



**The Honourable Matt Kean MP**  
Minister for Energy and Environment

MD20/6380

Peter Gibson  
President  
NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers  
PO Box 537  
PADDINGTON NSW 2021

By email: [info@freshwateranglers.com.au](mailto:info@freshwateranglers.com.au)

Dear Mr Gibson

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers about the management of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park.

The NSW Government recognises the outstanding natural and cultural features that make Kosciuszko National Park one of Australia's great national parks. There is strong scientific evidence that the wild horse population is having an adverse environmental impact on the park.

The *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* provides the framework for achieving balance between recognising wild horse heritage values in Kosciuszko National Park and enabling active management to reduce their impact on the park's fragile environment. The Act requires that a wild horse heritage management plan be prepared.

A community advisory panel and a scientific advisory panel are providing advice on preparation of the management plan. I encourage you to provide feedback on the draft management plan when it is released for public consultation.

The 2019 Australian Alps Feral Horse Aerial Survey estimated there to be around 19,000 wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park at that time. Following community feedback and concerns about the impacts of the 2019-2020 bushfires on wild horses, a further population survey of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park will occur in Spring.

This further survey will provide an updated estimate of the population to inform the long-term approach to sustainable wild horse management across the park.

The 2019-2020 bushfires had a significant impact on Kosciuszko National Park. Scientific advice indicates that post-fire, the impacts of wild horses, along with other introduced species will impede recovery of native plants and wildlife, especially in sensitive areas containing threatened species habitat and around waterways.

Alongside current programs to control other introduced species, there is an urgent need to actively manage wild horses in key locations while the long-term management plan is being prepared and the further population survey is undertaken.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is progressing wild horse control in highly targeted areas in the north of Kosciuszko National Park that were affected by bushfire. These actions are in approximately nine per cent of the park and are post-bushfire emergency measures.

All horses are being removed from the Nungar Plain area, while horse populations are being reduced towards sustainable levels in the management areas around Cooleman and Kiandra plains.

The post-bushfire control program was developed following close discussions with both advisory panels and is being informed by animal welfare assessments. As with previous wild horse programs, the aim is to rehome as many horses as possible. If horses cannot be rehomed, they will be sent to a knackery.

NPWS staff have extensive experience in horse control and management. A control program involving passive trapping and removal of wild horses from Kosciuszko National Park has been undertaken annually since 2002 (except for 2018 when control did not occur).

The welfare of horses is a key focus and is continuously assessed throughout control programs. NPWS works with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) to ensure the program meets high animal welfare standards. NPWS adheres with all relevant state and Commonwealth codes and guidelines regarding animal welfare and transport of wild horses.

More information on current wild horse management activities in NSW is available at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectsnowies](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/protectsnowies).

Thank you for bringing your support for wild horse control to my attention.

Yours sincerely



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23.9.20