



**SAVE THE BRUMBIES INC.**  
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## **TO FEDERAL SENATE ENQUIRY AND REFERENCE COMMITTEE**

### **Into impacts & management of horses in the Australian Alps**

Save the Brumbies Inc. (STB) CFN 17516 was established following the atrocity of the helicopter slaughter of wild horses in Guy Fawkes River National Park in October 2000. I was a member of the Horse Reference Committee as set up by the NSW Government to explore better management practices into the future.

Since the inception of STB Inc. we have seen some positive changes in management as a result of the deliberations of the HRC. i.e., passive trapping and removal, the cessation of aerial slaughter and ground shooting of the wild horses in our area.

Note that STB Inc. was the first organisation to establish rehoming of these Heritage horses whose ancestors share the same blood lines as the Walers, the war horses in both world wars. Many other rehoming organisations have now followed our example, i.e., in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) where such horses were also drafted into the Lighthouse regiments.



New England Brumby Sanctuary (NEBS) 2018



NEBS Brumbies coming up for a feed of hay

We have had unqualified success with our Adoption program; to date over 400 horses have been successfully placed in approved, caring homes. We have

also established the Australian Brumby Horse Register thus giving the horses recognition and many now compete successfully at agricultural shows Australia wide. Through our efforts the Australian Brumby horse is now renowned for the hardiness and lack of inbreeding as is found in many domestic breeds.



New Brumby arrivals to NEBS



Males gelded to adjust to new ways

Brumbies are sentient animals, family orientated independent free spirited souls who bring their caring, intelligent, protective traits with them for their new forever human, provided the Brumbies has been given time to adjust to their vastly different domestic environment by skilled, dedicated rehomer groups who collect Brumbies from park trapping programs, transport to private property, with secured fencing, yards for safe handling, feeding as the Brumby is now under human care in one small area of land, vet treatments, and hours of unpaid volunteered time spent on gentling in the Brumby.

The problems facing the numerous rehoming groups are many, firstly the lack of interest and funding by Governments to enable such dedicated people to continue their life saving work to preserve such a vital and important part of our national Heritage.

The financial costs to such groups that are animal welfare approved is high, many are unable to continue long term, i.e., the cost of transportation, initial horse handling, gelding of colts and stallions, adequate land, fencing, veterinary attendances, all of which are frequent and ongoing, creates a severe drain on available resources, thus resulting in well-meaning people being unable to continue to take horses for rehoming. Some initial seed funding and

financial assistance by Government is an essential necessity going forward into the future.



Gentling Brumbies takes time to ensure a lasting and safe result.

### **Fertility Control:**

In 2014 we commenced the first fertility control trial conducted in Australia at our Armidale, NSW New England Brumby Sanctuary. This trial involved some 60 horses and was ongoing for a period of four years. Dr. Andrea Harvey, Phd, initiated the trial and the results were positive. Dr. Harvey presented the results to NPWS, Armidale Branch. The method was that trapped horses were injected into the muscle and at the same time a GPS tracker was inserted into the neck of each horse, horses were then released, the GPS tracker would thus enable NPWS staff to track the movements and possible foaling of such horses.

However to our dismay we were informed that under legislation, trapped horses were to be removed from national parks and therefore such a program would not be considered yet the costs of implementing the drug were minimal. The financial costs to our Charity to conduct the trial were in excess of \$20,000; we are still maintaining many of the horses in that trial as now being older and not suitable for rehoming. Dr. Andrea Harvey would be happy to provide further information.

Fertility control has been conducted in the USA with the Mustangs and also the wild ponies in the U.K. for many years, we ask ? why cannot such programs be utilized in Australia ? It is simple, cost effective and an efficient tool in reducing horse numbers, this, coupled with rehoming would substantially assist in keeping horse numbers to an acceptable level into the future. The ongoing and constant debate regarding bullets continues; the public in general, condemn

the shooting of our Heritage horses; carcasses left to rot where they lie thus providing a feeding ground for wild pigs, dogs and other carnivores to consequently breed up, many of which are not native species. This is no way to ensure the preservation of our Heritage horses for future generations.



Slow process produces amazing results



Children ponies, bush treks, jumping and shows

### **Conclusion:**

As we are situated in the Northern Tablelands of NSW we are not actively involved in rehoming horses from KNP due to the trauma of trucking wild horses over some two days; however please note that in 2021 we did take 29 horses from KNP; the horses arrived severely stressed, several are still with us in high level care due to injuries and our veterinary costs were substantial. Due to the above is the reasons we will not now take horses from KNP.

I sincerely hope that my comments prove useful and we all, collectively, look forward to a more humane, sustainable approach in the management of such a renowned Australian Icon, our wild Brumby horses.

**JAN CARTER Founder, President, Public Officer. Save the Brumbies Inc.**

**20<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

**Website: [www.savethebrumbies.org](http://www.savethebrumbies.org)**

**Facebook: New England Brumby Sanctuary.**