

Witness appendix to Impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps Senate Committee on behalf of the Heritage Horse and Environment Protection Alliance

Contact: Dr Jill Brown

I respectfully ask that the Committee consider the following points.

- The extreme cruelty of aerial culling of wild horses is beyond question. The terror experienced by the horses in this process is indefensible. It is also demonstrably inefficient resulting in animals being left to suffer multiple wounds and die in great pain over an extended period of time.
- Wild horse advocate groups are ready and willing to work with government and national parks to resolve this issue in ways that are both humane and effective. This requires an openness to alternative views and the establishment of effective communication between groups. The current adversarial approach is unhelpful.
- The number of wild horses in the Alpine Region is open to dispute as is the impact of the horses on the environment. A growing body of recent research suggests that there are fewer horses than the estimate used to justify the culling and that the observed impact on the environment is, in the main, attributable to other species.
- There are alternative approaches to population management which are used successfully in other parts of the world. These include relocation, rehoming (with appropriate central management and financial support), fertility control, protection of sensitive environmental zones to exclude all invading species and the maintenance of sustainable and protected numbers in appropriate areas.
- The Australian Waler horse is currently classified as rare and endangered. It is our heritage horse, the Australian equivalent of the American Quarter Horse, and must not be allowed to disappear. The bloodlines of this rare breed are held within the brumby population. Once gone, they can never be replaced.
- Wild horses are a potential tourist attraction and an irreplaceable part of our our history and heritage. Elsewhere in the world such horses are valued and protected. I ask that the same be done here.

Thank you for your consideration of the above points. If clarification or additional information is required, please contact me

