



PO Box 3276, Victoria Gardens, Richmond, Vic 3121 - ABN : 90784718191

info@australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

www.australianbrumbyalliance.org.au

ABA Media contact Mob : 0400-558-772

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The Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA) is appalled at the decision by Minister Sharpe to amend the Wild Horse Management Plan and overturn the NSW ban on aerial shooting of wild horses. In the wake of this decision, the ABA calls on Minister Sharpe to commit to a balanced approach to management, including a strengthened commitment to passive trapping and rehoming as the most humane management method.

“Aerial culling was banned because evidence from Guy Fawkes National Park massacre and other locations showed it was a cruel and imprecise way to manage Brumby numbers” said Jill Pickering, President of the ABA. “As an animal loving nation, it’s a very dark day when we lower standards on animal cruelty issues.”

The ABA supports a targeted approaches to management of Brumby numbers are needed particularly in fragile areas, and notes that the population has always been managed in some way. However the ABA believes that fertility control, passive trapping and rehoming are/is the most humane method of management. If implemented consistently, modelling shows this is sufficient to effectively manage numbers to safe levels over the long term in Retention zones, consistent with the NSW Wild Horse Act.

“We implore Minister Sharpe to strengthen commitment to and resourcing of passive trapping and rehoming as the preferred method of population management, reserving lethal methods to high density areas and designated fragile zones identified in the NSW Wild Horse Act. Working closely with experienced horse communities will reduce conflict and facilitate rehoming.” Thousands of fabulous, rehomed Brumbies across the country are testimony to the trainability and viability of Brumby rehoming as a positive outcome.

“These horses are unique, highly trainable and sentient creatures who can have wonderful futures. They deserve better than being left to die an agonising death peppered full of bullets.” Ms Pickering said.

The ABA also highlights the mental health impact of lethal heritage Brumby management on rural communities. “High country people who love and value these iconic horses are already facing the horror and grief of wild horses being shot and left to rot beside waterways and walking tracks in Victorian and NSW National Parks” she said. “The emotional toll on many Australians of this is enormous”.

Especially now that we find decades of ACT zero horse tolerance has not helped the Corroboree frogs. We urge the minister to consider ALL threats to native species, commence on-ground counts/data trends to see whether, or not, killing horses actually help native species as frequently claimed.

The ABA also notes many of horse shootings have been in Retention zones that the current Plan states can tolerate safe Brumby numbers. We urge the Minister to ensure horse retention areas are not disturbed.

“The Brumbies have been co-existing with native species for nearly 200 years” Ms Pickering said. “We owe it to them and to those who value their social heritage to horses humanely”.

Authorised by Jill Pickering M: 0400-558-772 for the Australian Brumby Alliance