting by the end of 2022.

Jill Pickering
ABA President



Jill Pickering with Charlie at the Melbourne Brumby protests in August



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

ABA LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST PARKS VICTORIA

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc (ABA) has commenced proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria against Parks Victoria. Australian Brumby Alliance alleges that Parks Victoria's inhumane killing of Brumbies by gunshot is unlawful and does not comply with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. "Over-population of a non-native species does not give Parks Victoria a ticket to inhumanely kill for population control," ABA president Jill Pickering said.

"Photos have emerged of horses and tiny foals slaughtered by gunshot. Sadly, there is evidence of immense suffering. "Parks Victoria have chosen cruelty over common sense or compassion by shooting our beautiful, sentient wild Brumby horses. "There are kinder alternatives available to the Australian Labor Party in Victoria to control Brumby populations, but the Andrews Government has chosen lethal methods.

"Victorian Brumby numbers can be controlled by humane methods, such as fertility control which has been used successfully in the USA for 40 years, and rehoming which was stopped in Victoria when shooting began.

"If ABA is successful in the case, Parks Victoria will have to stop the inhumane shooting and killing of Brumbies and instead use humane methods of control – which is exactly what ABA have been calling on them to do for the last 14 years," concluded Ms Pickering. ABA has asked for the case to be heard quickly, given the inhumane shooting and killing of Brumbies continues. The Court has not yet set a date for the hearing.

Support our legal action fund – donate here <https://gofund.me/2a4f0580>



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

NSW KIANDRA BRUMBY KILLINGS

The ABA received credible reports that on Sunday, 11th of September, eleven Brumbies had been shot and killed in Kiandra area, Kosciuszko National Park (KNP), NSW. This was later confirmed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) on 16th of September via [press release](#) on their website.

This senseless shooting is inconsistent with NSW's Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 which regulates sustainable management of Brumbies on public land. The purpose of the Act is to recognise the heritage value of sustainable wild horse populations within parts of KNP and to protect that heritage.

NPWS said via press release that the killings were 'conservation' and that they were approved by the RSPCA. The killings made news and were condemned by a number of people causing the Minister who oversees NPWS to put an immediate temporary halt to the shootings and required a full investigation.

These Brumbies were much loved by the locals and their fans on social media who were aware of their stories. The ABA condemns these killings in the strongest possible terms and labels them as unnecessary and damaging in multiple ways. There is no environmental benefit to the shooting of eleven Brumbies and leaving their bodies to rot, some near waterways. The ABA has also received unofficial reports of more killings of Brumbies in NSW and is concerned the senseless and pointless shooting of Brumbies in the KNP by NPWS is widespread.

In this newsletter we will acknowledge the life of Arrowboy and his partner as two of the well known Brumbies who were senselessly killed by agents organized by the NSW state agency and supported by the state's peak animal welfare body.



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4



Arrowboy and his beautiful roan mare

Photo credit: Michelle Brown



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

VIC LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MOTION

On the 19th of August **Bev McArthur MP** moved a motion in the Victorian Legislative Council which requires the Victorian Government to;

- Publicly provide the current brumby numbers in the Barmah and Alpine National Parks,
- Reverse the suspension of trapping and re-homing operations,
- Provide approval to volunteer brumby re-homing organisations and
- Cancel current or planned brumby shooting operations, especially those leaving carcasses to decompose on public land.

The ABA is grateful for the support of MPs who take a stand and use their position to support Australia's Brumby!



MPs WHO SUPPORTED THE MOTION TO PROTECT VICTORIA'S WILD HORSES

Melina Bath - The Nationals
Jeff Bourman - Shooters Fishers + Farmers Party
David Davis - Liberal Party
Clifford Hayes - Sustainable Australia Party
David Limbrick - Liberal Democratic Party
Tim Quilty - Liberal Democratic Party
Wendy Lovell - Liberal Party
Tania Maxwell - Derryn Hinch Justice Party
Bev McArthur - Liberal Party
Andy Meddick - Animal Justice Party
Catherine Cumming - Independent
Gordon Rich-phillips - Liberal Party
Catherine Burnett-wake - Liberal Party
Georgie Crozier - Liberal Party



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

MELBOURNE PROTEST

MELB BRUMBY RALLY August 20th

Thankyou to the Charlie Lovic and others who organised this rally in Melbourne. It was a great turnout with great speakers including MPs Bev McArthur and Wendy Lovel. Warm friendly atmospheres, large turnout for a Brumby rally.





Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

UPDATE FROM SAVE THE BRUMBIES

New England Brumby Sanctuary Open day September 2022



After a gap due to Covid years I was thrilled to join in our member group (STB) "Save The Brumbies" property near Guyra called the "New England Brumby Sanctuary" (NEBS).

It was a near perfect sunny day with pleasantly warm weather, accept for the wind that this area often experiences which kept us busy weighing down papers with local stones.

(left) NEBS open day poster

It was a great turnout including local and interstate visitors, all keen to hear about the work carried out by STB volunteers at NEBS. With a special thanks to our resident caretakers, Lucy for her brumby gentling skills and Isiah for the never ending fence and general repair work.



Welcome by Jan Carter, Information tent from the cabin STB president, Veranda sausage sizzle area



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

The new foal and Mum were distanced from the visitors to avoid any stress, but still within easy sight range. Visitor creativity was harnessed through a foal naming lottery, and by the end of the day, the foal was named Breeze, very fitting for the weather that day.

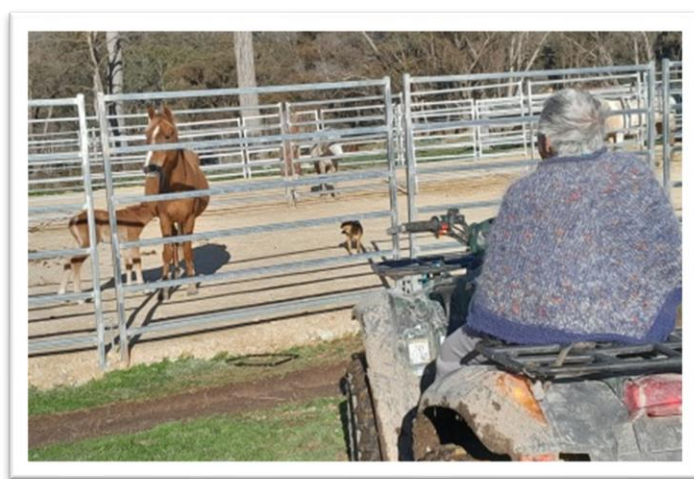
Other activities throughout the day included, Brumby handling demonstration by Lucy, pony rides, Sanctuary tours, information tent and of course a yummy sausage sizzle lunch.

Several rehoming inquiries were raised which Jan and Lucy will be following up and I had fun moving around with raffle tickets and answering questions on the Sanctuary's vital work.

STB Committee member



2day old foal & proud Mum



Foal enjoying Mum's home brew



Contact New England Brumby Sanctuary

W www.saveTheBrumbies.org



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

UPDATE FROM BLUEWATER BRUMBIES

Our new yards have arrived!! 🎉

Bluewater Brumbies are excited to announce that we were successful in a recent grant application and this has allowed us to purchase this beautiful new set of yards! Thanks **Black River Cattle Company** for your patience and support.



P: 0402 703 951 E: bluewaterbrumbies@gmail.com

W: www.bluewaterbrumbies.com.au

FB: @BluewaterBrumbiesinc



Brumby Bridges

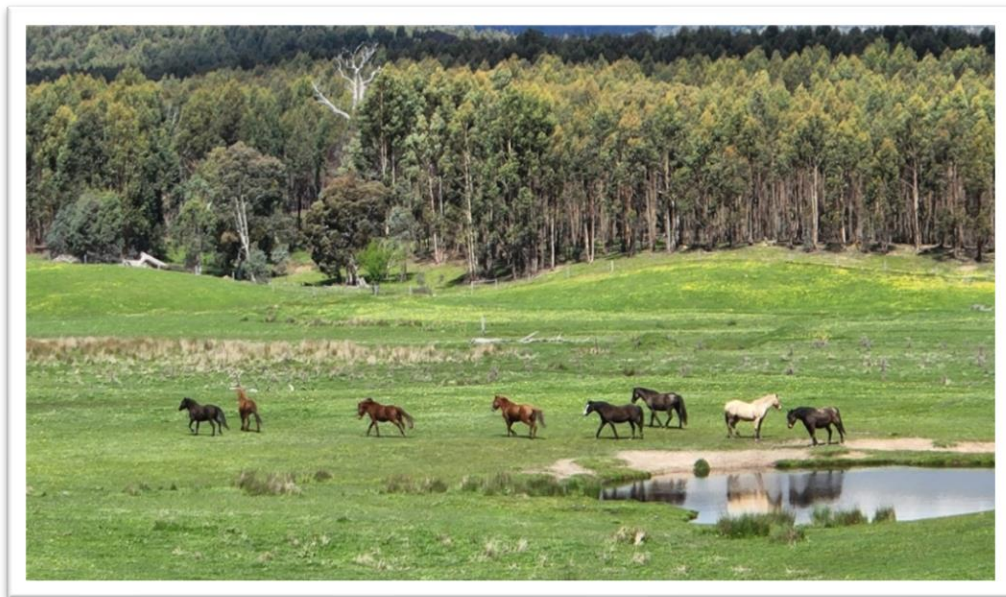
The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

UPDATE FROM VICTORIAN BRUMBY ASSOCIATION

This is Sanctuary. Safety, family and respect to live the life they want.

Our North paddock crew watching us watching them this morning. Many of them are Brumbies who were older when caught, although there are a few in there who just didn't want to be domestic horses. Zorro will turn 30 this year, King and Thora are in their late twenties and with their age, they are moving a little less and we find we need to watch their weight more closely on our lush pastures.



Almost every Brumby adapts incredibly well to domestic life. Our decision when we started taking on Brumbies way back in 2007 was to be 100% committed to every Brumby that we took on.

As the years have gone by, we have filled some of our paddocks with Brumbies who will live with us forever, which means of course that we can't take in as many perhaps as we often have in the past which makes us sad but we only have to look at these beautiful souls to feel good about our choices.



Contact Victorian Brumby Association

W: www.Victorianbrumbyassociation.org

FB/ VictorianBrumbyAssociation

P: 0408 201 107



Brumby Bridges

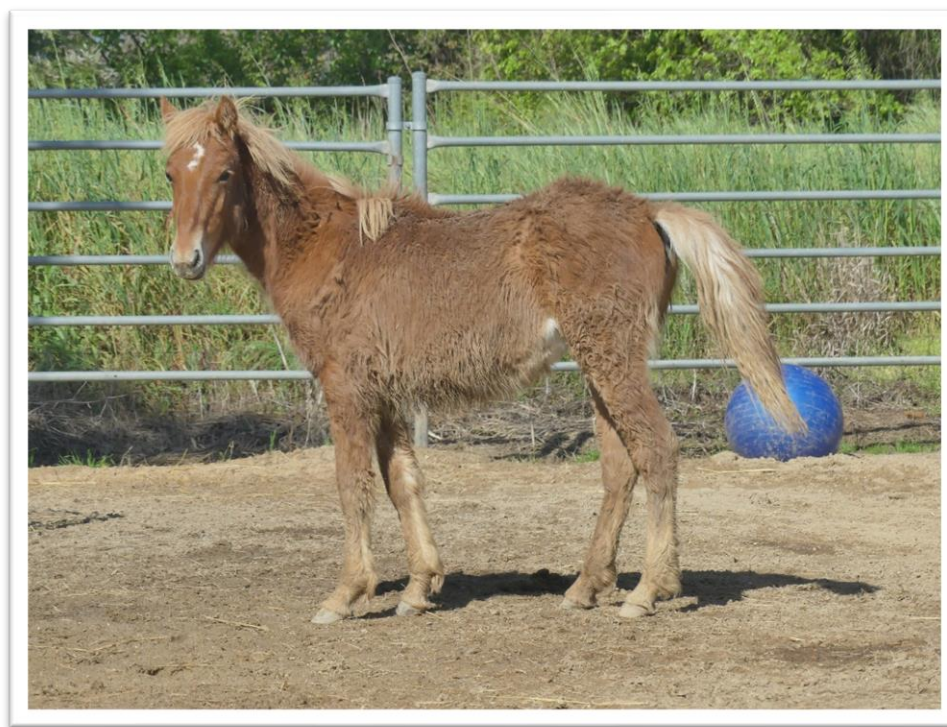
The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

UPDATE FROM HOOFS2010

HOOFS2010 have accepted more Brumbies to be rehomed, meet one of their newest members!

Little Chestnut filly a scruffy little one and has wind in her heels, yet to consume her worm treatment or have much to do with us as yet.



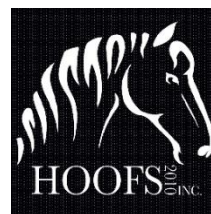
Contact HOOFS2010

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

E hoofs2010@live.com.au

P 0401 527 991

FB /Hoofs2010





Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

UPDATE FROM WHITE ALPINE EQUINE

Big day for the horses yesterday!

The brumbies had lots of visitors and the big horses got to just hang out in the sun and catch up on some zzzzz's 😊 Lucy and Phin are getting on so well, it is adorable to see him gaining confidence as she progresses his basic lead work to the next level.

Captain got to hang out with one of his best friends, Gracie, and Darcy got lots of love and attention from some new visitors who had travelled down to Adaminaby for a weekend away. So it was just a quiet session this morning, halter training for Darcy and treats all round for everyone else.



Contact White Alpine Equine:

P: 0434 493 090

E: whitealpineequine@gmail.com

FB/ WhiteAlpineEquine



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

WILD ANIMALS ARE EVOLVING FASTER THAN ANYBODY THOUGHT

By Sandy Radke

In a recent article in *The Conversation*, ANU researcher Timothée Bonnet describes a collaborative research project that measured the speed of adaptive evolution in the wild. Their findings are that many species are evolving 2-4 times the speed suggested in earlier work.

What does this have to do with Brumbies? It means that not only is it possible for wild horses to rapidly adapt to a changing environment but so can native fauna. And while the author states that their work alone is insufficient to draw predictions, it shows that evolution cannot be discounted if we want to accurately predict the near future of animal populations. Including, I would venture to say, the populations of native species claimed to be doomed to extinction by Brumbies.

The study used "*the fundamental theorem of natural selection*" which says that the amount of genetic difference in "fitness" to survive and reproduce among individuals across a population also corresponds to the population's rate of adaptive evolution.



To measure this, they collaborated with 27 research institutions to analyse data from 19 wild populations that have been monitored for up to about 70 years. The data included information about birth, mating, reproduction and death of each individual in these populations. It is a body of work that represents about 250,000 animals and 2.6 million hours of field study.

They use quantitative genetic models (lots of mathematical statistics etc.) to capture the net effect emerging from changes in thousands of genes.

And what did they find? Let's cut to the headline.

Genetic change in response to natural selection was responsible for an 18.5% increase per generation in the ability of individuals to survive and reproduce.

And what exactly does this mean? We know that, while most offspring in the wild do not survive long enough to breed, those that do because they were born with some variation that gives them an environmental advantage (be it a behaviour or a physical one) are more likely to live long enough to breed and pass on their advantageous trait to their offspring. And the fitter they are, the more offspring they will have.

This research measured the change in this evolutionary fitness and found that individuals who, because of natural selection, survive and reproduce are on average 18.5% "fitter" than their parents. It also suggests that an average population can survive 18.5% deterioration in the quality of its environment.



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

More and more, scientists studying novel ecosystems, adaptive evolution and coevolution are finding examples of native species adapting to human induced environmental changes.

Isn't it interesting that the cane beetle is an Australian native species, and an introduced species, the cane toad, was deliberately brought here to protect another introduced species – sugar cane?

The cane toad was introduced to Australia in 1935 by the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations (now Sugar Research Australia) to control the native grey-backed cane beetle in sugar cane fields in northern Australia. Because of the toxins in the cane toad, the experiment proved devastating for many Australian natives, particularly predators. And yet, years later we find the following adaptations:

- A study of Australian snakes (Phillips and Shine, 2004) analysed 4 snake species. It was found that the 2 toad vulnerable species (red-bellied black snake and green tree snake) showed a steady reduction in their gape size and an increase their body length over time. This meant that they could only eat smaller toads and had larger body mass to survive the toxins. In contrast, the 2 low-risk species showed no consistent changes in these traits while exposed to toad toxin. In less than 75 years, these snakes had evolved in toad-inhabited regions of Australia to have increased resistance to toad toxin and decreased preference for toads as prey.

- Northern Quoll populations in the Northern Territory were severely impacted by cane toads and have become critically endangered. However, several populations seemed to have learned to stop eating them and are surviving. While it is unclear if this is a genetic trait or a learned behaviour being passed, these populations have adapted in some way.
- Some birds, such as the black kite (*Milvus migrans*), have learned to attack the toad's belly, avoiding the poison-producing glands on the back of the head.
- the Torresian crow, has learned how to kill and eat cane toads without ingesting the poison by flipping it onto its back and using its powerful bill to deliver a lethal blow to the throat where the toad's skin is thinner, giving the crow access to the toad's nontoxic innards
- In 2014, researchers found evidence that the Australian freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus johnstoni*) had learned to eat just the hind legs of cane toads

In reality, there are other evolutionary things at play that would affect the 18.5% statistic from Bonnet's article; this study estimates only changes due to natural selection. Furthermore, the environmental change itself may be the dominant driver of population decline and if the environment keeps deteriorating, adaptive evolution will not be able to keep up.

However, this study has compelling evidence that adaptive evolution must be part of the equation in predicting population scenarios due to environmental change.



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

I wonder how this might relate to recent research on Brumbies in the Bogong High Plains and Eastern Victorian Alps. Work by Berman, et.al. (in press) has determined there is a threshold population level below which horse impacts such as dung piles, stream trampling, roll pits, pads or trails are small to immeasurable. Above this threshold, impacts increase exponentially.

Berman's work is concerned with understanding how horse density impacts the environment and whether the impacts have a net benefit or cost to the environment; it is not measuring adaptive evolution.

However, there may be an important link here. If horse numbers are kept below the threshold limit and horses are no longer continue to significantly impact on the environment, then the presence of wild horses never overwhelms adaptive evolution, enabling the co-evolution of horses and many native species to shape the environment. Furthermore, if Bonnet's study does have traction, native fauna can withstand higher impacts on their environment than previously thought, be it from horses or other things, and still continue to adapt.

It is sad to consider the consequences of Parks Victoria's insistence on lethal culling and eradication of wild horses if this is indeed the case.



Perhaps focusing a little less on horse dung and a little more on the adaptive responses in the ecosystem would be more illuminating in determining the management of introduced species.

By Sandy Radke

For the list of references for this article, go to the ABA website.



Brumby Bridges

The quarterly newsletter of the ABA

SPRING 2022, ISSUE 22-4

ABA MEMBER GROUPS

Incorporated 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-Incorporated ABA member groups:

- Friends of Wild Horses (SA)
- White Alpine Equine (NSW)
- Indigo Brumbies (VIC)
- Heritage Horse and Environment Protection Alliance (VIC)

For any queries, please contact us on info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

CONTACT US

Australian Brumby Alliance Inc.

ABA Inc. Charity/ABN No: 9-784718191

POST: PO Box 3276, Victoria Gardens, Richmond, Vic 3121

PHONE: 0400 558 772 **EMAIL:** info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

WEB: www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

FB: /AustralianBrumbyAlliance **Insta** /AustralianBrumbyAlliance

END NEWSLETTER