

2 November 2021

Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan  
National Parks and Wildlife Service  
PO Box 472  
Tumut NSW 2720

By email to: [npws.wildhorses@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:npws.wildhorses@environment.nsw.gov.au)

### **Submission to the Draft Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan for Kosciuszko National Park**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write on behalf of the NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers Inc (CFA) to express our strong objections to the proposed draft plan. We are the umbrella body for numerous recreational fishing organisations in NSW.

Many of our members visit the Snowy Mountains frequently and are appalled by the damage caused by feral horses. Anyone who has witnessed first-hand the damage to the sphagnum moss bogs and wetlands in places like Currango Creek, the upper Eucumbene River above Kiandra, the upper Murrumbidgee River, Racecourse Creek and Bullocks Head Creek near Kiandra, and numerous un-named creeks feeding the Murray River in the Tin Mines part of The Pilot Wilderness, will fully understand the scope and urgency of the problem. As a result of the mismanagement of horses within the Kosciuszko National Park, we now stand on the brink of irreparable damage to some of the most pristine and unique environments in NSW.

The high-altitude peat and sphagnum bogs and fens provide pure filtered water which feeds many of the creeks within the Kosciuszko National Park. These, in turn, create an unsullied natural environment for countless species of flora, sub-aquatic invertebrates, crustaceans, insects, arachnids, bird life and fish to thrive. The damage done by wild brumbies to these sensitive environments is enormous; and any move to allow horses to continue their destruction equates to ecological vandalism.

Section 2A of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* clearly states the intentions of the people who created it. In the light of this Act, how the situation has evolved to a point where we now need to make public submissions to guide the actions of government about protecting a sensitive area beggars belief.

The argument that brumbies have a cultural value is scant. A.B Patterson's poem *The Man from Snowy River* describes a hunt to trap a nuisance herd, many of which plagued early settlers by their raids on farms to steal mares. The pioneers understood that wild horse numbers should be either controlled or preferably eliminated. Trapping was a common practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Snowy Mountains and well as the Kanimbla and Megalong Valleys west of Sydney. These activities are well described in Bernard O'Reilly's book *Cullenbenbong* (circa 1940) which records his personal memories. It has been suggested that

the Waler equine bloodline exists among wild brumbies and this breed certainly has cultural value through its connection with the 1<sup>st</sup> AIF. However, the genetic strain can be easily identified and sustained by professional breeders if it has indeed survived the generations. Any connection with feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park is extremely dubious.

We believe that the complete removal of brumbies from Kosciuszko National Park and its environs is the only responsible way forward if the environmentally sensitive areas are seen by the Government as worthy of protection.

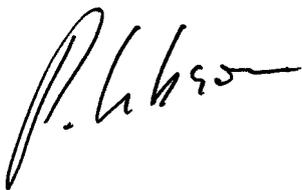
The Plan mentions the cost and difficulty of fencing large sensitive areas but ignores the broader damage to flora across Kosciuszko National Park. If immediate cost is problematic, why would you knowingly commit to the ongoing cost of controlling the ever-increasing numbers brought about by breeding?

The *Wild Horse Heritage Act of 2018* should be repealed to allow for the proper application of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. The *Wild Horse Heritage Act* is currently incompatible with the proper application of biodiversity and conservation measures within the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* and should not be sustained.

We encourage removal of the feral horses within Kosciuszko National Park to be enacted immediately, as the longer this is delayed, the more damage is done. The use of aerial culling by professionals is also supported, as this is both a humane and effective method, particularly in remote areas where ground-based shooting or other means may not be practical. It should be noted that the NPWS has already approved aerial shooting from helicopters within the park. We also note that the RSPCA has stated that it supports aerial shooting of feral horses.

Failure to act promptly and decisively will ensure further and ongoing destruction of Kosciuszko National Park's unique and special environment, an asset that holds significantly higher heritage value for a greater number of people and which cannot be replaced or relocated.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Gibson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Gibson  
President  
NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers  
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