

Environment and Communications References Committee
Answer to questions on notice
Invasive Species Council

Inquiry: Impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps inquiry

Hearing Date: 23 August 2023

Hansard Page: 8

Question Date: 23 August 2023

Question Type: Spoken

Senator Cadell asked:

Senator CADELL: ...The other thing is your data. In your submission, you say 13 road accidents per year near Kosciuszko National Park have carried through in the economic system. Where does that come from? I can't find that.

Mr Gough: I am not aware of that part of my submission, sorry.

Senator CADELL: Okay. I'll find it and give it to you... 13 road crashes annually near Kosciuszko National Park. And later on in the economic submission it says it's using your data to calculate the—

Mr Gough: I'll take that on notice and come back to you on that.

Answer:

The figure of 13 per year was provided by the Invasive Species Council to Frontier Economics in about 2020 for their economic report. Unfortunately this was before my time and I have not been able to track down the exact source of this estimate. I understand it was based upon a series of freedom of information requests to NSW NPWS, the NSW Police and RMS as well as direct conversations with the NSW NRMA.

I can however provide the committee with information on collisions with feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park which was obtained through freedom of information requests to the NSW Government by the Invasive Species Council (See 9 documents attached).

I have also located an article from May 2019 with Alan Lanyon, then President of the Snowy Mountain Brumby Sustainability & Management Group Inc, saying "I've seen about seven carcasses which I believe were horses hit by trucks and another four hit by cars in the past 12 months"



- [Picture of dead horse amid calls for speed limit reduction on Snowy Mountain Highway \(yahoo.com\)](https://www.yahoo.com/news/picture-dead-horse-amid-calls-speed-limit-reduction-snowy-mountain-highway-120000381.html)

This is of course old information and the number of feral horses has increased significantly since then. I understand that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service keeps detailed records of collisions and incidents with feral horses and may be able to provide more up to date information.

I hope this helps the Committee.

Kind regards,

Jack Gough, Advocacy Manager

 NSW GOVERNMENT	Environment, Climate Change & Water National Parks & Wildlife Service		<h1>Risk Treatment Plan</h1>	
			Date: 1.3.2016	Ref:
Group/Division - Branch/ Region - Section/ Area: PWD-SRR-Murrumbidgee Area				
Risk description: A horse on the Snowy Mountains Highway causing a vehicle accident resulting in injury to visitor or people moving through the park.				
Current controls: RTA managed warning signs Trapping program as per the current Horse Management Plan Media awareness Horse numbers monitoring				
Consequence: Moderate	Likelihood: Probable	Risk Level: High		
Treatment options: Close the Snowy Mountains Highway – Not feasible as this is major road transport link. Fence the effected section of the Snowy Mountains Highway – not feasible due to financial and ongoing resource requirements to maintain. Remove the horses Education Additional signage - Liaison with the RMS				
Environmental and other considerations: Political – currently a very political topic with horse management plan being reviewed Public backlash – significant public backlash to complete removal of wild horses. Financial limitations – significant costs and management issues associated with fencing are unrealistic. Public expectations – safe passage along the highway, whilst seeing horses in the area. Movement of native animals would also be impeded by fencing.				
Proposed actions: Continue trapping and monitoring program Monitor signage and liaison with RMS				
Resource requirements: ~\$80k per year for staff, equipment, overtime, materials, helicopter time, etc				
Timing: Signage monitoring and RMS liaison year-round Control horse control program currently undertaken in late autumn/winter				
Performance Measures: Reduced horse numbers along highway. Reduced number of accidents attributed to horses.				
Reporting and monitoring required: Continue to record collision information Continue annual NPWS horse distribution and numbers monitoring				
Residual Risk Evaluation on Completion of Risk Treatment Plan: Without the complete removal of horses from the area there is still a likelihood of collisions with vehicles travelling through the area. Are you lessening the likelihood or the consequence or both and what is the overall reduction to the risk rating?				
Consequence: Moderate	Likelihood: Possible	Residual Risk Level:Medium		
Prepared By:			Date: 1.3.2016	
Endorsed A.M			Date: 12.3.2016	
Approved R.M			Date:	
To be implemented By:				

**Office of
Environment
& Heritage**

18th March 2014

Regional Manager
Southern Ranges Region
PO Box 123
TUMUT NSW 2720

Re: Wild brumbies in the Snowy Mountains

Dear

I am writing this letter to express our extreme concern at the growing numbers of wild brumbies in the Kosciusko National Park, particularly along the plains adjacent to the Snowy Mountains Hwy.

forests in the Bombala region. 3(a)(b)

then return to Bombala via the Snowy Mountains Hwy.

using the Snowy Mountains Hwy both day and night. We continue to encounter wild brumbies on the road and have had several collisions with horses causing a lot of damage to our trucks and considerable cost to our company, the latest being on the 12th March 2014.

So far these accidents have been isolated to single vehicle incidents with no personal injury but the horse involved has died as a result of accident. As we are heading into another winter when traffic numbers increase considerably with the winter ski season we have major concerns that there may be accidents and possible injury or event death as a result of the growing numbers of horses that wander across the road. Visibility in the months ahead is usually inhibited by foggy conditions only adding to the risk of collision.

We would encourage any kind of humane controlled culling of the brumbies in this region in an effort to reduce the risk of further accidents.

Could you please advise if there are any plans in the immediate future to address the concerns raised above.

Yours faithfully

3(a)(b)

From: 3(a)(b)
To:
Subject: Horse/Vehicle Incident - 20/09/2018 - Snowy Mountains Highway
Date: Wednesday, 26 September 2018 12:20:58 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

3(a)(b)

Not sure whether you are aware of this incident or not, but appears there was a significant vehicle/horse interaction on the Snowy Mountains Hwy within KNP (near Kiandra from the photos) last Thursday evening.

Appears the lady 3(a)(b) driving east at night through Park walked away unharmed, but from the pictures posted if she had a passenger at the time could have been a different story. Apparently took 3 hours to get someone there to put the horse involved out of its suffering.

3(a)(b)

She indicates that she has written to Mr Barilaro.

Thought it was worth a heads up as potential enquiries and/or a potential knee jerk response in regard to increased calls for fencing, signage etc.

From the comments to the post there is a claim that this is the 6th adverse horse/vehicle incident this year??

FYI

Horses Found Dead

Date	Location	Number	Description/comments	
24/10/2003	Yarrangobilly SMHy Exit Road	1	chestnut	
7/7/2006	Yarrangobilly SMHy Ent	2	road kill, top of hill bay & chestnut	1
5/9/2006	Yarrangobilly SMHy Exit Road	1	photo	
30/6/2007	A/Way SkiTube T/O	1	found on road, road kill	1
3/8/2007	Yarrangobilly SMHy Exit Road	1	Bay mare hit & shot? ~3 days old	1
22/10/2007	Yarrangobilly SMHy Ent	1	photo	
24/10/2007	SMH Deep Creek	1	road kill, 634845 6049071	1
26/12/2007	Rules Point	2	illegal shooting, reported to police	
21/4/2008	SMHy Kiandra Gooandra THd	1	Bay headlight found, road kill photos	1
10/2/2009	Elliot Way, near pk boundary	1	road kill @c24.62, photos	1
6/3/2009	SMH 2km Nth Caves Exit	1	hit, throat cut, holden statesman UHW078, hit windscreen, photos	1
5/5/2009	SMH Gooandra TO Kiandra	2	road kill, truck tyre marks road	1
5/6/2009	SMH Bullocks Hill	1	road kill, car totalled, photos police attended, Chef at Cabramurra cuts, abrasions	1
25/2/2010	SMH Powerline Creek	1	Reported Hit by B-Double, approx \$5k damage	1
14/3/2011	SMH Bullocks Hill	1	road kill black mare	1
17/3/2011	SMH Bullocks Hill	1	road kill strawberry roan	1
2/6/2011	SMH Kiandra Plain 1km Sth Goandra Trail	1	Black horse hit by truck. Euthanised and moved by backhoe and truck to Coppermine FT.	1
2/12/2011	Kiandra plain	1	road kill gr634420-60332960	1
13/1/2012	Kiandra plain	1	Foad hit by vehicle, euthenased by member of public (rock to head). 0634840 6034511. AGD66 Reported alive by passer by. Found dead by NPWS	photo in portpholio 1
11/4/2013	SMH Eucumbene River Bridge, Nth Kiandra Plain	1	road kill Blue Roan, towed off rd, RMS attended later & moved off further	photo in portfolio 1
31/7/2013	SMH Bullocks Hill, 100m Sth campground T/	1	road kill Bay, 0636431 6039470	photo in portfolio 1
12/3/2014	Rules Point	1	Horse hit by truck at high speed just north of the Long Plain Road entry. No reports by vehicle owner.	1
20/2/2015	Kiandra plain	1	Horse hit by unknown vehicle	Photo in portfolio 1
20/9/2015	Kiandra plain	1	grey horse by unknown vehicle approximate date	photo in portfolio 1
16.10.2015	400m south of Bulocks Hill	1	dark grey horse by unknown vehicle	photo in portfolio 1
29.2.2016	400m north of Bullocks Hill	2	2 dark coloured horses by unknown vehicle	photo of vehicle in portfolio 1
6.9.16	3 Mile Creek - Kiandra Plain	1	Black Horse hit after dark (1830). Significant damage to bullbar, bonnet and both gaurds of hilux.	1
22/2/2017	Kiandra plain	1	Hit by vehicle Gr 634455-6033431	1
1/5/2017	Long Plain turnoff	1	Hit by vehicle Gr 638378-6046019	1
7/5/2017	Bullocks Hill	2	Hit by vehicle Gr 636212-6039010	photo in port 1
10/5/2017	3 mile ck	1	Hit by vehicle Gr 634428-6033254	photo in port 1
14/6/2017	SMH	1	Hit by vehicle Gr 636997-6041560	photo in port 1
3/1/2018	SMH Racecourse Creek	1	bay mare hit by vehicle killed	photo in port 1
20/9/2018	SMH Gooandra gravel dump	1	bay horse hit and killed by vehicle written off. See attached report	1
9/10/2018	SM HwyNear Y Caves Exit 637687 6043822	1	Stallion. Approx 480kg estimate. Assume hit by large truck. No sign of vehicle damage. Report sent to RMS Cooma.	1
24/10/2018	Bullocks Hill SM Hwy	1	Assume hit by truck. GR 636630 6039727 . Email of details sent to RMS Cooma	1

From: 3(a)(b)
To:
Subject: Horse trapping & Horses hit Kiandra area Snowy Mountains Highway
Date: Friday, 9 November 2018 11:24:52 AM
Attachments: [SMH Horse Hits 2017 2018.pdf](#)
[SMH Horse Traps 2014 2018.pdf](#)

Hi

1. Attached are maps showing horses hit last 2 years & trapping along Highway for last 5 years
2. There has been no trapping along the Snowy Mountains Highway for the last 2 years from rules Point to Sawyers Hill, in my meeting brief I didn't include the trapping at Long Plain Road/Murrumbidgee River which is 2km NE Rules Point & was trapped August 2017, Most of the other traps haven't been used since 2014 & 2015
3. There was some initial salting at Carols Creek September 2017 but trapping didn't proceed and some salting at 3 mile dam in April 2018 for the horses at 3 mile but trapping didn't proceed due to community concern
4. From our records :

Horses Hit SMH Kiandra area

Year	No.
2018	4
2017	6
2016	3
2015	3
2014	1

Horses Trapped Kosi Nth

Cal Year	No.
2018	0
2017	148
2016	235
2015	122
2014	495



Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW)

Memo to: File **of:**
From: **Phone no:**
Date: Friday 13th January 2012
cc:
Subject: Foal hit by car on Snowy Mountains Highway

3(a)(b) phoned NPWS Tumut 8:30am to report that her husband had observed an injured foal on the edge of the Snowy Mountains Highway in the between Gooandra Trail and Kiandra earlier that morning while driving from Cabramurra to Talbingo. It was having trouble getting into a standing position and he observed grazes on legs and noted it was having trouble using its back legs. It appeared to have been hit by a vehicle.

arrived at the location of the foal at 10am and reported that the horse had already been euthenased by someone using a large rock to the back of the head. I arrived at 10am. The foal was already beginning to bloat and rigor mortis was setting in so the horse had been dead a few hours.

Contact details 3(a)(b)

I contacted to inform her of the fate of the foal. is a horse owner and had offered to pay for the vet bills and transport the horse if it was a minor injury.

Ranger, Murrumbidgee Area

Memo

To: 3(a)(b)

Date: 25 September 2019

From: 3(a)(b)

Subject: Horse and Car Collision Snowy Mountains Highway
on Thursday 20 September 2018 around 6pm

A wagon travelling on the Snowy Mountain Highway collided with a bay horse near the Gooandra gravel pit around 6pm on Thursday 20th September 2018.. This information was reported to Ranger 3(a)(b) (A/Area Manager) by the driver 3(a)(b) on 25th September 2018 and a friend of the driver who also contacted on 24th September 2018.

The driver was travelling at around 80kph (100kph zone) on the Snowy Mountains Highway. Her headlights were on high beam. As she approached a gentle bend on the Snowy Mountains Highway near the gravel pit at Gooandra a horse that was in a drop on the side of the highway stepped out in front of the car.

3(a)(b) stated that the horse could barely be seen until she was almost upon it as it was a dark bay colour. The horse was hit in the belly and flipped onto the car with the horses head cracking through the windscreen mainly onto the passenger side of the vehicle.

3(a)(b) lost control of the vehicle and it veered across and off the road. The road at this section did not have any steep embankments.

3(a)(b) stated she was extremely fortunate that she was not injured as the horse rolled onto the car, that she did not have a passenger and she did not roll off steep embankments that surround the area. She also stated how fortunate she was in one of the few places that had phone reception in the area and was able to call for assistance from the police and a friend.

3(a)(b) also wanted to state that the horse did not die on impact, and the horse distress calls were ongoing for the approximate 2 hours it took for police to arrive, and other horses were hanging around the highway the whole time she was there. The police euthenased the injured horse. also stated that driving out she guessed that there were up to 100 horses (in various groups) throughout the Kiandra area as they left later in the evening around 9:30-10pm.

The attached photos were sent to from who attended the scene on the night.

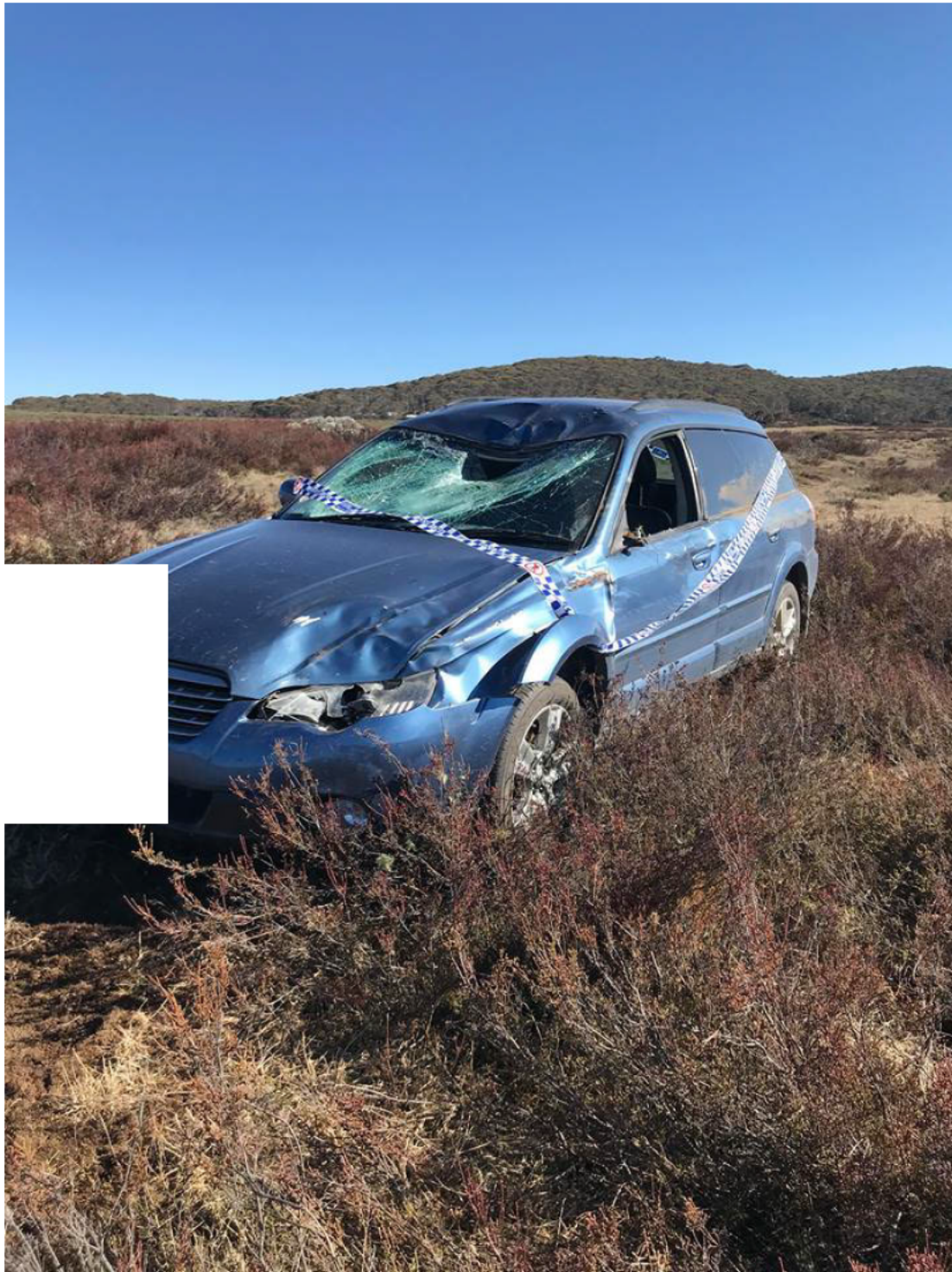
They both made contact with NPWS as they believe was extremely luck not to have been killed. She was driving in a safe manner and this accident still occurred.

are aware of the complex nature of horse management, however they are very concerned that there is a safety issue with them on the Snowy Mountains highway and wanted to see if anything can be done to improve safety for drivers.

also asked if NPWS would consider paying the insurance excess of \$750 for the accident. stated her primary purpose was to raise this safety issue to a higher level.

The following pages include:

1. Photos of the horse and vehicle the day after the collision
2. Map of accident location











From: 3(a)(b)
To:
Cc:
Subject: FW: Wild horses "Brumbies" [ref:_00D90ZANp._5006F1A9yKJ:ref]
Date: Thursday, 21 January 2016 12:20:02 PM
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

Given is still away and your involvement in the horse program, are you best placed to respond to this enquiry

Thanks

From: Environment Line [mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 19 January 2016 3:48 PM
To:
Cc:
Subject: FW: Wild horses "Brumbies" [ref:_00D90ZANp._5006F1A9yKJ:ref]

Hi
For your attention

Regards

Information Centre
Office of Environment and Heritage
tel: 131 555
www.environment.nsw.gov.au
info@environment.nsw.gov.au

----- Original Message -----

From: 3(a)(b)
Sent: 18/01/2016 10:38
To: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Subject: Wild horses "Brumbies"

3(a)(b) and on Sunday I was fishing the upper Tumut River above Talbingo dam from Talbingo Dam (Sue City) to Tumut 2 power station.

We travelled via The Elliot Way from Tumbarumba to Sue City the back end of Talbingo Dam.

On the way home I was very cautious and aware of the Brumbies in this area as one of my partners was hit by a brumby (not him hitting the brumby) exiting the bush at speed at night. He was very lucky that he only damaged the car and bull bar and smashed the windscreen where the horses head hit, and he didn't have a major accident. The car was not drivable and he had to walk 7km for assistance from his mates at Sue City at 10pm at night. There is no phone signal in this area so you can't contact anyone for assistance. Very lucky guy.

But the reason I am writing is that on my way home between the hours of 9pm and 10pm along the Elliot Way, I was not game to travel any faster than 60km an hour due to the

sheer number of brumbies on the road, far out numbering the kangaroos and other wildlife.

We saw no less than forty (40) brumbies just along the Elliot Way. Many had foals with them and they did not spook but just stood on the sides of the road.

I am very concerned that a deadly accident will occur along the Elliot Way road. Especially with travellers not being used to or aware of how many horses are in these areas and the lack of phone reception to contact others for help. If an accident occurred and the car veered off the road they may not be found for days.

I have been frequenting these areas for over 40 years and the numbers of horses/brumbies has exploded in this time. More so in recent times.

Going into the back of Tantangra dam at times I have seen hundreds of horses and they don't seem to be that scared of approaching vehicles. When travelling in this area though you are at very low speed so the danger is not as great for a major accident but along the Elliot Way this is a 100km road and be assured on my experience last night there will be a death on this road not too far into the future.

I am asking that you take action to cull the growing amount of horses in the national forests "NOW". I understand that you have challenges with this but we need to convince others that the death will be on their shoulders. A thousand horses is not worth one human life or worse a tragedy of losing a child or injuring someone so they are a vegetable for the rest of their lives.

Could you please reply with your thoughts to my email.

Many thanks and this part of Australia and more, this part of the world is just fantastic. I stopped several times just to take in the smells and the sites along the Tumut River.

3(a)(b)

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ref:_00D90ZANp._5006F1A9yKJ:ref

Horses Found Dead

Date	Location	Number	Description/comments	
11/02/2019	200 m north of Bullocks Hill turn off, SM Hwy	1	brown colt with white star. Unknown vehicle. Staff moved off road. GR 0637286 6040169.	N:\REGION SH
13/03/2019	SMH	1	Found dead on highway. Staff moved off road. GR 037 437.	N:\REGION SH
28/03/2019	SMH	1	Powerline creek GR 635271 6037104. Likely hit by truck, given extent of injuries. Grey, Sex could not be determined. Staff moved off road	N:\REGION SH
19/04/2019	SMH near Kiandra	1	Under powerlines. GR 0635172 6036373. Brown horse.	N:\REGION SH
5/05/2019	SMH between Exit Road and Bullocks Hill	1	Brown horse. Presumed hit by vehicle. GR 372 423	N:\REGION SH
25/06/2019	SMH Bullocks Hill	1	Black foal. GR 63657 6039867	N:\REGION SH
26/06/2019	SMH Bullocks Hill	1	Black stallion. Injuries correspond to motor vehicle accident. Euthanised. GR 0636907 6040508	N:\REGION SH
11/09/2019	SMH North Bullocks Hill	1	Approx. 2 year old colt. Found dead. Body had been moved by unknown persons to near Blue Creek Copper mine Trail. GR361 386	N:\REGION SH
11/09/2019	SMH	1	Brown filly/mare (?). Found dead beside highway. GR 407 306	N:\REGION SH
17/02/2020	SMH	1	Brown foal. Found dead beside road. GR 365 395	N:\REGION SH
9/03/2020	SMH	1	8 - 12 month old brown colt. Found dead on edge of road inside guard rail. Moved off the road by staff. GR 373 412	N:\REGION SH

[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\Horse hit SMH Bullocks Hill 11 Feb 19.msg](#)
[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\GR 037437 13 Mar 19.jpg](#)

[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\28032019 SM Hwy Powerline Creek GR 635271 6037104.jpg](#)
[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\Road Kill 19 Apr 19.msg](#)
[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\5 May 2019.msg](#)
[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\25 Jun 2019.msg](#)

[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\26 June 2019](#)

[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\11 Sep 19 Brown colt](#)
[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\11 Sep 19 Brown Filly](#)
[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\17 Feb 2020 Foal.jpeg](#)

[ARE\Portfolio PhotoLibrary\MURRUMBIDGEE\WORK IN PROGRESS\HORSES\Road kill photos\Foal hit on Snowy Mountains Highway 9 Mar 20.msg](#)

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