

Kosciusko National Park

Wild Horse Heritage - Identified Values

A report to the Minister for Environment

and the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Community Advisory Panel

The purpose of this work is to identify the heritage values of the Kosciusko wild horses and determine their historical areas for retaining populations.

This document is not intended to be a formal Heritage Assessment.



Bringing in the Brumbies on near Charlottes Pass, Kosciusko 1949
Photo by Jim Fitzpatrick (National Library of Australia)

Leisa Caldwell

'Rundayvoo' Grosses Plains

July 2020

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Executive Summary

There have been wild horses (also fondly known as Brumbies) roaming in the Snowy Mountains since the beginning of white settlement in the region. Since then, they have become an integral and inseparable part of the heritage and folklore of the Snowy Mountains.

Like our ancestors, the Brumby grew its own knowledge and connection with the land for its survival... But equally as important our old people were animal lovers. They would have had great respect for these powerful horse spirits. Our people have always been accepting of visitors to our lands and quite capable of adapting to change so that our visitors can also belong and have their place. Learning their ways and gaining true understanding. A caring and sharing culture.
David Dixon elder Ngarigo/Djiringanj The Ngarigo, Djiringanj and the Brumby 2017

The intention of this report is to identify just *some* of the history and the locations of where Brumbies have historically inhabited and which localities they should remain and be managed in sustainable as well as genetically viable populations. **This will recognise that the Brumbies heritage value does need protection but it also ensures that protection of all natural and cultural values is vital and required under NPWS Act 1974 and the KWHH Act 2018.** Equally it demonstrates that traditional practices and values created by the Snowy Mountains people and their extended families and communities, should be encouraged to continue. This is so the fundamental practices established by their ancestors for a significantly Australian culture and heritage that has been bonded to the Snowy Mountain Brumbies, will continue for current and future generations.

The Brumbies have roamed free in and around these mountain areas in often immense numbers for well over 150 years, but the major controversy of their existence has only been in the last 10 to 15 years. The mountain area became National Park in 1967 and it was only in the late 1980s that the local mountain horsemen were prohibited from having any participation in the management of the Brumbies even though this had been their custom for 150 years and many generations.

In 2002 the Guy Fawkes River National Park saw 620 wild horses massacred by National Parks & Wildlife Service by aerial shooting. There was a ground swell of outrage and disgust not only in Australia but internationally which identified that many people in the community have the view that Brumbies deserve a place in the mountains as it has been there home for so long but more so they deserve better treatment and should be considered differently to other introduced animals.

Major bushfires in 2003 saw more than 50% of the Snowy Brumbies perish. The following years saw a complex change in brumby populations and their locations. With good growing seasons the populations recovered quickly and National Parks started major removal programs thereafter which only added to the complexity of their population dynamics and the areas they inhabited.

In 2016 the Kosciusko National Park drafted a new management plan for the Snowy Brumbies. The plan intended to remove almost the total population only retaining 600 horses throughout the whole park. It also proposed the removal of Brumbies by shooting. The draft plan was overwhelmingly rejected by the public as was the biased public consultation process and saw major protests.

As a consequence, there was much lobbying by the Snowy Mountain community and in June 2018, the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act (KWHHAct 2018) was assented by the NSW parliament. The object of the Act *“is to recognise the heritage value of sustainable wild horse populations within parts of the Kosciusko National Park and to protect that heritage.”* The Act directs the Minister to prepare a new Wild Horse Heritage plan of management.

In preparing the plan, the Minister is to seek advice from the Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel. According to the Act, the functions of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) is “to provide advice to the minister on any matter relating to the identification of the heritage value of, and the management of, sustainable wild horse populations with Kosciusko National Park.”

To date the CAP has not discussed recognition nor introduced any identification of heritage values of wild horse populations as directed by the Act. Neither has there been any field inspections as requested to identify any impacts by horses which would go a long way to understanding other values which may be threatened but are vitally important and must also be protected. So far, the CAP has only discussed the conspicuous but typical ‘Wild Horse Removal plan’ and not a ‘Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan’. The discussions have been no different to any other futile consultations in the past. The management of Brumbies is not just simply removing them from the landscape, but other measures and controls must also be considered.

The intent of the KWHHAct 2018 legislation must be supported as it was absolutely endorsed by the people in last year’s democratically held state election. The Hon. John Barilaro MP introduced the legislation and then riding on the back of the “Brumby Bill” he was further given a mandate by the community by being re-elected to Parliament. **This election win had a record swing to Barilaro where he won every polling booth in the electorate which had never been done before. This is the highest recorded win in history in this electorate’s marginal seat. There is no doubt that the majority of the community value the heritage of the brumbies.**

It’s also appropriate here to relate the views of many unrepresented individuals, in particular long-term local residents and descendants of the mountain people. This report will demonstrate the history and ongoing existence and long-term heritage practices of the Brumbies in Kosciusko.

It concludes that Snowy Mountain Brumbies have significant cultural heritage value to many people at all levels throughout Australia. It maintains that retaining wild horse populations in culturally and historically appropriate areas must be implemented and that management includes, if not driven by local community experience knowledge & practices. When Brumbies are managed well the heritage significance remains intact and all natural and cultural values are protected equally. This is not just for the local communities but crucially also for the preservation of the Australian culture and identity.

There are no exact map lines drawn however localities within KNP have been identified which are of significance for our cultural heritage and the management of Brumbies:

1. Kiandra, Tantangara, Gooandra, Rules Point, Long Plain, Currango, Cooleman, and Peppercorn, and Coolamine areas
2. Pilot Wilderness: South of Cascades Hut, Tin Mines, Mt Pilot to Ingeegoodbee, Wombat Gully to Thatchers Mountain, Jacobs River to Pinch River to Willis, Cowambat flat areas.
3. Byadbo Wilderness: Bididi Creek, Pinch Mountain, Sandy Creek, Sheepstation Creek, Guttamura, Merambego and Black Jack Mountain area including Muzzlewood to Jacobs Ladder to Reedy Creek
4. Snowy Plains (Davies Hut area) – Botherum Plain

Although wild horses have also inhabited most of these areas below historically & extensively at times it is also acknowledged that today these areas should remain horse free.

- Main Range from Thredbo to Cabramurra (excluding Snowy Plains)
- Jagungal wilderness
- Lobbs Hole area, Yarrangobilly, Nungar Plain & east of Tantangara & Pocket Saddle Roads.
- Dead Horse Gap, Big Boggy, Cascades Hut, Bobs Ridge & Ramshead Ranges.

Methodology

This brief of the history of brumbies in Kosciusko is based on historical research encompassing several sources including National Parks & Wildlife Service publications & commissioned consultative and committee reports, online archives of newspapers and books, personally owned documentary books & videos, journals, diaries & photo collections and personal communications including:

- TROVE National Library of Australia Newspaper Search
- National Library of Australia
- NSW Archives
- Snowy Monaro Regional Council
- Researchgate
- NSW Land Registry Service

*The criteria for assessing cultural heritage values are based on those used in the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 and the Burra Charter of Australia ICOMOS1 (Marquis-Kyle and Walker 1994) to refer to qualities and attributes possessed by items that have **historic, aesthetic, scientific or social value** for past, present and future generations. These values may be seen in places and physical features but can also be associated with intangible qualities such as people's associations with or feelings for an item, or in other items described above such as cultural practices, knowledge, songs and stories.*

Cultural significance is a concept that helps in estimating the value of items. The items that are likely to be of significance are those that help to provide an understanding of the past or that enrich the present, and that will be of value to future generations.¹

It should be remembered that the assessment of living animals, and in particular an introduced wild animal population as heritage is new ground both in Australia and overseas. The only known wild horse population on a heritage list is the Dartmoor Pony population of England, which are native to the landscape they continue to inhabit. The wild horse population is neither a place nor a value. In the national heritage assessment approach in Australia, the term 'attribute' is best applied.²

¹ (Kosciusko National Park Independent Scientific Committee (ISC) 2002 An Assessment of the Values of Kosciusko National Park)

² (CONTEXT) Melville, G., Johnston, C., Doyle, H & McLay, C (2015) 'National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment & Conflicting Values Report: The Wild Horse Population Kosciuszko National Park', Context Pty Ltd

CONTEXT

In 2015 a study was commissioned by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to better understand the cultural heritage values and conflicting values associated with the wild horse populations in Kosciusko National Park (KNP). Noted here as the CONTEXT report.

The CONTEXT report noted that wild horses were an attribute which was based on and met at least five of the criterion of the National Heritage Listing (NHL) of which is considered to have outstanding heritage value to the nation. CONTEXT also subsequently recommended that further research and projects are needed to gain an even better understanding of the relationships that people have with the horse populations as well as to better understand the conflicting issues and impacts on other values.

This report will *also* recommend that further research is needed but needs to include more participation of locals with identified long term family history in the area. There is much local history omitted to date both pre and post settlement. This would identify significant heritage values that includes wild horses (brumbies) in Kosciusko at Local, State and at National levels along with historical evidence of the spatial locations where the heritage identified horses should remain.

In the Kosciuszko National Park Draft Wild Horse Management Plan 2016, the CONTEXT assessment of the cultural heritage values of the wild horse population in the park detailed the cultural and social values that many people associate with the wild horse population, including those values outlined above. In the CONTEXT study the wild horse population in the park is considered as an 'attribute' of the place; the place being Kosciuszko National Park. The National Heritage List criteria and assessment guidelines were used to frame the assessment of the significance of wild horses in the park. The CONTEXT study drew on previous cultural heritage assessments relating to the listing of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves (which include the park) as a place on the National Heritage List.

In relation to KNP and wild horses, these meanings are intangible. They can be expected to be held by many of the visitors to KNP, and also will be held across the wider Australian community, many of whom may never visit KNP. The Burra Charter is very intentional in using the words 'respect', 'continue' and 'revive'. Meanings are cultural expressions that cannot be conserved except through a culture or subculture itself. Meaning should be expected to change over time, and the meanings described as 'Snowy Mountains' mythologies demonstrate this. However, it should not be expected that the meanings associated with wild horses will disappear; they may over time, or they may strengthen. Meanings can be respected through interpretation – through careful consideration of language for example – and by the continued engagement with those for whom those meanings are particularly important. The aesthetic values attributed to the experience of seeing wild horses in the landscape are related to the 'Snowy Mountains' mythologies as well as to broader cultural values associated with the admired characteristics of horses. The opportunity to see wild horses in the landscape, particularly in places related to the history of pastoralism or locations evoked in literary sources offers a way to retain positive aesthetic values, just as reducing the likelihood of seeing a wild horse in a remote wilderness area helps retain that very different aesthetic experience. Opportunities to see wild horses could be presented as a special experience and made available in particular locations or through guided tours. (CONTEXT 2015)

The assessment found that the wild horse population in the park is an attribute associated with the cultural heritage significance of the park in relation to five of the nine criteria. The values associated with these criteria include:

- Historical values associated with the High Country pastoralism and the ‘Alps experience’ that contribute to the national identity. (Criterion a).*
- Cultural values associated with alpine pastoral landscapes, particularly the north-east Kosciuszko landscape, that demonstrate the pastoral way of life. Wild horses are a key element of the pastoral landscape, as are the alpine and subalpine terrain, extensive grasslands, huts, pastoral properties, the bushmen/women, former stock routes and historical narrative. (Criterion d).*
- Aesthetic values associated with the uniquely wild and remote alpine landscapes that represent a cultural icon with Mount Kosciuszko as a defining image in the minds of Australians. The wild horses are a tangible attribute associated with the positive experience that some people have when witnessing wild horses in the landscape. There is a strong aesthetic appreciation of the ‘Australian brumby’ across the Australian community and the High Country community. (Criterion e).*
- Social values associated with the love of the High Country cultural landscape and The Man from Snowy River legend – a value derived from the long social and cultural history associated with pastoralism in the area. The landscape, the legend, and past pastoral activities have reached iconic status in the nation-building mythology of Australia. (Criterion g).*
- The High Country environment and landscape – the Snowy River and Main Range/Cascade Hut in particular – have had an important role in the lives and works of significant people, in particular writer Elyne Mitchell (Silver Brumby series) and AB ‘Banjo’ Paterson (The Man from Snowy River). (Criterion h).³*

³ (CONTEXT) Melville, G., Johnston, C., Doyle., H & McLay, C (2015) ‘National Cultural Heritage Values Assessment & Conflicting Values Report: The Wild Horse Population Kosciuszko National Park’, Context Pty Ltd

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage identified values and the heritage of the Man from Snowy River community - intrinsically linked:

Historical significance

The Wild Horses Of Kosciusko

Today, in the little known country round Kosciusko, thousands of wild horses, or brumbies, roam the ranges. They are the descendants of horses belonging to the early settlers, which, lost or turned out because of age by their owners, found their way up into the mountains and remained there. This article tells how they are captured during the summer months, and are later taken to Victoria to be sold.

Wild Horses Of Kosciusko (1948, October 14). *Chronicle (Adelaide, SA)*

There is much evidence of wild horses being present at one time or another in the whole of the Kosciusko/Monaro Region from East to West across the Great Dividing Range and from the Victorian border in the south to the Australian Capital Territory border in the north.

Since the early to mid 1800s, wild horses have roamed throughout the current boundaries of the now Kosciusko National Park throughout most of the park's varying landscapes, elevations and ecosystems.

Cattle and sheep were also seen in their 'tens of thousands' at least seasonally for well over a century. During this time the actual numbers of wild horses continually fluctuated in all areas. Grazing of livestock in snow leashed areas would mean the controlling of the wild horses also. Horses were culled or removed sporadically and horses were also further released into the areas to improve bloodlines or for pasturing. Snow, fire and drought have played a role in reducing numbers of horses as did good years for their return but the horsemen took the role of predator. It is known that at times horses were seen in great numbers at different times and different locations and at other times were found to be elusive.

James Spencer Snr and later Jnr lived at West Point (Waste Point). From the 1840s father and son were both mountain guides to many scientists including Clement Wragge, Von Lendenfeld and Von Mueller in 1851. Several journals and diaries include notes of wild horses to be seen on these journeys as well as the guide's protection of their riding and pack horses from the brumbies.

However, since grazing was abolished from the main range areas the brumbies have seldom returned and are now replaced with manmade and permanent tourist resorts and associated infrastructure that ironically developed in their place.

The wild horses of the Snowy Mountains are historically significant to many Australians nationwide and locally:

- Brumbies are evidence of the distinctive way of life of people who lived in the mountains of which has a unique culture to the rest of Australia.
- Similar to the First People who would gather in summer on the high plains for ceremonies and Bogong Moth feasting and came from different areas surrounding the mountains, the new settlers also gathered together in the high country coming from all over the mountain districts to attend events and festivities like brumby runs, rodeos, sporting days and races.
- The brumbies are associated with the history of pastoralism in the Mountain districts which included long-term relationships with the surrounding & neighbouring mountain people as well as the Traditional Owners and pastoralists from both sides of the mountains.

The Men from Snowy River

“The words been passed around about the Men from Snowy River, Their story wasnt forgotten and not allowed to wither, For a wise and strong Bugeenj woman who listened to her Elders, Nurtured the seed of future story tellers’

The connection between my family (Hoskin and Mundy) and the Brumby (Australian Wild Horse) isn't that well known. The Mundy side of my ancestry also lived at Delegate Aboriginal reserve (gazetted 1892 - 1957) on the Monaro, and also at Wollondibby within the Koskiosko National Park. The Mundy's are Ngarigo people. Living at Wollondibby close to the Alps would have been central to capturing the Brumby from the wild before the long and arduous journey driving the horses to the coast. Some of the horses would have made their way onto farms, but its also possible that some made it to the front lines of the Second Boer War 1899-1902 in south Africa, as the timelines coincide. And brumbies were used within this war. This is where the legendary Australian Light Horse first seen military action.

Jack Hoskins and his family lived upon the Aboriginal Reserve at Blackfellows Lake/Lagoon (then called Cohens Lake). There were two reserves at Blackfellows Lake. The first Aboriginal reserve was gazetted in 1883 (R895 - 112 acres) before being revoked. The second reserve (R17616 - 55 acres) at Blackfellows Lake was gazetted in 1893 with our family recorded on the reserve up to 1925. This second reserve, which encompassed part of the first reserve was created for Jack Hoskins and his family. Aboriginal Protection Board records make reference to the local Bega police constable recommending land acquisitions up to 40 acres each for Aboriginal families on the Bega River. The Aboriginal reserve at Blackfellows Lake is where the Brumbies were rested and tamed. They were then taken to the old steamers at Tathra wharf. Agricultural works, for their own food and produce for external markets, was also carried out on the reserve. Our family also had interests in the fishing industry within the Bega River, and off the coast of Tathra. This was my family living between two cultures...adapting...surviving....trying to provide for kin via shared contribution.

Our collective journey is one that requires us to acknowledge OUR collective past and strive to right the wrongs and realise justice is possible. This is a shared history, not a segregated one...it depends on how you view it I suppose. It's a shared history, the good along with the bad. Our family story about our interwoven history with the Brumby, as told by our Elders, is one that reminds us that reconnecting with our past can be a powerful connector to conversation, ideas and possibilities that can unify rather than divide. Which is, within itself, a giant leap towards justice and healing for everyone.⁴

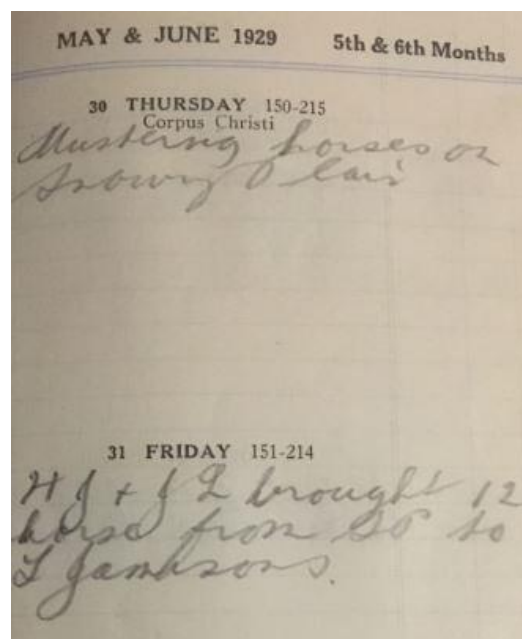
⁴ David Dixon, Ngarigo and Djiringanj mawa (male) “Retelling of my elders story of Ngarigo, Djiringanj and the Brumby... The Men from Snowy River



George Day mustering brumbies near Charlottes Pass for the annual rodeo 1948 (Photo by Fitzpatrick NLA)

A report in the Alpine Pioneer on 28th December 1860 describes how a party of ‘enterprising gentlemen’ including an American, Mr Inchcliffe, climbed from the Thredbo/Crackenback diggings to the top of the adjacent mountain range. The climb took upwards of three hours and once on top the party found remnant snow drifts three feet thick. The report said, ‘On ascending the table land, immense herds of wild horses were seen, which it would be impossible to drive in.’ It would appear that the party had climbed the Ramshead Range and looked out across the alpine country in the vicinity of Perisher Valley. Clearly the horses they saw had been in the area for some time.

(Hugh Capel 2003 Kiandra Gold ‘historical facts’)



Jardine Family diaries at Bullenbalong 1929.

“HJ & JL Brought 12 horses from Snowy Plains to yards at Tom Jamiesons”

Lisa (Jardine) Rowbotham collection

Long trek over wild bush trails to mountain rodeo

By **BETTY WILKINSON**

Horsemen and horsewomen rode for days over rough mountain tracks to attend the first rodeo held at the Chalet, Mount Kosciusko.

They camped at night in stockmen's huts scattered over the ranges or else pitched their tents.

"Some of the horses were turned originally out on the mountains where they were running with hundreds of brumbies. One, who gave a good exciting show of buckjumping, had never been ridden before. Snowy River horsemen think a lot of these mountain ponies for when they catch them nowadays by yards in unexpected places putting salt in them.

"The horses will come around to get salt," said veteran Leo Byatt, who has ridden them for 50 years. "They would come right into the Chalet if there were no people about."

"FOR THE BUSHMEN LOVE HARD RIDING" The Australian Women's Weekly 23 February 1946 (above)



Hotel Kosciusko (Charlottes Pass) Rodeo (NLA)

"Hackney" writes: - "I have heard boundary-riders and farmers' sons say that the wild horses or brumbies running at large in the mountainous country about Mt Kosciusko when broken were the finest horses they ever handled, having great, strength and endurance, not having been pampered in stables as the more finely formed racehorses are. So it is in America, The wild horses on the great range of Texas, California, Oregon, and Dakota when broken to the saddle, make the best sort of army, and cavalry horses-hardy sturdy beasts...⁵

Snowy River March.

On the 6th January there will start out on its pilgrimage to the metropolis from Delegate the route march known as **The Men from Snowy River Route March.** This is a march distinct from any other route march owing to the environment of the people through which it passes. The famous **Mauaro brumby** is noted for its staying qualities, whilst the **man from Snowy River** for his fine physique and stamina.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer Tuesday 21 December 1915

Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Tuesday 4 November 1941,

ARMY STILL NEEDS HORSES

Transport and Cavalry

CARE AND SKILL IN TRAINING

BY A STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Australian Light Horse in its last series of camps, which ended in May, used nearly 10,000 horses, while 4,000 remounts are permanently on army duty in Australia.

Horses for the remount depots are always obtained unbroken. Many of the best draft were taken from the unbridled freedom of Kiangra and the slopes of the Southern Tablelands.

⁵ HORSE-BREEDING. (1900, July 28). *The Australasian*

Aesthetic significance

Wild Horses do have high aesthetic significance and value when included in some natural landscapes. For many people the nature and integrity of the landscape that includes horses is closely related to their own spiritual and cultural values. This visual appeal includes the sensory perception and appreciation of the horses' freedom, strength and wildness. Catching just a glimpse of elusive brumbies running through the bush and hearing the galloping stampede of hooves or a whinnying call from one horse to another can be breathtakingly exhilarating and thrilling for many.

Some people feel that the horses can add a kind of beauty and cultural meaning which has exceptional aesthetic value as they are a defining inhabitant in these unique landscapes. There is also a simple admiration for the horses that cope and adapt to the inhospitable elements. All this has obviously stirred strong emotions and associations with humans in these remote and wild landscapes for over a century in one way or another.

A barren and almost industrial landscape of disturbed and damaged gold diggings at Kiandra for example can look cold and uninteresting and even ugly, so is not considered worthy until a wild horse adds its noble majesty to the frame which instantly changes and heightens the senses.

While it is acknowledged that some may feel that horses on some landscapes have negative aesthetic values it is equally true of some manmade items that is ironically deemed valued.

A national icon celebrated by another national icon:



The remains of the pastoral theme in the mountains history, especially the huts, and their exotic domestic plantings in a unique and beautiful mountain setting along with the brumbies have a very strong connection and appeal to many visitors and especially to locals imbued with their pastoral traditions. Our past history, our stories, myths and legends as well as the remains that are left behind have been used for more than a century by famous Australians to create works of literature and art which continue to be nationally recognised and still celebrated today and which form a part of the national psyche. A principle inclusion in the pastoral theme of old is the wild horses as expressed in Kosciusko and is of national aesthetic significance.

Truscott et al. (2006:134) argued that the national threshold for social value of the Australia Alps generally is reached because of the iconic status of the place and the Australian community's sense of national identity based on cultural myths such as 'The Man from Snowy River', originating in 1890, and continues as one of the central nation-building narratives of post-colonial Australia. This symbolism has its roots in the simple but aesthetically evocative image of horses in the wild mountainous landscape — often linked to the horses' mere presence in the landscape ...⁶



Carol Hancock Photography

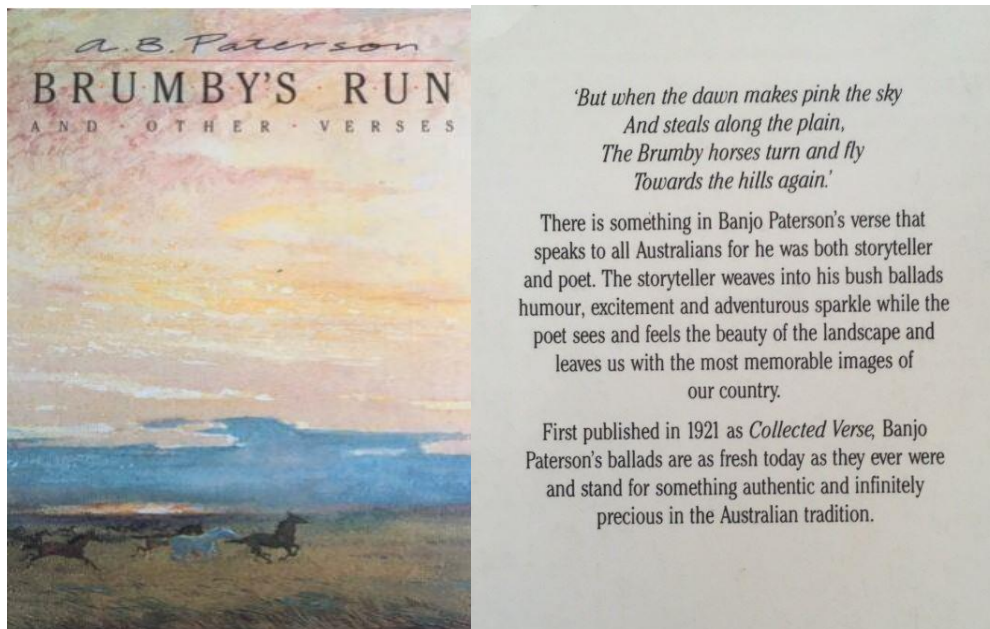
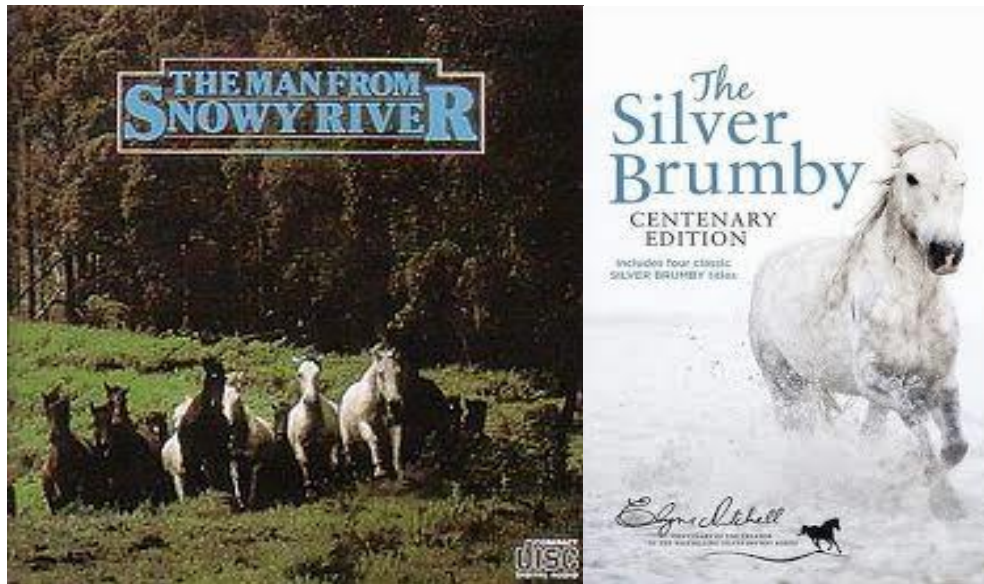
Several generations of Australians grew up reading or knowing of the Silver Brumbies series of books (famous and still in print for 60 years) or has watched the Man from Snowy River movies or TV shows. Maybe they have visited the long running 25 years Man from Snowy River Bush Festivals or the Gold Coast's theme park of the Outback Spectacular started by the Man from Snowy River Spectacular which had booked out tours around Australia in 2002 to 2004. There are also hundreds of smaller celebrations of the same brumby themed celebrations of our history continuing today around Australia.

The majority of the audiences all long to see the real brumbies of the Snowy Mountains in the flesh to tick off their bucket list, or to start a new love affair with the mountains. The Snowy brumbies are loved by people from all walks of life. Without needing any personal connections to their history, many just cherish the sometimes 'once in a lifetime' experience and to photograph the wild horses in real time.

⁶ (CONTEXT)

Although the Snowy brumbies were already acknowledged locally for decades before the famous poem, The Banjo then brought them to the world via the Bulletin in 1890.

Later in 1958 Elyne Mitchell who lived at the foot of the mountains carried the baton even further when she brought the brumbies to *life* in the Australian bush. They amongst many other writers and artists celebrated the brumbies in poetry, paintings or literature. They can today be very glad that the story of the brumbies is still told well over 100 years later but in now beautiful photographs and digital video shared around the world in an instant.



The Kosciusko NP wild horse population is recognised as a tangible attribute associated with the positive aesthetic experience of witnessing wild horses in the landscape. This appears likely to reach the national threshold due to the strong aesthetic appreciation attributed to the 'Australian brumby' across the Australian community (and linked to the Snowy River mythologies), and by the High Country community for the same reason, as well as for their more intimate aesthetic connection to the KNP landscape, their own histories and to wild horses.⁷

Not many other introduced animals to Australia can lay claim to being the subject of several famous creative works of excellence that the brumbies have. Works of art, poetry and literature were popular in the last century as brumbies were a common theme. Today it is no different and modern artists still see quality and significant meaning and value in the brumbies.

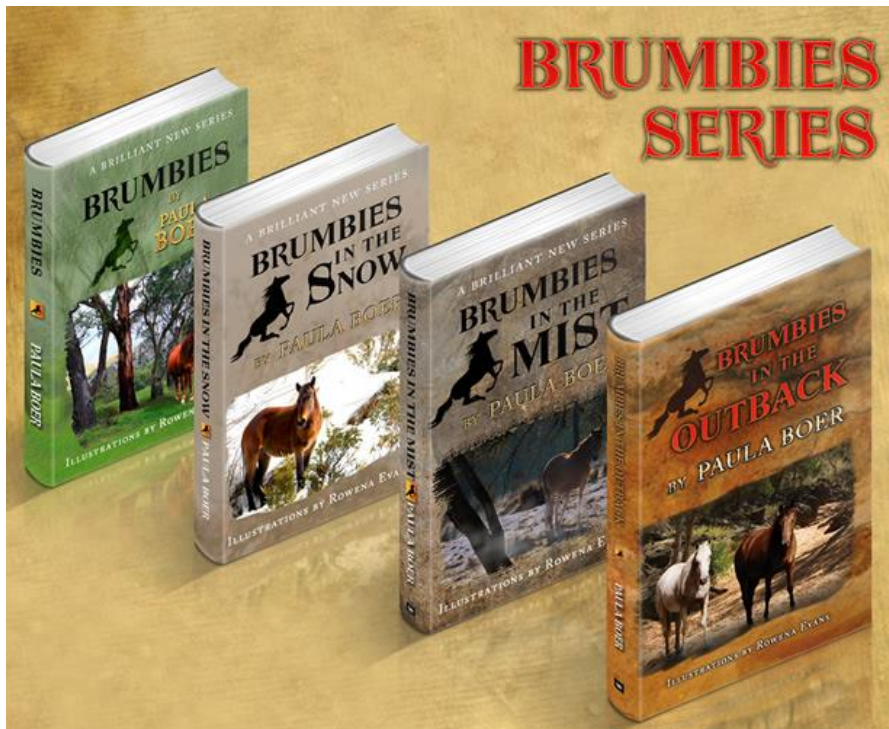


Kevin Best: Brumbies in the Snow, Brumbies Hideaway...and others

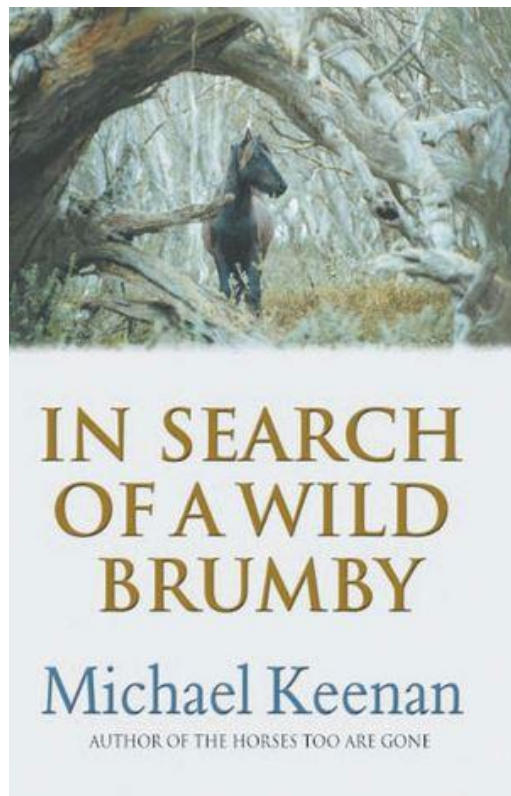


Darcy Doyle: Brumbies in flight, Brumbies Run ...and others

⁷ (CONTEXT)



Paula Boer: Brumbies, Brumbies in the Snow, Brumbies in the Mist, Brumbies in the outback



Michael Keenan: In search of a wild brumby, Horses too are gone, Wild horses don't swim & Last horse Standing.

There are numerous talented photographers with portfolios full of wonderful images of brumbies in the Snowy Mountains. These images are shared around the world generally but it is not uncommon to see as posters or framed prints on display in many tourist retail outlets, accommodation houses and resorts and public houses as well as in many corporate type office work environments. The brumby images are also popular as calendars, postcards and even cushion covers. There is no end to the appreciation of this beautiful imagery that is most popular in the community.



Snowy Mountains Brumby Photography



Australian Brumby Photography



Social significance

“These values may be seen in places and physical features but can also be associated with intangible qualities such as people’s associations with or feelings for an item, or in cultural practices, knowledge, songs and stories.”⁸

Kosciuszko Wild Horses without doubt are known to have outstanding social significance to the local community and the Australian community at large because of their historical and cultural associations. Brumbies are recognised and esteemed by associated communities as a part of their story and their identity. Many locals and non-locals venture to the brumby areas to horse ride or hike and photograph. The brumbies evoke a sense of freedom and history in the landscape and have a strong visual appeal to many.

Brumbies are intrinsic to communities’ sense of wellbeing and, if removed from the landscape would result in a strong sense of loss.

The current plight of the brumbies being played out in social media further demonstrates the continuance of strong community associations with them in the bush and the deep meanings and feelings arising from those connections.

‘The KNP wild horse population is recognised as a tangible attribute associated with this value, again one of a suite of tangible and intangible attributes, and strongly evidenced in the continual appearance of the ‘Snowy River brumby’ in the Australian and High Country communities’ public realm of expression.’⁹

The pioneering history of the high country is valued as an important part of the construction of the Australian identity featuring in myths, legends and literature. The ballad "The Man from Snowy River" epitomises horsemanship undertaken historically in the rugged landscape. The stories, legends and myths of the mountains and mountain lifestyles have been romanticised in books, films, songs, and television series and many such as the Elyne Mitchell’s Silver Brumby novels are part of Australia’s national identity.¹⁰

There continues to be numerous relevant local events held annually as well as many more national shows and multi-media events all significantly celebrating the heritage of the Man from Snowy River and his Snowy Mountains brumbies. This demonstrates the continuing popularity and the national iconic status of the brumbies and the horsemen.

Combined, these establish that the brumbies are a symbol as a reminder of a past times including traditional and historic associations.

⁸ (Sharon Sullivan and Jane Lennon. *Cultural Values, KNP Independent Scientific Committee (ISC) 2002*)

⁹ *CONTEXT 2015*

¹⁰ (*National Heritage Listing*)

Even our great grandmothers rode brumbies. Alice & Charlotte Adams Jindabyne (1920)



Jindabyne 1930s



Personal collection

Local Festivals

- Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Assoc annual 'Man from Snowy River Mountain Muster' - Winners of the "Canberra Regional Awards for Culture".
- The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival – 25 years Annual event over a week in Corryong
- The Snowy River Festival – Annually Dalgety
- Mountain Cattlemen Association of Victoria's Get Togethers – Vic. Annual circuit of several high country districts
- Mansfield Great Mountain Race – annually Mansfield Victoria.
- Australian Mountain Racing Australia – Annual Circuit of Vic & NSW high country riders.
- Annual Man from Snowy River Rodeo – Jindabyne. Boxing Day annually since 1940
- Adaminaby Stockmens Challenge
 - Murrarundi Stockmens challenge, Gundagai Stockmens Challenge and others

Major National Media Events that celebrate our heritage

- The Man from Snowy River – feature movie
- The Man from Snowy River II, Return to Snowy River – feature movie
- The Man from Snowy River, The MacGregor Saga - TV Series
- The Silver Brumby – feature movie
- The Silver Brumby children TV shows
- The Silver Brumby book series over 60 years
- The Man from Snowy River Arena Spectacular – stage show tour of Australian cities
- The Man from Snowy River show – annual Sydney Royal Easter Show
- The Gold Coast Outback spectacular theme park "High Country Horses" theme
- The Opening of Olympic Games Sydney



In comparison with other wild horse populations, the KNP wild horse population strongly represents the 'Snowy Mountains' mythologies, notably through the influence of Paterson and Mitchell, as well as having an historical connection to the High Country cultural landscape created through pastoralism. The wild horse population is also valued for the aesthetic qualities of wildness.

- *The horses played an important role in the cultural history of the region;*
- *They have a strong association with some sections of the local communities in the Kosciuszko area and the direct descendants of pastoralists and pastoral workers;*
- *The stories and traditions associated with them have a strong association with a group of people of importance in the cultural history of Australia — poets, artists and writers in the pastoral tradition; and*
- *The most celebrated wild horses in the Australian pastoral tradition are those associated with Kosciuszko, which have to some extent become a national icon, along with their riders and musterers, as demonstrated in literature, art, film and the 'Man from Snowy River' sequence that opened the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.¹¹*

The (Context) analysis also found that there are no wild horse populations outside the Australian Alps that better represent the three key value themes identified, although some other wild horse populations may embody similar values such as identity-building within communities, cultural memories of past land uses and cultural practices, and ideas of the untamed natural landscape. Unlike comparable wild horse populations within Australia, KNP and the Victorian Alps' wild horses are the only populations directly associated with 'The Man from Snowy River' legend, which was in turn inspired by the Snowy Mountains landscape. For some members of the Australian community, KNP's wild horses represent powerful ideas of horsemanship in the mountains and the mountain lifestyle expressed in 'The Man from Snowy River' legend. This legend and associated 'brumby' mythologies of Elyne Mitchell form an integral part of Australian folklore and Australia's national identity in the present. The wild horses continue to represent a dichotomy between civilisation and wildness, being seen simultaneously as domesticated assets of pastoral occupation and as wild natural creatures in a natural mountain landscape.¹²

¹¹ (ISC REPORT 2002 Cultural Values)

¹² (CONTEXT)



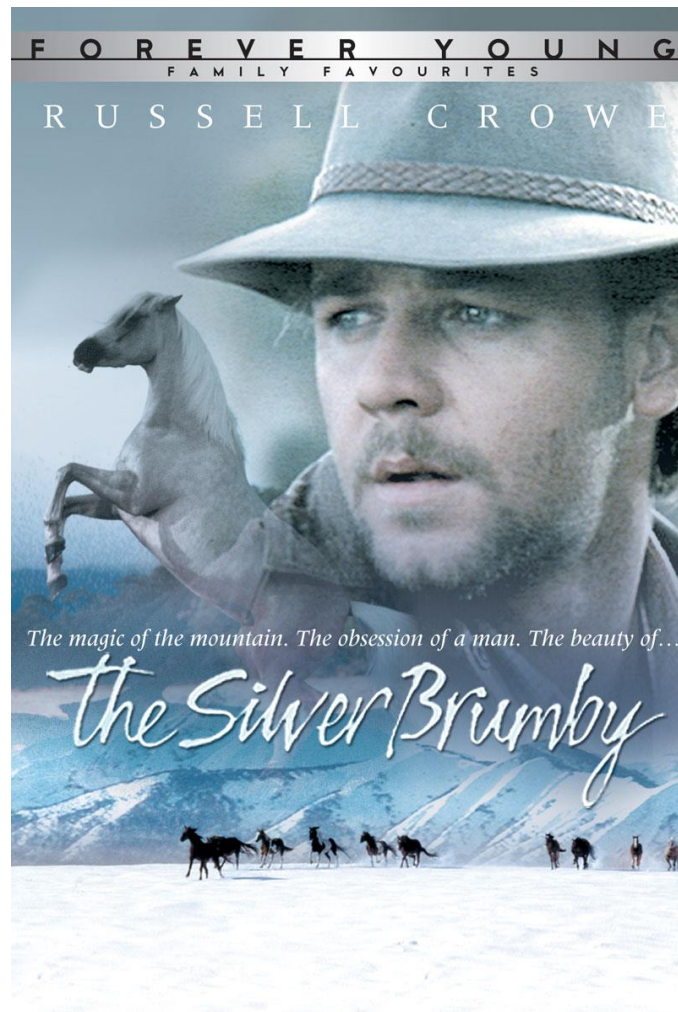
The Man from Snowy River Re-enactment at
The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival, Corryong 2019

Thousands of visitors waiting for the brumbies to arrive
'at the bottom of that terrible descent'...





High Country – Myths and Legends at the Australian Outback Spectacular



As the television images and thousands of photos taken at that moment still show, The massive black animal was power incarnate, an expression of the ultimate in horsemanship. And on his back The Man from Snowy River had come alive to welcome the World to Sydney. The world's attention was gripped The organisers had done it – they found the image that identified Australia to the world! They had brought Australia's bush legend to life¹³



“Some nations are lucky enough to have a national poem, a work that encapsulates the national character, that speaks of its history and unfolds its ideals at the same time...Paterson’s genius was to capture, in 13 stanzas and six and a half minutes those things that are quintessentially Australian. The larrikin spirit, the never-say-die determination, the identification with the underdog, the national right to a fair go – they’re all there in Snowy.....Some say our sympathy for the battler is a heritage of our convict past, when we were all underdogs and seeing the toffs take a spill would make our day. But even for us New Australians, children of two traditions, it is precisely those traditions embodied in Snowy that make us most want to identify as Australian. I think we were all surprised just how proud we felt when that lone rider came out and cracked his whip, that night at Homebush. But really, we shouldn’t have been. After all, Australia is probably the only country in the world where every citizen knows at least one line by the national poet”¹⁴

¹³ (Evan McHugh Outback Heroes 2004)

¹⁴ (Ignatius Jones - Co-creative Director of Sydney 2000 Olympic Opening Ceremony)



The ACT Brumbies Rugby Union team – ‘the team’s logo – the Brumbie, which is the fearless wild horse that roams wild in packs in the Alpine country south of Canberra’. ¹⁵

The relationship between humans and horses is long-standing and horses continue to be held in high regard as domesticated animals that support human endeavours. While this value may be primarily connected to domesticated horses and other evidence of their important role, the history of KNP demonstrates that the releasing, re-capturing and harvesting of wild horses formed a part of pastoral activity in the High Country.

However, KNP (along with the adjoining conservation reserves in Victoria and the ACT) appears to offer the strongest evidence of specific narratives and values associated with High Country pastoral activities and transhumance, as well as with brumby running and brumbies in Australian mountain and alpine landscapes.

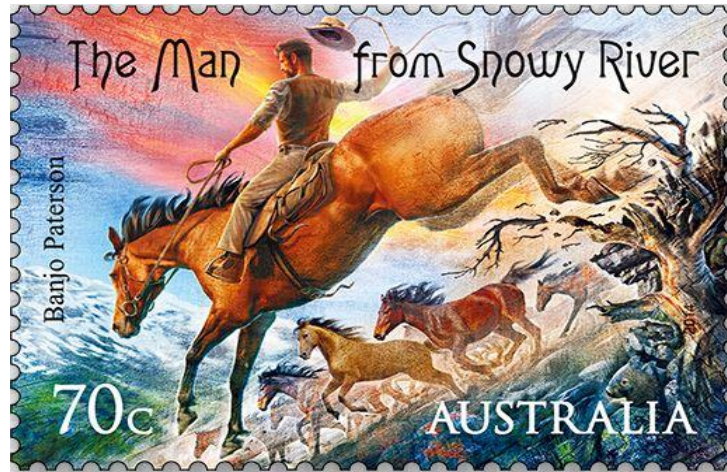
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The National Icon on our currency

¹⁵ (A short history of the Brumbies – The Runner Sports)

¹⁶ (CONTEXT)



The National Icon on our postal stamp

“The pastoral theme as expressed in Australia's highest mountains has strong social value, demonstrated in the very active continuation of and celebration of its traditions and the respect for its physical remains including its pastoral landscapes, wild horses, and stock routes. The Man from Snowy River is known in many households around Australia. In this sense the social value of the theme is of national importance. The most celebrated wild horses in the Australian pastoral tradition are those associated with Kosciuszko, which have to some extent become a national icon, along with their riders and musterers, as demonstrated in literature, film and the Man from Snowy River sequence which opened the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.”¹⁷
Jane Lennon 2002 Australian Heritage Commissioner

¹⁷ (Jane Lennon 2002 Australian Heritage Commissioner. The Cultural Significance Of Australian Alpine Areas, International Year of Mountains Conference)

At the Local Level – Man from Snowy River country

'From the beginning, there has been a series of major problems in local relationships, and sometimes deep and long enduring resentment of the park. There are many residents who have a real sense of attachment to the park, but that is not very evident to the visitor. The commercial sector and in particular the ski resort industry, totally dominates...'

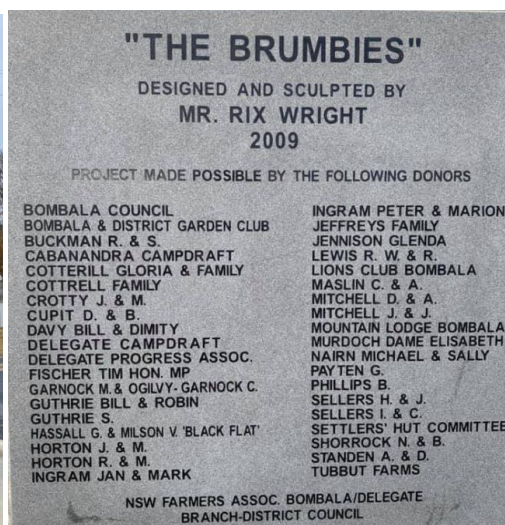
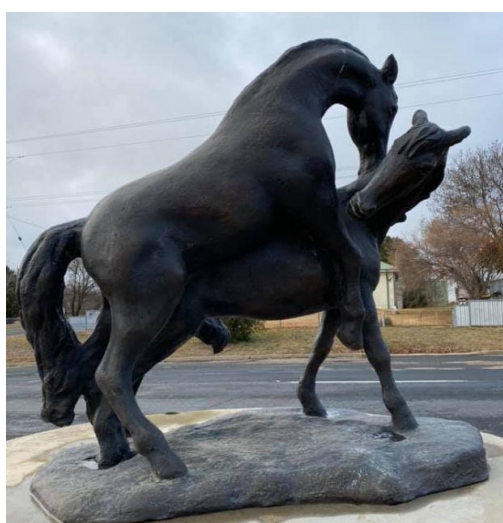
*'In so far as the social dimensions of park management have already been considered, this has been based primarily in the utilitarian spheres of recreation, tourism and public education. There has been little or no exploration of the spiritual, ideological, and community identity elements of the park experience; we know all too little about how people perceive or value the park experience, or what that experience really means to them.'*¹⁸



A brumby welcome at the entrance to the Snowy Monaro ACT/NSW border by Snowy Monaro Regional Council



The Man from Snowy River welcome at Cooma Centennial Park by Snowy Monaro Regional Council



A demonstration of the Delegate community's value and celebration of 'The Brumbies' in the main street

¹⁸ (Elery Hamilton –Smith Social Values Independent Scientific Committee 2002)



The Man from Snowy River at Corryong Victoria on the western side of the mountains

The above repetitive theme undeniably states that the Snowy brumbies have played a very significant role in the Australian story. At the local level the brumbies have a much more personal and deeper importance as they are an integral part of our local history and culture in the Snowy Mountains. Since colonial settlement of all the mountain districts, wild horses were never far away and a huge part of the story.

It is true that some of our ancestors did not always look kindly on the wild horses. In the early days most of the whole region was unfenced and consequently the brumbies were considered pests to be loathed as they competed against the domestic livestock for forage & grazing just as the deer and kangaroos do today. Unfenced land holdings and new ventures of pastoral enterprises starting out meant they were also a threat to domestic horses to cross breed or worse to actually “*join the wild bush horses*”. Brumbies were often shot or snared and used for their hides. In the very early days it was a matter of survival in the wilderness and wild horses were a plentiful resource for various needs.

As the years passed, the mountain community started to warm to the brumbies. Chasing of brumbies was soon considered a sport and the good types caught were used for mounts or bred and released again. The Boer war also saw many of the wild horses then a valued commodity as horses were wanted by the army as well as for stock work.

Following many decades of fairly disparaging attitudes towards wild horses, there was a discernible shift in the 1880s and 1890s in popular attitudes to the wild mountain horses. Terms such as ‘splendid’ and ‘magnificent’ begin to be applied to the wild horses of the district. A sales notice for a pastoral run in the Kiandra district in 1880, for example, advertised ‘200 splendid wild horses on the run’ (Queanbeyan Age, 28 Jan 1880). An article on the Upper Murray District in 1885 noted the wild horses that occupied the nearby Snowy Mountains on the border between Victoria and NSW. A local pastoralist named Findlay declared, ‘he did not let his horses run on the back hills as there was danger that they would join the mobs of wild horses that are frequently found in the high mountains’. The article continued: ‘These horses are said to be remarkably swift and agile, and whenever seen are always in excellent condition’ (North Eastern Ensign (Benalla), 24 Nov 1885).¹⁹

¹⁹ (CONTEXT)

The close relationship of brumbies with some in the local community was never a secret but is mostly unknown today. For generations, the mountain horsemen grew up listening to their forefather's stories of dash and danger and of bravery and endurance. Just like 130 years ago many claimed to be the subject of the famous "Man" and today the competition is still just as strong. This is demonstrated today in "Challenge" events around Australia. Every generation of riders is never as good as the last generation before it in their own eyes. The bushmen continue to show honour and reverence for those who rode before them and it is equally thought of the horses.

This culture has not disappeared it has merely evolved to suit the era. The world has now grown larger around the mountains. Tourism has seen a major expansion into the mountains in recent decades. Many newcomers are unfamiliar with this heritage however many newcomers also came *because* of that heritage. Although resorts and infrastructure have now taken over the grazing runs and development and bitumen roads has replaced the stock routes, there are still some families today continuing to carry on the traditions.

Some people cannot grasp the social and often emotional connection. It has been said that the blame lies with Banjo Patterson for leading us astray with his romantic poetry and then say that he was fraudulent in his descriptions of the wild horses and that they were purely make believe.

As we here in the Snowy all know, the Banjo did in fact spend a lot of time here in the mountains with our own families and the stockmen. Banjo saw the magic all first-hand. The magic is very real and common knowledge to those of us who have been lucky enough to experience it.

Here in the Snowy the Brumbies are an integral part of our high- country heritage and its folklore. They reflect the history of our ancestors, a history that in this part of the world gives us our own identity of which we are rapidly losing.

The Snowy Mountains Stockmen now almost extinct, rightly or wrongly had their cattle taken from the mountains, then their homes and history flooded for Hydro-Electricity and more recently their way of life of riding their horses in the mountains was prohibited too.

The horsemanship, bush craft and bush lore that was once passed down and celebrated by Australians is all but gone. What is there left now if not for the brumbies to even demonstrate that our history ever existed.²⁰

The horsemen have come of age over the last century with their horsemanship and skills, their knowledge and treatment of their own domestic horses and also with brumbies. More than ever before, horsemen are now at their best. They are thirsty for knowledge to give the horses a better deal and to learn from them. Horsemanship has changed dramatically from what it once was and is continually evolving. It is acknowledged that we never stop learning about and from these special animals. These special skills are demonstrated and celebrated in many equine disciplines today but most particularly in stockman's challenges that indeed include brumby events for all to see.

²⁰ (Leisa Caldwell - Why the Emotion? - Response to 2002 KNP Wild Horse Steering Committee on Guy Fawkes massacre)

Scientific significance

The Wild horses of KNP could have very high scientific significance in the potential to yield information that will contribute to a better understanding of:

- horse impacts on environments (positive and negative)
- horse impacts on human behaviour (psychology/therapy)
- understanding horse behaviour
- population management

The modern species of Equus has been around for at least a million years. Humans hunted horses for food and their hides from around 50,000 years ago. Something special happened around 6,000 to 8,000 years ago when the horse became domesticated by man.

Humanity and civilisation was transformed thanks to horses. The horse and man relationship and *later* the wheel, combined gave a great boost to man's ability on earth and consequently the civilised world evolved.

This 21st century is now seeing for the very first time ever in human history that horses are no longer needed for the mainstay of civilisation (transport, fieldwork, food or war). The horse carried us into wars, and by our side died for us as partners for thousands of years and still continue by our side as pets and partners. Horses have been a part of our own evolution since the beginning of human time and so instinctively for many people today wild horses in particular evoke very deep feelings in us. There is no other species on the planet with such a record as horses have had interacting and partnering humans whether it be as a beast of burden, or as man's best friend. The inter-connection is still as strong as it ever was.

We are learning more about our connections with horses every day. The bond between horses and humans is profound and emotional and now there is plenty of evidence that horses both wild and domesticated can be utilised in mental health therapy programs around the world.

Horses are now known to be healers and teachers. This intimate response to horses is well known in groups who use horses for therapy for disabled and autistic people for example. RDA (Riding with the disabled) now have thousands of established volunteer groups around the world specific to helping people of all ages with mental and physical disabilities. They know the profound effect that horses can have for therapy.

*Throughout time horses have held a certain allure and mystery for human beings.... horses have a mythical significance; the wild horse represents the uncontrollable instinctual urge of the unconscious, whilst the horse also stands for the magical side of the person, the intuitive mother within. Horses are also rich with metaphoric possibility. In the Bible the horse is most often depicted in battle. Speed, endurance, strength, beauty, and loyalty are characteristics associated with horses.*²¹

²¹ (Randy Zasloff 2009 Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy: An Outcome Study)

1. Horses, just by their large, gentle presence, put people therapeutically in touch with the vitality of being alive.
2. People who ordinarily shun physical and emotional closeness often can accept closeness from a horse and through therapy can transfer these skills to their daily lives.
3. The behaviour of a sensitive horse display the rider's emotions to the therapist and provides a vehicle the therapist can use to teach the patient coping skills.
4. Therapists with an interest in horses can learn more about how to become involved in an equine-facilitated psychotherapy practice through the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association

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Wild horses are also being further used for helping rehabilitate prisoners and returned veterans with PTSD. Some people prefer to just seek them out in the wild to sit and watch them in harmony with nature. Should brumbies need to be removed from the National Park, they can continue to contribute to the health of the human species in ways that we still don't fully understand.

People of all ages can benefit from Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) Some specific client challenges include: behavioural issues, Attention Deficit Disorder, anger management, conflict resolution, relationship problems, couples therapy, depression, anxiety, stress, substance abuse, eating disorders, at-risk youth, victims of abuse, those in bereavement, those lacking self-esteem, veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, people who are unresponsive to traditional therapies, and people with other mental health challenges. EAP is also used for corporate retreats, group and family sessions.²³



²² (Anne Bates June 2002 of patients & horses. Equine-facilitated psychotherapy)

²³ (Laura Trask Ph.D. Wild Thoughts 2010 Psychology Today)



Private Messages received:

“I am a client with beyond blue and I am suffering with severe depression. why am I saying this is simple when the world is hard on my shoulders I head to the mountains to see the brumbies running free . It's my therapy it's my time and space to forget about everything. To sit and watch them graze all day to sit have lunch with them and to just be there makes my life feel fresh and happy again. Its like they absorb all negativity. Working all the time with nowhere to escape and when u find the place they are now distorting it . Some people wont admit it but they go out there to cry to feel free of pressure and the general day to day life experiences.” ANON

“My best mate and I share the same thing escaping to the snowies to just be at peace to relax in the bush to see the brumbie s wonder freely we go searching for them and get all excited when we sight them we count them quickly take photos and go wow check that little fella out hehehehehe. We both live it up there it's the land of the free. A slice of heaven wrapped up in those big beautiful brown eyes . As you look into them it's like there taking out what's bothering your mind and easing it away. It's like a breath offresh air been sent back through you starting from the grass roots up . Touching your blood flowing through your vains that pumps eventually into your heart . The cold fresh air that comes from there snout blows towards your face and you breath it deep with in your lungs that slice of air is the cold snap of life been re born into your body . A tear rolls down your face not of sadness but of happiness . Because you could see this majisticfree animal for one more time .

When I head there I head there to be reborn I head there for a slice of heaven a slice of the meaning why we work so hard . A slice of silent thank you . There is no greed there is no politely there is no crime there is no humanity crimes . Please save our brumbys.” ANON

There is much to learn from our wild horses.

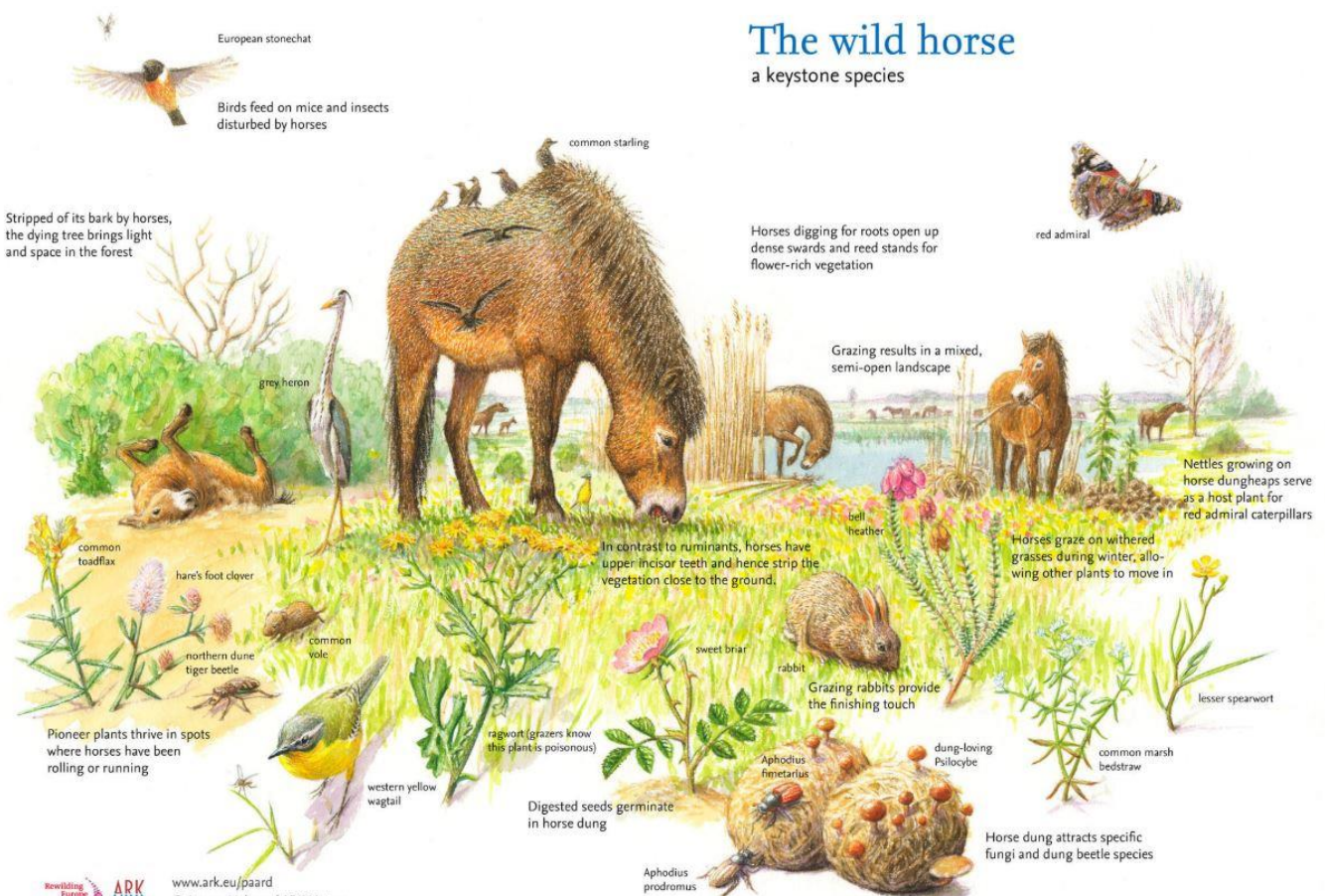
So far it has been refused to investigate any benefits to the natural environment in Australia by wild horses. Any benefits are dispelled automatically in Australia simply because horses are not native. If horses were human this would be deemed discriminative.

If government wants to sincerely rely on scientific evidence alone then all values and impacts should be rigorously researched. All literature today tells us that there are still many knowledge gaps. Yet to date, there has been no long-term independent field studies on impacts (good or bad) of wild horses in Kosciusko. Too many assume that the grazing era studies suffice when we know that horses are a totally different grazing herbivore to that of cattle and sheep on the environment and can have benefits if managed properly.

Australian authorities are quick to reference studies from overseas such as the BLM or New Zealand experience to consider removal methods or other issues, although refuse to seek further knowledge of the European experience in their use of rewilding areas with horses.

There is ample evidence that proclaim that grazing by horses is not only very different to that of cattle or sheep but can also be beneficial to some natural ecosystems when managed.

An example of the European experience:



Rewilding Europe Ark Nature.

Wild horses are being released into the wild in many nature reserve areas overseas to rehabilitate and restore the biodiversity to again flourish in the United Kingdom including Wales, Scotland and the south coast of England.

In Italy, the Foce Isonzo Natural Reserve has used horses since 1991 to keep the park's environmental balance. Since the horses arrived the variety and health of the reserve's plants and animals, in particular its birds, has flourished. Similar programs are underway in France and Asia with the principal objectives being habitat protection and restoration.

A conservation group has arranged for horses to be re-introduced to the Campanarios de Azaba Biological Reserve in western Spain to protect its biodiversity and replenish natural spaces.

United States, Wildlife Ecologist, Craig Downer said recently of our Snowy Mountain brumbies *“they are being targeted in a very prejudiced manner. These are magnificent animals who contribute so much that is positive to the ecosystem and to the life of the community. Wild horses can be a very big positive in restoring soils and in seeding many diverse plant species. (Particularly after fire) They can adapt. It is not all black and white as the narrowly focused conservationists maintain.”*²⁴

In Kosciusko National Park it is often noted by many locals when exploring different areas of the bush how there seems to be much more birdlife in brumby habitat areas. There is so much more to learn and field studies are vitally needed to fill these knowledge gaps.



Michelle J Photography Copyright

²⁴ Craig Downer Wildlife Ecologist, (2014) Report to Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Assoc.

THE MISSING LINK

Hard-hooved animals and the Australian environment

Many people have strained credibility by claiming that so-called soft-footed animals have less adverse effects upon soil and water conservation values than do 'hard' hooved animals.

It is difficult to support this theory after observing the extensive areas of bare and disturbed ground scarified by lyre birds beneath the scrubby understory of forests in the Eastern ranges and the burrowing and soil subsidence following countless years of wombat excavation.

Half a century ago there was vast devastation by soft-footed rabbits that completely denuded the land, destabilized river banks, and ring-barked millions of tree seedlings.

The inconclusive rhetoric that has been circulated and has gained some currency with people who do not understand grazing animals, has led them to believe that the so-called hard-hooved animals are detrimental to the Australian environment.

Australia appears to have had by far the greatest soil erosion rate of any of the major land masses on the planet Earth and yet it is the only country that has not had vast herds of grazing ungulates. History indicates that in other countries, great herds of these hooved animals generally moved in a migratory fashion as they followed seasonal pasture growth and had their herding instincts developed by predators.

As they moved across the land, their hoof and tooth action reduced most of the remaining previous season's brittle and combustible dead grass to composting litter and converted new growth to fertilizer. Unfortunately human intervention with animal management has not always been accompanied by good husbandry practices in various parts of the world and this has created the misplaced belief that hooved animals are all bad for conservation values.

In Australia, where geologists have informed us that in past ages mountain ranges were as high as 25,000 feet above sea level, the large land creatures other than birds were marsupials and reptiles. Most grazing marsupials avoid the more elevated and snowy regions but it appears that as the mountains eroded and the plains became more arid and the annual snow melt reduced, these animals developed a unique reproductive system that better equipped them to survive droughts.

Until the aboriginal race of humans, and dogs came (a short space of time in ecological terms) their survival instincts were directed rather to withstanding drought than to the depredations of large and effective land based predators.

For millions of years the high country of Australia which is derived from the same basic foundations as are to be found throughout the rest of the world, was affected by successive routines of fire, flood erosion and regrowth which continued with relentless and devastating effect.

The average elevation of land in Australia is probably less than 200 metres while all other major land masses would have an average elevation of perhaps 1,000 metres or more.

There is a very great difference in the erosion levels while the only real significant difference is that Australia has not had the same beneficial hoof and tooth action of vast herds as they followed the seasons and made the annual regrowth of ground cover less fire-prone.

There is ample evidence today that well-managed grazing activity uses, and at the same time, strengthens plant communities of pastoral value.

In conclusion, is it not a fair question to ask, has the lack of hooved animals been responsible for accelerated land degradation in Australia?

Jim Commins

There is an opportunity to lead studies of managing horse populations.

Given the vast and diverse elevations and types of ecosystems that horses inhabit in and around KNP, it should be utilised for rigorous research that is needed for Australian environments. Not all areas are impacted the same.

Some salient examples of further scientific research that is required regarding horse impacts from previous studies regarding horses in Kosciusko National Park:

- *It has been noted that horses' hooves loosen and human feet compact surfaces (McQuaid-Cook, 1987), suggesting that there may be an advantageous 'cancelling-out' effect with concurrent trail use by horses and walkers. This is evident in field observations at Kuring-ai Chase NP, Canberra Nature Park, and South-east Queensland by the author of this current report. However, this has not been investigated in the literature.*
- *Geomorphic systems are characterised by thresholds relating to soil stability. When these thresholds are exceeded change, expressed as the initiation or development of gullying, rilling or sheet erosion, occurs. However, whilst this concept has been applied to responses of trails to use and climatic events in the United States, it has been noted that: Almost any rainstorm or level of use impacts new trails, but extreme storm events or very heavy use is needed to initiate change on existing tracks (Kuss, 1986). This has important implications for management of existing trails but needs to be assessed within the Australian context.*
- *Australian studies are extremely limited with significant constraints for wider application due to poor experimental design, site specific conditions or inadequate analysis of results. In addition, Sun and Walsh (1998) have stated that most studies have used field survey techniques which provide rapid results with relatively low costs.*
- *Snapshot perspectives do not provide an understanding of seasonal or annual variations in use or environmental factors;*
- *Short term data cannot provide an understanding of the relationship between the degree of impact and the intensity of use;*
- *The influence of prior events which define vegetation cover and surface soil condition (such as fire and/or extreme climate events) may not be integrated into the study*
- *The absence of grazing (by native, domestic and/or feral animals) is the most salient factor influencing the number of weeds (Whinam et al., 1994, Weaver and Adams, 1996)*
- *'plot experiments cannot be extrapolated to the landscape scale and certainly not to other ecosystems.'* (Sawyer, undated)

(Dr Sara Beavis ANU Senior Lecturer, Fenner School of Environment and Society.
Report to Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Assoc 2002)

Compensatory responses in survival, fecundity and age of first reproduction in the population should also be considered in any management program. That is, when culling reduces density, survival and fecundity may increase and age of first reproduction decrease, as reported for feral donkeys²⁵

Compensatory reproduction is defined as an increase in reproduction as a direct or indirect consequence of management reductions, including removals and contraception. Indirect responses could include increased fertility, foal survival, or adult survival due to reduced competition for forage.²⁶

... it may seem as if the ecological effects of feral horses are well established. We contend that this is not strictly the case, particularly for Australian ecosystems. Like all species, horses use and respond to their environment in a heterogeneous fashion (Turner 1987) over several spatial scales (Bailey et al. 1996; Beever et al. 2003; also see Wiens 1989; Mackey and Lindenmayer 2001; Kelly 2006). Hence they modify the spatial patterns of landscape elements variably across spatial hierarchies (Hobbs 1996; Beever et al. 2003)...

...This problem is best exemplified by the critique of Rogers (1991), offered by Linklater et al. (2000), demonstrating that positioning of horse exclosures can result in impact measurements unrepresentative of the broader system...

...The small number of feral horse studies that have paid credence to the importance of factors such as scale (see Beever and Brussard 2004), feedback loops and indirect effects (see Levin et al. 2002; Beever and Herrick 2006) have been undertaken in semiarid and marshland environments, and hence their applicability to similar disturbances in other ecological systems may be limited. Furthermore, we are not aware of any peer-reviewed research that analyses the effects of feral horses on native environments in Australia. In conclusion, there remain several critical gaps in our understanding of the ecological effects of feral horses on native environments, particularly with regard to Australian ecosystems.²⁷

Each of the professional groups that evaluates aspects of the cultural significance of places does so as a 'community' with shared interests and values, although not necessarily with agreement on everything. Each expert community develops its own knowledge base, language and criteria about what is valuable and what is not.

At present some values that represent the shared values of certain communities of interest are adequately represented simply because they are incorporated into professional assessment practice. However, other communities of interest remain unrepresented in the process, and some views may never be represented by 'experts' as they do not lend themselves to professionalisation.

Our current heritage assessment practices are clearly too narrow and fail to reflect the breadth and depth of interest present in our society. Social value has tended to mean all those values expressed by the community which fall outside our current professional framework. To enable such to be recognised and protected, social value needs to come into the mainstream of heritage assessment...²⁸

²⁵ (Walter 2002 Population Ecology of Wild Horses in the Australian Alps)

²⁶ (Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward (2013)

²⁷ (Dale Graeme Nimmo & Kelly K. Miller (2007) Ecological and human dimensions of management of feral horses in Australia)

²⁸ Johnston, C. 1992 'What is Social Value?', Context Pty Ltd for the National Trust of Australia

Genetics

It has been proven in other countries that the worth of each nation's iconic horses is twofold.

Firstly, as a tourist resource, where people are able to view and study the wild horse; to see firsthand, the horse in nature, in his environment. To make that link with that generational asset. There can be little doubt that the Brumby is now an adapted species of the Australian Mountain areas.

Secondly, the Brumby is a valuable genetic seed stock. The natural environment selects for that environment. Favourable mutation causes the variation we observe in any adapted species. Natural selection is not random, nor is evolution. The genetics of the Brumby have developed outside that of domestic breeding. Domestic breeding uses artificial selection to increase the frequency of traits we like, thus our domestic horses evolve by artificial rather than natural selection. Because of this fact, our equine genetic diversity is reduced, the rare alleles that were selected by nature will be lost. The 'wild' Brumby on the other hand isn't pressured by nature to 'look good' or perform exceptionally, he is likely to have a greater genetic diversity that is the future seed stock for our domestic breeds when it is required in the future. Destroying the Brumby, is destroying that genetic diversity, and those rare alleles that we may well need for our domestic animals.

In discussing the areas for the horses to be deemed as heritage I would say this; the smaller the horse numbers, they would have to be more closely managed so as not to enforce inbreeding. They should be allowed to range free and to intermix with other mobs. This would preserve the DNA and keep alive the rare genes in the sub population. The more you restrict the horses the more likely you are to enforce inbreeding.

Brumby DNA is an ongoing project. At the moment Dr Gus Cothran (retired), works part time on this project free and analyses the results as provided by Dr Rytis Juras (a past student of Gus's), at the Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences at Texas A&M university in Texas, who are the world leaders in equine genetic analysis.

I work as a sole link to these gentlemen. It helps control the database. The A & M is a teaching facility not a commercial lab, but they are a worldwide authority on equine DNA and the lab is extensive in its abilities.

Gus has single handedly written management plans for many of the worlds rare and endangered wild horses.

The Hoofs2010 brumby group have been collecting brumby samples for testing and we are building a database in regard to various brumby mobs from Kosci and including the Barmah forest brumbies.

What is important is that they have 'survival' genes that differ from domesticated horses.

(Richard Crispin (2016) Dip Equine Genetics, Snowy River Waler Horse Stud)

PRELIMINARY GENETIC ANALYSIS OF THE BRUMBY POPULATION OF THE KOSCIUSKO NATIONAL PARK AND BARMAH FOREST NATIONAL PARK, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

The following is a report of the findings of a preliminary genetics study of feral horses (Brumby) primarily included 31 horses from Barmah NP and 37 from Kosciuszko NP and these were the focus of this study. Genetic variability measures were calculated for the two populations above and compared to measures from 56 domestic horse breeds and the Przewalski Horse. These results for the two Brumby sample sets and representative domestic breeds are shown.

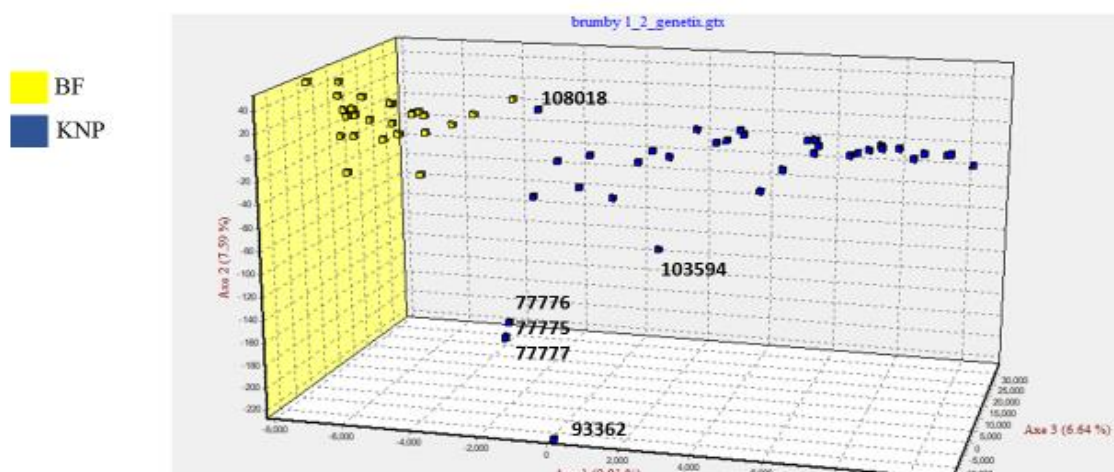
Looking at genetic resemblance of the individual Brumbys shows considerable diversity among them (Figure 1b). This figure is a plot of the genetic coordinates of individuals from four localities including BF and KNP. Of note, the KNP individuals are spread over the entire space while the BF horses cluster rather tightly with the exception of a couple of individuals.

As would be expected based upon the history of horses in Australia, both herds fall within the cluster of breeds that can trace their origins to the English Thoroughbred. The KNP shows closest resemblance to the Australian Waler breed. The BF is closest to trotting breeds in a cluster that is just outside the Thoroughbred cluster.

What needs to be done as we progress is to get samples from a number of different locals and analyze each local as a separate population. We can then characterize levels of genetic diversity in each local to determine what the genetic risks are for each area.

We can look at the relationships between each local and perhaps determine something about the origins of each (this is often very difficult with groups that have highly mixed origins as the Brumbies are likely to have). Overall, the goal is to devise a management plan that is based upon what is known about the genetics of each herd which can be incorporated into plans that need to take things such as the ecology into account. Wild horse management is complicated as is most wildlife management but adding genetics into the plan gives a much stronger strategy.

Figure 1b.



(E. Gus Cothran, Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA)

Brumby Habitats

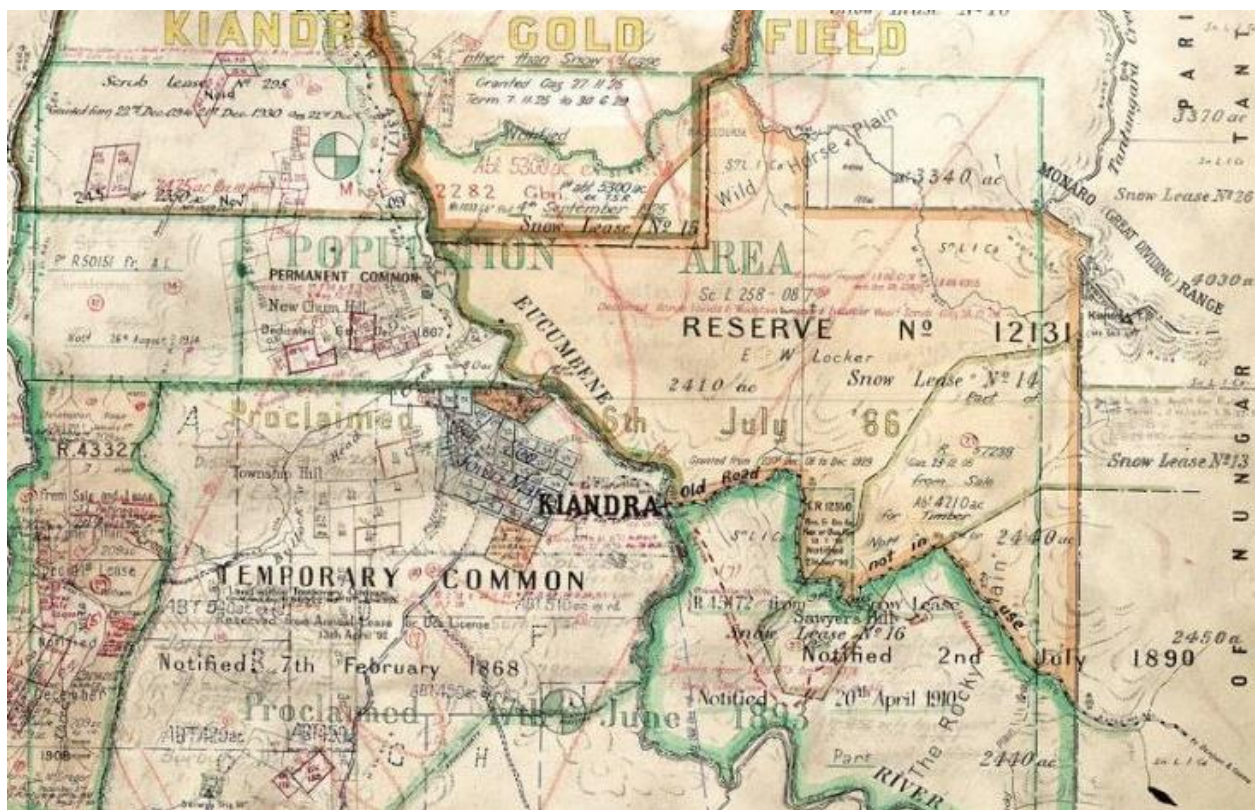
Northern Kosciusko – Wild Horse populations should be retained

Kiandra, Tantangara, Goandra, Long Plain, Currango, Cooleman, Rules Point and Peppercorn, and Coolamine areas.

Historically, the whole Northern end of the park is known for having horses and livestock spread far and wide for over 160 years.

Kiandra was settled with the gold mining boom and had a human population of more than 10,000 people plus their horses and livestock around 1860 and for some time after and then smaller populations thereafter for over 100 years. The whole northern locality from Kiandra to Peppercorn has seen many disturbed landscapes and environments from the diggings and pastoral settlements throughout the area.

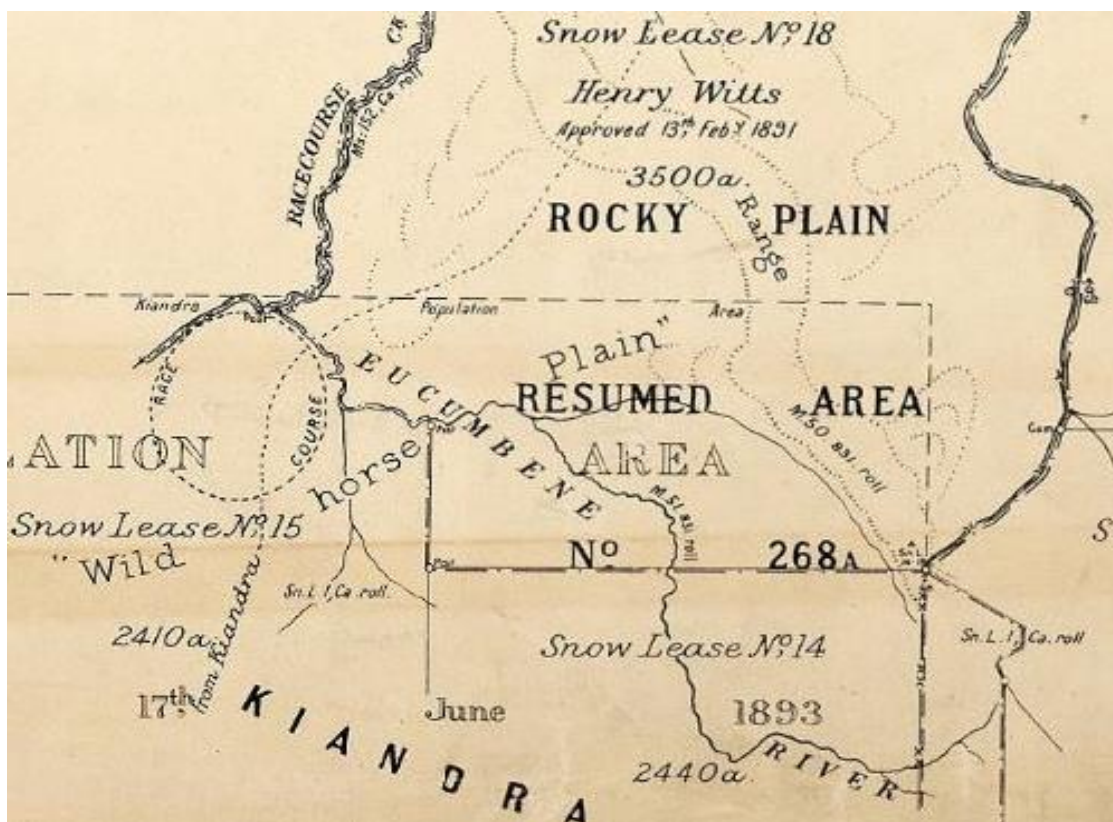
In 1866 the parish map of the heavily populated Kiandra district distinctly shows the area adjoining and north east of Kiandra township as “Wild Horse Plain”. A good indication that the wild horses were well established by 1866 in this location. The reserves and commons were intensely grazed by horses and livestock for over 100 years.



As had occurred in the nineteenth century the women largely stayed at the homestead and when there was no stock to muster the men hunted, fished and prospected throughout a wide geographical area encompassing the Long Plain and the Cooleman Plain. Additional money could be made from brumby running, rounding up wild horses and breaking them in; Tom Taylor was often hired by other station managers to break horses in. The division of labour changed gradually, with women participating in cattle droving and taking over the mail runs. By the 1940s women participated in the musters, horse races, buck jumping competitions and brumby chases.

Lachlan Cochran of Yaouk, who was decorated in the Boer War, is believed to have been one of the stockmen that Paterson used as a model. Amongst the families who lived on the mountain plains mustering and brumby chasing skills continued to be passed on from generation to generation. These practices continued to be employed until well after World War II and are documented in oral histories.²⁹

Even when the gold ran out, these bustling settlements in this populated region continued to thrive. There were several permanent homesteads, huts and outstations as well as hotels and guest houses at Kiandra and Rules Point. Social events were common including dances and picnics, sporting days and brumby chases. Horse racing was very popular and a regular event. This Kiandra parish map shows the circled racecourse above Wild Horse Plain on the bend of Racecourse Creek. Races were also held at Currango.



²⁹ (Coolamine Historical Analysis (2007) Otto Cserhalmi & Partners)

FEBRUARY 4.

A very enjoyable day's racing came off on Wednesday, in Centennial week, at Mr. Fisher's selection on the Currangorambla run, belonging to Mr. H. T. Whitty, near Kiandra, which is situated about 22 miles north east from Kiandra, and is nearly out of the snow-line, the herbage changing its character in a great measure in the total absence of snow-grass, but a profusion of wild oats is growing luxuriously on the open rolling plains. The attendance was very large, considering the sparsely populated neighbourhood, but which a few years ago was the habitat of the wild horse and the dingo alone. A great mistake was made in not having the meeting registered, as the fields would have been larger and the patronage more extended. Racing commenced with the Maiden Plate, 1 mile, weight for age, which was won by T. Oldfield's Nightshade, with W. Fisher's Nimrod and J. Mulvaney's (Kiandra) Miner occupying the other places. Hack Handicap, 1 mile, fell to J. Fisher's Dot, with W. Warner's Cinderella second, and T. Oldfield's Lucy third. The Currangorambla Handicap, 1½ mile, was an easy win for H. Oldfield's Cossack, who made all his own running and won by about 20 lengths, with T. Oldfield's Nightshade second, and W. Fisher's Queen third. The Ladies' Purse Handicap, 6 furlongs, was won on the post by half-a-head by Oldfield's Fairy Girl, with J. Hawkins's Tim and Fisher's Kathleen occupying the other places. The Trotting Race, 1½ mile, 11st. up, was won easily by E. Hawkins's Creamy against six starters.

. During the afternoon, in a race for a bridle, an old stock horse of Mr. T. Oldfield, by the name of Tom Webb,

known to be 22 years of age, and famous in his young days for running wild horses and bullocks, beat six other hacks of a superior description in a race for half-a-mile for the above prize.

(Kiandra. (1888, February 11). The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser)

The pastoral theme as expressed in Australia's highest mountains has strong social value, to descendants, to modern bushmen and to many other Australians. This is demonstrated in the very active continuation of and celebration of its traditions and the respect for its physical remains including its pastoral landscapes, wild horses, and stock routes. The high country's traditions are known, celebrated and passed on locally, and regionally and have an important place in the historic consciousness of Australians especially in regional Australia, albeit in a somewhat romantic way. The Man from Snowy River is known in many households around Australia — urban and rural. In this sense, the social value of the theme is of national importance. The pastoral theme, as it is expressed in the alps in general and Kosciuszko in particular, represents a unique high country variation of a way of life and a period of economic and social development that is of historic significance at a national level.³⁰

³⁰ (Independent Scientific Committee 2002)

SPORTS DAYS

Although each hut and homestead had no close neighbours there was no shortage of entertainment where everyone in the area would get together. Bushmen's carnivals, sports days, rodeos and races were held at Yarrangobilly Village, Yaouk, Talbingo, Rules Point and there was a New Years Sports Day at Kiandra. The Yarrangobilly Sports day was held not long after the Yaouk Rodeo. Locals rode down Yaouk via Currango and then back up to Yarrangobilly. Horses were the only means of travel. You went on horseback or you went in a horse and sulky. We [the Taylor family] rode everywhere. We used to go to Adaminaby or we'd ride to Tumut. It was a long trip down there but nobody thought twice about going fifty miles to a rodeo or something. The first Rules Point Sports day was held in 1915, with the proceeds donated to the Tumut hospital. It was at one of these sports days, in 1929 that Tom Taylor met Mollie Marden. Mollie's photos show the sapling yards, the buck jumping contests and the assortment of cars and buggies that brought the spectators to Rules Point. The Rules Point Guesthouse ...became the venue for the important annual event, the Rules Point Sports Day, usually in March. Flat races were run across the road, on the start [of] Long Plain. It was possible to get as much as four furlongs (800m) of fairly level ground, in one straight run. George [Day] remembers some of the best riders in the 1920s were Clarrie Rees, Bung Harris, the Yan boys, Clarrie Ware, Alvy Oddy, Tom Taylor and Doug Maxwell. Most were real daredevils and thought nothing of having a spill.³¹



Buck Jumping, Rules Point Sports Day, 1929 Note the similarity of the yards to those at Coolamine. Source: Taylor Family Collection via Coolamine Historical Analysis OTTO CSERHALMI + PARTNERS P/L

³¹ (Coolamine Historical Analysis for KNP (2007) - OTTO CSERHALMI + PARTNERS P/L)

The whole Kosciuszko landscape has been affected by the pastoral phase in Australia's national development, and it presents continuing evidence of this era. Significant evidence of the pastoral era on the landscape includes impressive and appealing cultural landscapes, vegetation change, changed fire regime, the continued presence of wild horses and other introduced species, and distinctive erosion patterns. Much of this evidence constitutes damage to the pre-European environment left by the Aborigines, but this record also has significant historic and scientific value.
(Independent Scientific Committee 2002)



Kiandra Plain diggings with wild horses in distance – photo circa 1890-1920

The current wild horse populations of the Kiandra area are important herds with specific confirmation & traits unlike anywhere else. Although the wild horses were already well established in the Kiandra and surrounding areas 40 years beforehand, another primary and major source of the horses' ancestry is from the Almac Cob Stud also known as Pleasant View Stud that was established in 1899 by Frank D Brown and located near Kiandra township. Brown had an area of from 14,000 to eventually 22,000 acres around the Kiandra township & west to the Tumut River. These horses were chosen for their body strength, endurance, solid bone and hardiness used under saddle and for harness. In 1906 four stallions were standing at this stud. "Snowball" a grey (white) welsh pony, "Vim" a chestnut Norfolk Cob, "Vero" was Brown/Black Welsh Pony imported from Wales and "Almac" a dark rich bay Cob that was deemed Champion at the Sydney Royal Ag Show on more than one occasion.

Early in 1912 Brown was declared bankrupt by the court and most horses were sold by dispersal sale. It was reported by the court that in January of 1913, there were 408 horses on "The Ranch" books at the time but there were 119 horses unaccounted for.³²

It is believed that the Almac horses went on to join the brumbies that had already been pre-established in the region and are now the ancestors of some of the revered iconic mobs at Kiandra today. These current well known and loved horses are renowned for their unique traits of heavy bone and cob type conformations.

Nov. 2, 1908.] *Agricultural Gazette of N.S.W.* 915


The Almac Cob Stud.

THE Almac Cob Stud was founded in 1899 by Frank D. Brown, at Kiandra, in the southern part of the State of New South Wales. It is a very mountainous country, and the elevations range from 1,600 feet to 5,000 feet above sea level. At the lower and intermediate levels the valleys fall into the Tumut River, and this part gives very good feed for winter grazing. The higher altitude, which is 8 miles to the westward of Kiandra, is a mixture of undulating plain country, and produces the best of natural grasses for summer feed. The Norfolk cob and the Welsh pony are the breeds of horses of which the Almac Cob Stud is composed. For foundation mares to start the stud, Mr. Brown purchased all those of thoroughbred and pure trotting bred and Welsh pony blood, with conformation, that met his approval, and the result is to-day a very fine group of youngsters, from foals 6 months old to mares 7 years old, that are doing exceedingly well, and the Sydney and Melbourne show rings have seen the geldings brought from the Stud which have won prizes at both Shows and have been sold at a good remuneration to recompense the breeder.

During the last two years Mr. Brown has been able to purchase about fifteen pure-bred cob mares from the States of Victoria and South Australia, where they were bred by Mr. R. G. Wilson, who has imported sires and dams, and Mr. C. H. Angus, who also has imported sires and dams; and from these mares Mr. Brown feels satisfied he will be able to show stallions bred in the State of New South Wales that will prove of good benefit in assisting others to advance in the breeding of true cobs. The pony mares were purchased from different States throughout Australia, and four very fine pony stallions have already been sold in different parts of Australia, and the result of the use of them is proving beneficial to pony breeders.

We show the photographs of two of Mr. Brown's cob stallions and one of his pony stallion; also one of a pure-bred cob mare, a half-bred cob gelding, and a half-bred cob gelding shown in saddle with the owner of the Almac Cob Stud.

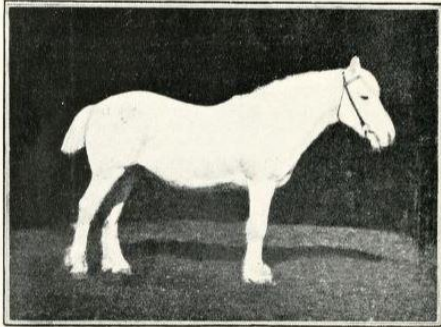
Almac.—The first cob stallion Mr. Brown interested himself in, was bred in New South Wales by Mr. Thomas Cook, of Turonville, Se me. His sire, Flying Shades (imp.), was a very superior horse and a most prepotent sire, and



Almac, Champion Cob Stallion.

³² (BANKRUPT MANAGER. (1913, March 12) The Daily Telegraph)

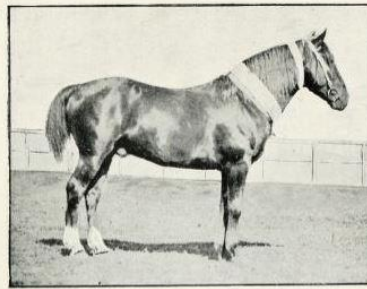
a very fast trotter, as in his day he has trotted 17½ miles within the hour. He was a horse of wonderful vitality, and proved himself a good sire at 28 years of age. All his stock have the best of dispositions, and Almac is indeed a very fine docile stallion, now rising 16 years old. The dam of Almac, Gipsy, was also bred by Mr. Cook, and her sire was Flying Shales, so you will note the result of inbreeding with a sire to his daughter. Almac is a beautiful rich dark bay with black points, and stands only 14½ hands high, and when in condition he has turned the scale at nearly 1,200 lb. His bone is over 8 inches below the knee, and to-day, as a 16-year-old, he is as sound as a bell. Almac won first prize for two years at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show.



Snowball. Sire, Bismark; dam, Tam-o'-Shanter.

Snowball—A Welsh pony, bred in South Australia, and purchased from there by Mr. Brown. His sire was Bismark, and his dam by the celebrated Tam O'Shanter, the great progenitor of ponies in the State of Victoria. Although Snowball is only 12½ hands high, he is strong, and well able to carry 18 or 20 stone. He is now also 16 years of age and has proved himself a very valuable sire, and the constitution he has will probably see him live to an old age, as he runs with his mares summer and winter in the hills, and the country is as much like the mountain ranges in Wales as can be compared. Snowball won first prize at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show.

Vim.—A pure-bred Norfolk cob, bred in Victoria by the late Hon. W. I. Winter Irving, M.L.C., who imported Vim's sire, Detective, and his dam, Darwinia, from England. Vim is a chestnut horse, 14.3 hands high, and



Vim. Sire, Detective (imp.); dam, Darwinia (imp.).

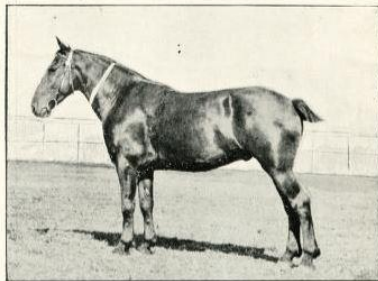
shows great dash with beautiful action, and a very fast trotter. He won first and champion prize at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show.

Vis.—A chestnut mare and a full sister to Vim, and she was bred in Victoria by the late Hon. W. I. Winter Irving, M.L.C. Vis stands 14.3 hands high, is strong enough to pull a spring cart or hansom cab, and is a



Vis, pure-bred cob mare. Sire, Detective (imp.); dam, Darwinia (imp.).

very fast mare in harness, with beautiful action and a fine disposition. She won the double at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Show by annexing the dogcart class and the special for best cob in two-wheel vehicle.



Barnum, bay cob. Sire, Almac; dam, half-bred mare.

Barnum.—Bay gelding, 14.3 hands high, bred at the Almac Cob Stud. His sire is Almac, and his dam a thick-set mare, whose sire was a trotting horse and her dam a half-bred mare. This shows the class of horse produced by the first cross with the Norfolk cob Almac to a half-bred mare. Barnum has won two first prizes at Sydney Royal Agricultural Society's Shows, one in saddle and the other in harness as a gentleman's cob. He is a very rich dark bay, like his sire, and coming from a mare a little heavier than his sire he shows a bit more substance, but with it he has good pace and a kind disposition.

George.—A dark bay horse, bred by the Almac Cob Stud, 14.3 hands high.



George and owner. Sire, Almac; dam, Monaro mare.

The photograph showing him shows Mr. Brown, the breeder, in the saddle, and George is carrying 20 stone, and with it has won prizes at Sydney and Melbourne Royal Agricultural Society's Shows. George is also a son of Almac, out of a very well-bred, sturdy mare, bred on the Monaro country, a mare that one could ride or drive, as she was very hardy; and George has also proved himself a very hardy useful animal in saddle or harness.

DISPERSAL SALE
of the Well-known
ALMAC STUD (Kiandra, N.S.W.).

COB STALLIONS,
at
INGLIS'S BAZAAR, SYDNEY,
WEDNESDAY NEXT, MARCH 20,
AT 11 A.M.

WILLIAM INGLIS and SON have received instructions to sell by auction, as above,

VIM, Chestnut, 15 hands, aged, by DETECTIVE (imp.), dam DARWHINNEY (imp.). VIM has taken three champion prizes at the R.A. Show, Sydney.

REAL KING, Brown, 14.2, rising 4yrs., by Reality (imp.), dam FOREST QUEEN, a pure-bred Cob Mare from imported stock.

ALMAC, Bay, 14.3, aged, by FLYING SHALES (imp.), DAM GIPSY, bred by Mr. THOS. COOK, TURONVILLE. ALMAC was the original sire used at the above Stud, and has won the champion prize at the R.A. Show, Sydney. His progeny have also been great prize-winners at the leading Shows in the Commonwealth.

ALMAC'S SON, Bay, rising 4yrs., 14.3, sire ALMAC, dam ATTACK (a purebred Cob Mare from imported stock).

VIDI, Grey Welsh Cob, 14 hands, rising 6yrs, by VERO, dam GREYLING, by OLENGARRY. The above are all sure foal-getters, and thoroughly broken to saddle and harness.

NOW ON VIEW AT OUR BAZAAR.

(The Cob. (1907, August 31). The Newsletter: an Australian Paper for Australian People)

The Alpine Pioneer & Kiandra Advertiser weekly newspaper in 1860 noted many lost horses in the district. The following is a small example of straying horses in the now northern end of Kosciusko National Park of which could also add to the brumbies ancestry..

Notice.

THIS is to give notice that a BAY HORSE, about 15 hands high, with black points, branded FH off, shoulder \approx) near shoulder is now running on my station, at the King-yard. Any one claiming the above can get the same, by giving authority as to being the right owner by applying to Mr. DAVID O'ROURKE, Kiandra, or to Mr. FRED. GLOVER, Cullimau, and paying all expenses.

33-33

FRED. GLOVER.

£1 Reward.

LOST, from Kiandra, a Grey Pony, hog mane and tail, branded \mathfrak{g} on shoulder. The above reward will be given on delivery to

33-33]

WM. CARRUTHERS,
Telegraph Office, Kiandra.

£5 Reward; £2 Reward.

STRAYED or Stolen from Kiandra:—One bay Mare, branded JR on the near shoulder and snip out of near ear, star in forehead. Also, one bay horse branded \approx C on near shoulder, small star on forehead, and party finding and bringing the same to Mr. Turner will receive the above reward. [33-35

£10 Reward.

STOLEN or strayed from Kiandra, a dark bay Mare, branded J V Y near shoulder, near ear clipped. If stolen the above reward will be given on conviction of the thief or thieves, and £2 if strayed, on delivery at the office of this paper.

33-35

JOHN MORIARTY.

£2 Reward.

LOST, from the Long Plain, a LARGE BAY HORSE, branded TO on off shoulder, long tail. Whoever will deliver the above horse to MESSRS. NEWELL & CO., Auctioneers, Pioneer-street, Kiandra, will receive the above reward.

33-35

Like the many people who settled in these areas, the brumbies were also widespread around Cooleman, Tantangara, Gooandra, Long Plain, Currango, Rules Point and Peppercorn areas in large numbers at times since the mid 1800's. There are many stories and biographies of journeys crossing the mountains in the early days and noting the many mobs of brumbies. Although unfavourable to the horses the old stories are nonetheless a valid demonstration of the abundance of the horses at different times.

...These pests are extremely numerous and devour grass enough to maintain large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. In various directions across the plains and through the timbered country their paths, like ordinary cattle-tracks, form a complete network, leading to favourite feeding-grounds, watering places, or crossings over the creeks and rivers. When the country is unoccupied they roam undisturbed over the mountains and plains, in herds of scores and hundreds, sleek and fat, now feeding, now basking in the sunshine or reposing in the shade, and anon sporting, neighing, and gambolling in the exuberance of their spirits....They are rarely seen in large numbers below the Wombat Ground, or even north of Diamond Hill. But, nevertheless, when sheep and cattle invade their domain, these useless brutes retire into the most unfrequented mountains by day, descending to the plains to feed when the invaders are quietly ruminating in yards or folds. At break of day they may be seen trooping off to their mountain fastnesses, as if conscious of their danger from man, or their weakness and inability to sustain their claim to the herbage of the plains when the lord of creation asserts his right to the same for the use and enjoyment of the tractable animals which content themselves in his possession and under his control.

As proof of the extent to which the plains are infested by wild horses it may be mentioned that in certain spots their ordure lies in prodigious heaps, more than enough to fill the largest horse or bullock dray...³³

... We reached the limestone plains of the Cooleman run. When near the bottom of the mountains, we noticed a large mob of wild horses, feeding close to the edge of the plain below us, and resolved to stalk them, but when we saw how level and smooth the plain was, we determined to have a hunt on horseback. So we dashed into the widely scattered feeding mob at full gallop, and singled out a couple, which we managed to ride up against and shoot, after a little more than a mile's chase. While poisoning these horses for the native dogs, a grand-looking horse, with his tail sweeping the ground, came up to look at us, and I fired at him, but he went away apparently uninjured. Shortly after a mob passed at a gallop. It would have been great sport chasing them, but we were afraid of tiring our horses. Hiding across the plains this afternoon in search of a camping place, we shot another entire that ran up to examine the horses, while we lay on the grass holding them by the bridles. Several mobs of horses were seen feeding in different places, some we went close enough to disturb, others in the distance we could just distinguish to be horses...³⁴

³³ (John Gale 'WILD HORSES' SIX DAYS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF COWLEY (1875, April 10). *Queanbeyan Age*)

³⁴ (Australian Alps. (1875, December 11). *The Brisbane Courier*)

The Peppercorn, Long Plain and Coleman areas are well known for their horses by their heavy and stocky builds as well as their chestnut and taffy colours of many.

“McDonalds arrived in the 1860s, two brothers John (my great grandfather) and his brother Alexander. John selected Peppercorn and Alexander selected Coolamine. They bred Remounts for the army as well as ran stock...they bred a lot of horses and according to Tom Taylor who lived nearby at Currango for many years, they couldn’t yard them so a lot went wild. They were sired by a thoroughbred horse called “War God” who was by Carbine (sire of Phar Lap), Tom said they were very tough horses.

Then my grandfather took over Peppercorn and some other mountain leases. He put a Suffolk Punch breed stallion over the mares and this is how many of the brumbies are the colour they are to this day...Suffolk Punch carry the Pangare gene which can revert to the silver manes and tails and markings of the very distinctive Peppercorn brumbies today.. McDonald’s also used the Sullfolk Punch horses to plough some of “Peppercorn” and the plough furrows can still be seen today from the air.

When grazing was stopped in the mountains most of the fences fell down and these horses slowly started to spread out all over the plains again.”³⁵



³⁵ (Personal communication Maret Rose, Great Grand Daughter of John McDonald May 2020)

The Suffolk Punch, or simply Suffolk, is a small draft horse, measuring up to around 15 hands. An unusual aspect to the breed is its single color; Suffolks only come in chestnut varieties. Suffolks are still used to do field work and pull wagons for exhibitions, but they're also shown and ridden³⁶



An Example of the Suffolk Punch prize bred Stallion (top photo) and today a Peppercorn brumby continues some Suffolk Punch traits (bottom photo)

The Suffolk: Another drafting horse is incredibly endangered, with fewer than 1,000 known to exist at the moment. All of them have a chestnut coat, though there can be varying shades of it. It is one of the few remaining horses that was specifically bred for regional farm work needs. The Suffolk region is filled with wetlands and marshes, so this breed was adapted to those conditions. (<https://karina-brez.squarespace.com/blog>)

³⁶ (Beyond the Top 10 Horse Breeds: Crossbreds and Draft Breeds; Audrey Pavia, Janice Posnikoff)

Southern Kosciusko – Wild Horse populations should be retained

Pilot: Cascades south to Tin Mines, Mt Pilot and Ingeegoodbee areas, SE of Wombat Gully to , Little Boggy to Thatchers Mountain, Pinch River, Jacobs River & Willis/border creek areas.

Byadbo: Bididi Creek, Pinch Mountain, Sandy Creek, Sheepstation Creek, Guttamurra and Merambego and Black Jack Mountain areas.

North of the Cascades Hut to and including the Big Boggy/Bob's Ridge/Brindle Bull/Chimneys Hill Paddy Rushs and Teddys Hut back to Dead Horse Gap on the Alpine Way has been well known for its extensive history of brumbies. However, it is recognised that these areas should be kept horse free as it is considered a feeder area to not only the Alpine Way but on to the Thredbo and Ramshead ranges which should not include brumbies. However the remaining areas of the Pilot and Byadbo Wilderness as stated above should retain managed brumbies as has been the case for many generations.

Brumbies have inhabited the whole of the southern section of the now Kosciusko National Park known commonly today as the Pilot & Byadbo wilderness areas. Like most other areas of the mountains the horses had been well established for well over 100 years before the area was ever declared a National Park in 1967. Byadbo was added to the Park estate in 1967.

The area is very remote today but is known to include ancestral pathways of and regularly used by the First nations people to go from the coast to the mountains. From the early to mid 1800's the area also saw some mining and prospecting but mostly grazing was established after colonial settlement until the park system in the 60's.

The Barry Way which divides the Byadbo & Pilot was also a major stock route from Jindabyne to Gippsland in Victoria which winds through steep forested terrain in between the two Wilderness areas and also runs parallel to much of the lower Snowy River which up until the 1960s was only a cattle/bridle track.

From the 1830s and 1840 when the Monaro and Snowy Mountains district was first settled, the occasional Thoroughbred and other breeds escaped from pastoralists, overlanders, or stockmen, or became lost, and inter-mixed with a growing wild horse population. A wild horse population was established in the Mt Kosciuszko area by the 1850s and probably by the 1840s. In 1861, during the ascent from Kiandra of Mount Inchcliffe, near Thredbo, the members of the climbing expedition sighted 'immense herds of wild horses, which would be impossible to break in' (Age, 7 January 1861). The presence of 'immense herds' would suggest that the horses were well established in the mountain environment at that time. There are various accounts of horses accidentally escaping at Mt Kosciuszko, including the horse/s belonging to Georg von Neumayer's scientific expedition of 1869. Domesticated horses were also intentionally released into the wild at Mt Kosciuszko from at least c.1900 by graziers and stockmen in order to 'improve' the wild horse population with fresh stock. Whereas in other pastoral districts of NSW the wild horses were culled on a large scale, the difficult terrain of the mountainous area of Kosciuszko provided a place of refuge for escaped and wild horses. By the 1890s, the wild horse population was probably greater in the Alps than in the Riverina and other districts. In 1890, Richard Helms noted 'A great number of unowned horses are found all over the ranges' (cited in Slattery 1998:145). (CONTEXT)

*...By the mid 1800s, Aboriginal people had become an important part of the region's pastoral industry, working as stockmen, station hands, house servants, and 'black trackers'. Many oral histories recollect stories of mustering brumbies from the Alps to be transported to the south coast then shipped to be used as cavalry horses; sometimes Aboriginal people would also trade horses for food*³⁷

History of traditional owners' connection to Snowy Mountain brumbies

An often-overlooked part of Australian history is how the Ngarigo and Djiringanj people forged a strong connection with brumbies after they were introduced to the Snowy Mountains. Due to the traditional owners' talents when it came to controlling horses, it is also thought their feats as stockmen helped inspire the rider immortalised in Banjo Paterson's poem the Man From Snowy River.

Ngarigo and Djiringanj elders Ellen Mundy and David Dixon said their ancestors would catch the wild horses in Currawong and Wollindibby – the area around Mount Crackenback – then break them in before driving them down to Tathra Wharf, where they would be shipped to Sydney.

From the mid to late 1800s these stockmen included Jack Hoskins and Bobby "Old" Mundy, who would stop at Blackfellows Lake at Kalaru for two weeks before taking them to the wharf.

Many horses went on to become used in Australia's military campaigns such as the Boer War around 1900.

Ms Mundy said the Ngarigo and Djiringanj developed such an affinity for the animals they became "horse whisperers". "Even though horses were an introduced species, they still learnt how to communicate with them," she said.

Knowing the safest routes, her ancestors would take the animals along traditional pathways that rolled gradually down from the high Snowys to the coast, past Bombala, Candelo and Bega, where they knew to find food and water.

"They were really great stockmen because they knew the land inside out," Ms Mundy said.

"They knew the shortcuts, they knew the best ways to come down to Tathra.

"They would have brought the horses down into places where they would have had a good run without breaking their legs."

It was not an easy life as her ancestors would not have been paid the same amount as their European counterparts - if they were paid at all - but they would have benefited from the work in other ways, as Mr Dixon said there was the thought that as the Ngarigo were stockmen they should be left alone.

"Maybe without the connection with horses it would have been harder for our people to survive," he said. Ms Mundy said being left alone gave them security and being part of the system and helping the economy gave them safety.

"There would have been white people with empathy and compassion who saw the talents of the Ngarigo at the work who would have given them an opportunity," Mr Dixon said.

"But at the same time they would have been told to assimilate, as they were still seen as savages.

"The relationship would have come about through necessity, it was an economic relationship that was unbalanced."

Ms Mundy said while her ancestors worked for the European colonists they were still traditional men. "They lived in two worlds, the white man's world, but they were still practicing their traditions," she said.

The identity of the man in Banjo Paterson's famous poem has been hotly debated over the years and a number of individual colonists have been named as possible inspirations.

³⁷ Australian Alps National Heritage Listing – Summary Statement of Significance (Wesson 1994).

Three decades ago the official historian for Victoria Bernard Barrett proposed the character might have been based on a young Indigenous Australian man named Toby.

"As a black-tracker, Toby was able to find trails of brumbies whenever they got out of sight," Dr Barrett told The Canberra Times in 1988.

However, Ms Mundy and Mr Dixon believe the poem's title character should not be looked at as being based on a singular man, instead as based on the Snowy Mountains' stockmen in general - both European and traditional owners.

"The best stockmen up there would have been our people," Mr Dixon said.

"But Banjo Paterson would not have been able to make a hero out of our people in his day."

Mr Dixon and Ms Mundy said the traditional owners and the farmers around the Snowy Mountains shared history with the brumbies.

They said there should be another option rather than either than culling the brumbies, due to the damage they cause to the environment in Kosciuszko National Park, or just leaving them in the mountains.

"We were the first conservationists and environmentalists in the world, not just the country," Mr Dixon said. "Catching and droving the horses also protected the land and environment.

"If people come together a solution can be put in place where the brumbies don't have to be culled or left there."

Ms Mundy added it was part of her people's law and customs not to kill an animal unless for food.

"A ceremony would have been held even for that to understand the taking of a life," Mr Dixon said.

As for hero of the Djiringanj Jack Hoskins, he eventually had land gazetted to him and his family near Kalaru as a reserve in 1893 at what was known as Cohens Lake, but was renamed Blackfellows.

Along with the large sign of a tribal warrior that once stood at the main road through Kalaru to point the way to the reserve, to many people the connection between brumbies and traditional owners has been lost or forgotten to time.

"There's a lot of things people don't know about the history of this country" Ms Mundy said.



(History of traditional owners' connection to Snowy Mountain brumbies (30 May 2018)
Bega District News)

Brumbies have been common for well over 150 years in the Crackenback, Wollondibby to Moonbah area including Mill Gap and Little Boggy. The Cascades, Big Boggy, Tin Mines and Ingeegoodbee are especially widely known now for brumbies thanks to Elyne Mitchell's "Silver Brumby" novels. Dead Horse Gap near Thredbo also reminds us of brumbies sometimes caught in snowstorms.

*The association with the pioneer families from this area, McGuffickes and Pendergasts is relevant as is the ability to demonstrate former lifestyles and customs particularly the practice of summer grazing in the high country and capturing brumbies in the mountains. There are still some yards located in the Moonbah valley that still exist today which were probably built in the early 20th century and were used for drafting cattle, sheep and brumbies brought down from the mountains.*³⁸

ABC's show 'A Big Country' documents below a snapshot of the last brumby runs into the heritage listed yards at the 'Top Place' on the Moonbah River. Norman McGufficke aged in his 80's rode on the wing to run the brumbies from the park into the yards in 1972. Other local riders were Dooley Pendergast, Noel Pendergast, Nugget Pendergast, Charlie Byrne and Richard McGufficke.



³⁸ (The 'Top Place' - NSW Heritage Listings database)

Norman's son Teddy McGufficke together with Dave and Noel Pendergast built 'Teddy's Hut' further up the mountains in late December 1948 for grazing and brumby running. The brumby trap nearby the hut was built in 1930 and 1931 by Kerry Pearce and rebuilt in 1960. It remains visible, just, in the small clearing immediately above the hut.³⁹

On the other side of the Moonbah range was another set of yards on Nugget Pendergast's property on the Alpine Way. These yards were also used to capture and release horses over the years from the Wombat Gully, Little Thredbo River, Penderlea, Wollondibby and Thredbo Valley areas.

A little higher into the mountains is the Big Boggy and the infamously named Dead Horse Gap. The story goes that many years ago a mob of brumbies were blinded by a snowstorm. The horses all huddled together and the snow built up around them. The snow continued to build high and eventually it froze to ice. This then became a wall of ice that the horses could not jump out of. The ice wall can last for several weeks before it melts. It is said that the brumbies survived the first few days by eating each other's manes and tails but without water they perished after several days.

A hut was built at Dead Horse Gap in the late 1920's by Jim Nankervis who had the snow lease on the area. It was used seasonally for cattle mustering by Leo Byatt and other stockmen as well as the Cascades Hut. Both huts were also frequented for brumby running. Herb Hain used to organise brumby hunting parties which was another means that the locals could earn some extra cash.⁴⁰



Herb Hain pictured with a young brumby and a hunting party at Dead Horse Gap near the hut in 1949. Nankervis Collection

³⁹ (Kosciusko Huts Association website 2010)

⁴⁰ (People of the Australian High Country 1994 Klaus Hueneke)



Hall Metcalfe, Harold Bluet, Laurie McGufficke, George Day & Berry McGufficke at Dead Horse Hut in 1940. The hut was burned down soon after the National Parks took over in late 60's.
(Klaus Hueneke, 'People of the Australian High Country' (1994))

The Cascades Hut was built in 1935 by Nankervis when they had the grazing lease and was used for both mustering and brumbyrunning. This is the area of the Silver Brumby which was well known to Elyne Mitchell who visited the hut and rode the surrounding area often.



Mustering at the Cascades, 1940.
Left to right: Dick McGuffick, Ernie Bale, Jack McGufficke, Jack Carson.
Greta Jones Collection



Teddy's Hut 2017 Michael Scott Lees Wild Places Photography



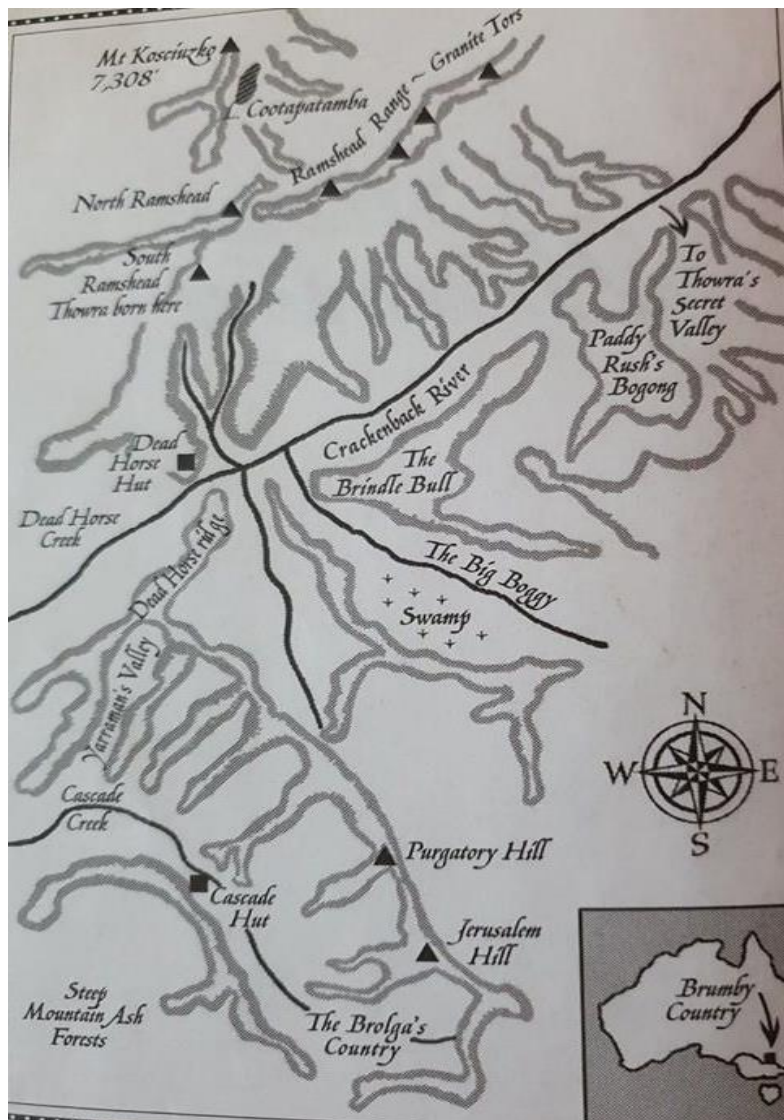
Old trap yards above the Moonbah River near Teddys Hut
People of the Australian High Country, 1980 Klaus Hueneke

“The magnificent silver stallion Thowra was born in a storm on the south Ramshead Range and forever known for his ghost-like elusiveness. He was the son of the majestic chestnut Yarraman who was the “King of the Cascade brumbies”.

A map of Silver Brumby country according to the first famous Silver Brumby book by Elyne Mitchell.

Note the arrow (top right) indicating Thowra’s secret valley actually points towards Teddy’s Hut to Little Thredbo river area. Many oldtimers will confirm that indeed there were a many silver grey horses in the Cascades and Big Boggy area.

The series of 13 books dedicate several different areas as brumby country including the northern area of Lobs Hole to Coleman plain. Although a work of fiction and fantasy, all the books by Elyne Mitchell are written with her own intimate experiences and expeditions of over 50 years of studying brumbies in those areas. All the maps and novels indicate the real names of real places including the real descriptions of the environments.



The first map of The Silver Brumby country published 1958 by Elyne Mitchell



"WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:" The Age 11 September 1954

According to this article in 1954, the brumbies were widespread and grazed in mobs mostly of eight to a dozen in the Mt Pilot, Tin Mines and Ingeegoodbee area. Some call this area the 'the real outback of the mountains'.

Escaped horses would add new strains to the brumbies and in the early days was constantly enriched with new blood of errant thoroughbreds. Drovers had to be careful in the brumby country to bell and hobble their horses at night in case they were tempted to join the wild bush horses.

The stockmen summarised the brumby thus: "He'll put up with you if you'll put up with him." Most mountain stockmen owned some brumbies, chiefly as packhorses for their hardiness and sure-footedness in rough country. Brumbies have been part of the bush population in many parts of Australia for more than a century. They bred from horses of miners and graziers which escaped' particularly before holdings were fenced.⁴¹

In the NSW/Victoria border country it is commonly knowledge that many of the brumbies are said to have descended from thoroughbreds brought in by David O'Rourke who planned a breeding establishment modelled on the studs of his native Ireland.

In 1843 Davey O'Rourke brought 70 horses and two sires to Black Mountain near Suggan Buggan. The latter were a black stallion called Peacock, and Gander, a grey. They were of the 'Steeltrap' thoroughbred breed and were turned on to a lower portion of the Black Mountain station afterwards known as The Turnback. Davey O'Rourke died in 1855 with no will or beneficiaries and so the horses were never mustered. These were the first horses brought into this portion of Gippsland and the Snowy River country and from them originated many of the brumbies which became numerous in later years.⁴²

In 1843, Entrepreneur Benjamin Boyd had 14 holdings on the Monaro before his extraordinary empire collapsed in 1849. Boyd had controlled over a million acres and owned hundreds of horses. Two of his holdings was Matong and Suggan Buggan within the southern area including several miles of the lower Snowy River. It is believed that most if not all of his horses were never mustered and spread the now known Pilot and Byadbo wilderness.⁴³

⁴¹ ("WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:" The Age 11 September 1954)

⁴² (Recollections of Edward O'Rourke Bairnsdale Advertiser 1930 retold in 'Cattlemen & Huts of the High Plains' Harry Stephenson 1980)

⁴³ 'Discovering Monaro - A Study of Man's Impact on his environment'(1972) W K Hancock.

“In 1888, a very dry year, 700 or 800 brumbies died at Slippery-Bog near Suggan Buggan where they were trapped in soft ground as they went in search of water.”

Dead Horse Ridge recalls another tragedy of the brumbies—the 17 wild horses trapped by snow where Dead Horse Hut now stands. The brumbies' enemies are man, snow and drought. In 1888, a very dry year, 700 or 800 brumbies died at Slippery Bog near Suggan Buggan where they were trapped in soft ground as they went in search of water.

("WITH THE BRUMBY CATCHERS:" The Age 11 September 1954)

Wild horses have been running the mountainous country of East Gippsland, in which are the sources of the Buchan River, and through which the Snowy River and its tributary the Deddick River flow. To this I must add the dividing range from Omeo to Mount Kosciusko. The wild horses probably date back in place to a time antecedent to the discover of Gippsland in 1842. On the Manero tableland which lies on the New South Wales side of the border, and extends up to Kosciusko and Kiandra and Sunit, as also from the country to the heel of the dividing range, I have no doubt that horses escaped and became wild. Of course these have been of all kinds..

On the high mountain plateau which lies between the upper Tambo River and the sources of the Buchan River I have seen horses which can be best described as dwarfed cart-horses and probably were the descendants of light draught stock used by prospectors and miners in the early times of gold discovery – after 1850. The country they live in is very high and cold, being covered in winter with snow and altogether ill adapted to feral horses. In the warmer but very hilly country which lies to the east of the Snowy River in Victoria, for instance at Gatemurra, Deddick and Tubbut the horses were of a much better stamp in many cases showing good breeding partly due to the excellent stamp of the NSW horses of about 50 years ago, but also to the fact that a Persian horse imported by Benjamin Boyd of Twofold Bay escaped and lived for many year after in the Deddick, Gatemurra and Tubbut country. The grey horses which occur there may be attributed to his influence. The horses of this district were in many cases very good, being especially sure-footed, but frequently were broken down by galloping when driven over the mountainous and exceedingly rough country which they inhabited. I have often seen one of thee ‘mobs’ as they are called coming down the mountain side when disturbed at a gallop... I know of cases where they were driven to the coast say at Bega and sold at half a crown...⁴⁷

⁴⁷ ('The Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred Horse' (1905) Sir William Ridgeway And a letter by Dr Alfred Howitt in 1904)

The Late William Kidman

As already briefly reported in the "Express," the death occurred on Thursday morning, 6th inst., of Mr William Kidman, Sr., at his late residence, Paupong.

"Billy," as he was universally known, was born 71 years ago at Cootralantra, near Berridale, and was reared by the late Mr Alexander Robertson. He came to Paupong at the age of nine, being one of the earliest settlers in that centre, where the rest of his life was spent.

Billy's fame as a horseman and "rounder-up" was well known on the Snowy, amongst whose hills wild cattle and horses were plentiful in his early years.

In due time he selected at Paupong, and gave attention to sheep-raising. Where travelling was concerned, he held strong opinions (like Mulga Bill after his wild bike ride) that "the horse was good enough for him."

He married in 1876 a daughter of the late John Elliott, and established the home in which he lived and eventually passed away.

Mr Kidman's health began to fail definitely about nine months ago and he finally took to his bed on November 9.

His widow survives him; also six sons—John, Lecton; Alexander and Samuel, Moonbah; Simon, James and Edwin, Paupong—and four daughters—Mrs C. Kelley, Jimenbuan; Mrs D. McPhie, Paupong; Mrs W. Thurbon, Gunning; and Mrs C. Thurbon, Peak View. There are also seventeen grand-children.

His only brother, Samuel, predeceased him by some years.

36.—The Run known as "Bidi," estimated to contain 10,240 acres. The Bidi run which is situated on the east side of the Snowy River, is bounded on the south by a range called the Wall, which abuts on the Snowy River, nearly opposite to the junction of the Pinch River; on the east by spurs of ranges; on the north by a range which abuts on the Snowy River nearly opposite to the junction of Reedy Creek; and on the west by the Snowy River.

FORFEITED AND VACATED RUNS. (1850, June 8). The Goulburn Herald and County of Argyle Advertiser

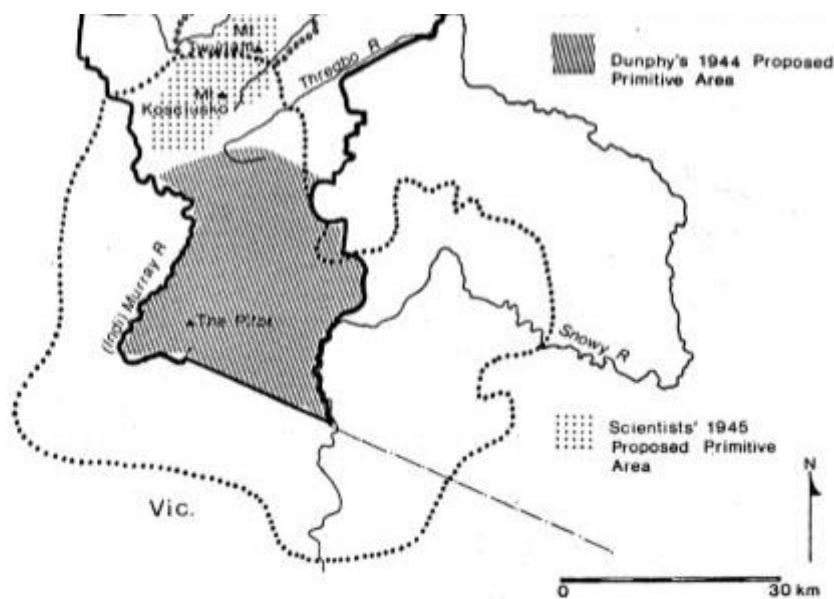
An obituary (private collection) of William "Billy" Kidman who lived at Paupong above the lower Snowy River and across the river at the Bidi run most of his life. His area of wild horses was from Matong to Jacobs ladder and across the lower Snowy River into Byadbo Wilderness. William's wife was Margaret Elliott who as a child lived in a hut at Bidi on the Snowy River now known as Byadbo Wilderness in KNP.

(William Kidman 1848 to 1923 buried in Boloco Cemetery personal collection)

Myles Dunphy (doyen of the early bushwalking fraternity and later lobbied for the National Parks and wilderness movement)

In 1932, the New South Wales Federation of Bush Walking Clubs was formed, followed in 1934 by the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council (N.P.P.A.C.). By the time Kosciusko State Park was established in 1944, there were several groups lobbying for the declaration of national parks in New South Wales. The N.P.P.A.C., under the direction of Myles Dunphy was responsible for the first documented proposal to establish a national park in the Snowy Mountains. Another difference of opinion occurred between Dunphy and the Wild Life Preservation Society (W.L.P.S.). Dunphy argued that dingoes should be protected in the proposed primitive area because they were native animals and part of natural ecosystems, while the W.L.P.S. believed that dingoes should be eradicated because of their alleged depredations upon small mammal populations. The opposite view was taken on brumbies (wild horses). Dunphy proposed that all the brumbies within the Park should be driven into the primitive area for sanctuary. **(Pilot Wilderness)** He claimed that they caused no environmental damage and were part of the romance and history of the Snowy Mountains. (M McDonald 1981. The Influence of the National Park Concept on KNP)

“All through these wild and cold highlands wild horses roam free in innumerable mobs, matching their horse-sense against their deadly enemies, the Freebody rifles. There is a scheme afoot and started, to wire fence the summit of the Great divide; so soon the poor harried beasts will be unable to change their grounds to accord with the seasons, and henceforth icy winds deep snow and that awful barbed fence will spell the doom of the thundering mobs. It ought not be so, it does not seem right that the last of the Monaro brumbies be wiped out ... Surely posterity would care to view their running free in land which had been theirs so long. The ‘Man from Snowy River’ will never die, why then the horses?”
 (Dunphy, M.1934. Myles Dunphy Selected Writings. Compiled and Annotated by Patrick Thompson 1986 ed. Ballagirin, Sydney).



MAP 3.1 PRIMITIVE AREA PROPOSALS 1944-1945
 SOURCE: N.P.P.A.C. 1943; N.P.P.A.C. 1945.

M McDonald 1981. The Influence of the National Park Concept on Kosciusko National Park

Heritage practises

Managing the brumbies could also be recognised as a significant heritage skill by the Mountain horsemen. Besides their knowledge of horsemanship and their knowledge of handling wild horses this also parallels their skills in bushcraft and bush lore as well as the local horsemen are renowned for their landscape memory. For example; on a few occasions they have been praised by Police and State Emergency Services for their involvement in search and rescues because of their remarkable knowledge of the bush and their abilities to cover such large search areas thoroughly and quickly on horseback in all types of terrain and weather. This is all done without using any modern GPS or compass devices and they are totally self-reliant.

There is no other local community to equal the recognition in the Australian psyche as the Snowy River Riders.

Mustering - Brumby Running

Similar to moth feasting being recognised in the National Heritage Listing as holding significant value to the local Aboriginal people, the same could be said of these brumby activities.

The Australian Brumby - as the basis for past annual gatherings of different mountain communities for local events sets the gatherings apart from any other community gatherings and has captured the Australian imagination, making it exceptional in Australia.

The Minister's assessment (NHL 2005:17) noted that bush skills and horsemanship of the High Country community remain valued despite the absence of pastoral practices in the KNP. The Minister suggests that the continuation of social value is derived from the long history of pastoralism rather than the presence or absence of contemporary pastoral practices. The activity of 'brumby running' is a pastoral practice still valued by today's High Country community and associated with the KNP wild horse population; it is regarded by some as a desirable way to remove wild horses from KNP. (Walter 2002).

Involving the local community and giving them some guided responsibility and ownership of an issue that is important to them will engage better relations as well as better management.

There appears to be very little, if any, research on people-management issues in the Australian Alps. Like some of the other issues, this is a contentious issue, but people are in the parks just as are the flora and fauna. So are the resorts... When activities are banned rather than being managed, they frequently become illegal ones undertaken in widespread and inappropriate locations. It was claimed that there is massive united opposition to aspects of park management by horse riders, yet they could be used to tackle the wild horse problem. If the people are managed, they will protect the resource. These are controversial views, but, for example, they appear to accord with aspects of management processes of Parks Canada (Banff-Bow Valley Task Force 1996; Parks Canada 1997). They certainly merit investigation.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ (Managing the Australian Alps: a history of cooperative management of the Australian Alps national parks Peter Crabb

Conclusion

There is a further mountain of history to be gathered and drawn on stating that the brumbies have existed in large numbers throughout the whole KNP for nearly two centuries. Their numbers have fluctuated throughout that time due to various factors.

The horse habitats have mostly been geographically consistent although some non-horse areas today, did in fact also carry many horses at some period, particularly the main range.

There is clear evidence which demonstrates that most people feel that the brumbies are without any doubt considered an integral part of our heritage in the Snowy Mountains.

The mountain horsemen clearly controlled the wild horses for most of the horses' existence in the Kosciusko region up until the last few decades.

In 2001, the first ever formal horse survey of brumbies was completed. It identified that there were approximately **3000** horses in the spatial area that was surveyed of **1600km²** (M Walters). Today's surveys in KNP tenure only are double the spatial area of approximately **3000 km²**. Worth noting is (Walter survey 2001) **North Kosci = 795 km²** and (Cairns survey 2014/2019) **North Kosci = 1,549 km²** a vast difference.

Michelle Walter's survey plainly stated that it did not survey some known brumby habitats including the massive area of Byadbo wilderness and a large area in the northern end. It would be reasonable to assume therefor that there could have easily been a further 1000 or more brumbies in the unsurveyed horse areas at the time taking the overall numbers to an estimate of at least **4000 – 6000 in 2001**. At that time this region was also in the grip of extreme drought which culminated in the widespread 2003 fires and consequently the numbers then should be considered on the lower scale in hindsight compared to previous good seasons.

Again back at that same time in 2001, there was not any campaign from National Parks or the anti-horse groups to remove horses from any areas below the tree-line elevation, so the populations below 1800m were not deemed an issue. Therefore, it should be a reasonable conclusion that a total population target of up to at least 4000 brumbies should be contemplated as an appropriate population estimate goal to retain in the total park again as it was 20 years ago.

Discussion started the same year about removing 10 only horses from Ramshead Range and then keeping true Alpine areas horse free from then. The local horse riders were invited to discuss and assist. The locals were very willing to help out and were praised by the supervising vets in trials of removal of the Alpine horses by trapping and then leading them out to trailers. (KNP Wild Horse Steering committee minutes 2001)

Purists would claim that brumbies are not truly wild and unimportant as they are all descended from domestic animals. That is true as there were no horses in Australia before white settlement. However, to argue beyond this that the brumbies of the Snowy are any less than wild is to have no knowledge of the equine species at all, for they are as wild as any creature in the mountains.

Almost no other domesticated animal adapts to the wild with such ability as the horse and it takes only a few generations for the descendants of the most blue-blooded thoroughbred to revert back to having the wild survival genes of their ancestors. This is because they breed via 'natural selection' and not artificially as in domestic life.

So far, the situation has been lacking the defined knowledge of such complex management issues of wild horses that decision makers need. Until now the basis of management has been absolute and uncompromising. Other philosophies and methods have been refused trial and discussion.

It is consequently no wonder that the powers that be can be easily caught off guard by a sudden and unexpected community uprising in defence of the brumbies.

There is a deep sense of attachment with the Snowy Brumbies which up until now has not been attempted to be adequately defined.

Many people with longstanding connections to the Snowy Mountains including our local traditional owners have made many sacrifices over time to their way of life including losing their homes and connections to the land, losing special and spiritual places including our towns & history which were flooded for Hydro or destroyed by National Parks.

In contrast, they see that there are many other massive concessions regularly made for other people and other values in the park like major tourist resorts and connected infrastructures for activities or Snowy 2.0 for example. They are tired of their heritage being ignored and they are tired of being ridiculed by some for making a stand for their own ideals.

The attachment to the brumbies is fundamental to our unique heritage that is all but lost in the Snowy Mountains. It may even be unconscious to many in our daily lives until it is threatened which changes the paradigm. The response to such a threat is charged with emotion and will be met with resistance. The inter-connection is real and will not be forsaken.

(The Horse Community and National Parks working together below Dead Horse Gap 2002)



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