



**SAVE THE BRUMBIES INC.**  
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## **TO: The Natural Resources Commission - Pest Animal Management Review (NSW) - 22<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**Below is our reply and comments relevant to the above.**

**As a member of the Australian Brumby Alliance we are in total agreement with the report already submitted by this organization. We comment on the following points.**

1. Save The Brumbies (STB) Inc. is absolutely opposed to shooting in any form except in matters of severe injury and in that case under the supervision of qualified personnel in a controlled holding yard. STB is especially shocked to see the draft Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) Wild Horse plan aim to reduce the KNP population by 90% or 600. This number is not sustainable in such a fire prone environment, and shows the insincerity of claims in the KNP draft plan to *recognize the Heritage value of KNP Brumbies*.
2. The Heritage value of the wild Brumby horses must be recognized, do eliminate the word 'feral' from any documentation relating to this issue. Although the word 'feral' is defined as 'wild' however it gives the popular image of 'dirty, underground, bad, etc.'
3. STB Inc. was a member of the Steering Committee set up by NSW Government following the aerial slaughter of horses in Guy Fawkes River National Park (GFRNP) in 2000. Since then successful programs of passive trapping and removal have kept the population to an acceptable level, taking into account seasonal changes, i.e., drought, bush fires etc. No horse has been shot in the name of conservation in the following years.
4. We urge that a similar Committee be set up by Government comprising of RSPCA, National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) and personnel experienced in wild horse management. To date any similar meetings have focused mainly on alleged damage and have not taken into account the positive contribution the horses actually make to the environment, as referenced in the Australian Brumby Alliance submission to the Natural Resources Commission.
5. We would like to see similar scientific reports tabled at any such meetings relating to other 'feral' species, i.e., wild pigs, wombats, foxes, wild dogs, cats etc. This is lacking and without such reports an unbiased outcome cannot be achieved. Refer the Australian Brumby Alliance independent reports on this issue.

6. Of most importance is the question of funding. Without adequate funding from the Government no progress can be made, the continual cycle of media attention regarding shooting of the horses, overpopulation etc. will continue. Many horse interest groups wish to take horses however the reality is that without some Government assistance to provide land, resources, infrastructure etc. it is just not feasible for the average person to do so. Some funding was provided to a not for profit group established to collect Brumbies from GFRNP following the Steering Committee, this should also be provided for groups who collect Brumbies from Kosciuszko National Park Alpine horses. Note: STB Inc. receives no funding, no paid staff and relies on donations from the public to continue.

7. STB Inc. is currently undertaking the first research trial of fertility control in wild horses at our Armidale NSW Sanctuary. Now in the second year results are positive. Privately funded and conducted by qualified equine specialists the drug being trialed is inexpensive, easy to administer and has no adverse affects. The trial has been approved by the Ethics Committee. It is proving successful with stallions as well as mares. It is particularly effective in groups of horses up to approx. 200. As horses in the wild are scattered with each mob having their own home territory this is another excellent tool in sustainable management. However to proceed with fertility control in national parks a commitment is needed from Government to fund such projects.

A report on progress of the STB fertility control trial will be released towards the end of 2016 after scientific approval before being made public. Note: the drug is not PZP as commonly believed and as stated is cost effective. At this stage of the trial further information is confidential.

8. Legislation and protection should be given to the Heritage wild horses similar as is done in the U.S.A. The Bureau of Land Management manages over 70.000 Mustangs, funded by the Government; a similar program should be established with the Alpine horses. As there are approximately only some assumed 6000 horses to manage in this area this is a very achievable target.

9. Finally we have proved conclusively over the years that the public want, can utilize and enjoy the Brumbies (Wild horses) in all forms of equestrian pursuits. It is high time that Government recognizes the Heritage value of the wild horses and provides funding and support for our cultural history and for future generations of Australians.

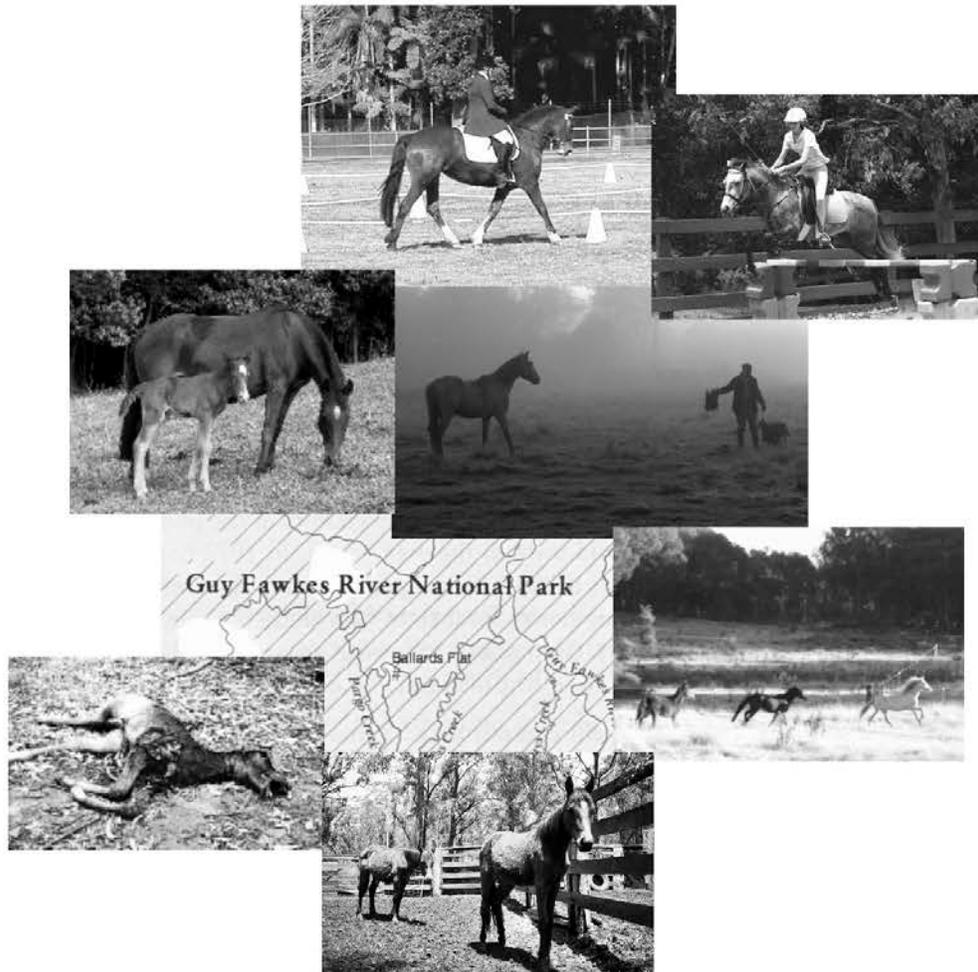
Attached for further reference is the booklet 'Our Story' which gives the background and work of STB Inc.

With thanks,

**JAN CARTER Founder and President of Save the Brumbies Inc. CFN 17516**  
**16<sup>th</sup> May, 2016**

# Caring for Australia's Wild Horses

## *Our Story*



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.org



# Our Story

Welcome to Save the Brumbies Inc., Tax deductible Registered State Charity CFN 17516 (STB). This booklet explains our work and why Save the Brumbies plays an important role, not only in our rescue programs but also in preserving the living Heritage of the Australian Brumby for future generations.

STB was established following the aftermath of the horrific helicopter slaughter of over 600 horses conducted by NPWS in Guy Fawkes River National Park, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2000. **The principle aims of STB are :**

- To further the welfare and well being of Brumby horses.
- To work towards the abolition of aerial/ground shooting of Brumbies in national parks, Government and private lands Australia wide.
- To liaise with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other relevant Government bodies to develop humane management plans relating to the removal of horses in alleged threatened areas and control of breeding to acceptable numbers into the future.
- To aim for a sustainable number of wild horses to remain in national parks as part of our Heritage, History and Culture. (A wild horse is what he is because of where he is; this is what we need to protect and preserve.)
- To ensure that no action of STB will lead to the destruction of a Brumby either directly or indirectly (including by means of sale to a third party whose intention may be the destruction of the animal.)
- To ensure that any capture and relocation of Brumbies from national parks and Government/private lands is done in a manner that complies with RSPCA Guidelines.

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- To seek legislative changes which give the Australian Brumby Horse protection and preservation into the future and to support suitable breed registers to maintain the Heritage and blood lines of such horses.
- To foster and work with other organisations and projects whose objectives are compatible with those of STB.
- To seek to enter into agreements with NPWS and other bodies with a view to providing safe, alternative and secure pastures for Brumbies.
- Where possible, to run adoption programs, thus making Brumbies available to the public.
- To keep the profile of the Australian Brumby Horse before the public via the media, agricultural shows, the Pony Club movement etc.
- To raise money under the Charitable Act to further the above aims of STB

### **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF STB**

Since our inception we have worked closely with NPWS to bring about much needed changes in wild horse management. We are concerned about the environment and the impact that large numbers of horses may have on protected country. However, in the past there were no management plans in place to control horses in the wild and this situation has gone unheeded for many years. Consequently large numbers of horses have bred up to a point where control has been carried out by aerial and ground shooting with horrific results that have outraged and disgusted Australians and the wider world.

Due to pressure from the public and horse interest groups a Heritage Working Party was set up following the helicopter

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slaughter of horses in October 2000 in Guy Fawkes River National Park to establish the Heritage value of the horses and their value to the community. The findings proved the Heritage of the horses and recommended that controlled numbers be allowed to free range in Guy Fawkes. However Government declared that the horses be removed and handed over to horse interest groups for management. Furthermore, under present legislation all wild horses are declared 'feral pests' and are to be removed from national parks and Government land.

Following the Heritage Working Party report a Steering Committee was established to determine ways of removing the horses. This Committee was comprised of NPWS, RSPCA, conservation groups and horse interest groups. As a member of the Committee, STB represented the Australian Horse Alliance and other similar organisations.

We fought very hard for the rights of the wild horses and lobbied tirelessly for management changes and the abolition of shooting as a means of control. We took our direction from the Mustang programs of management in the US where the Bureau of Land Management is responsible for wild horses and run adoption programs for the Mustangs. In the US, as in other countries of the world, wild horses are protected and valued; our aim is to eventually see similar programs introduced in Australia. However funding for such programs here is non existent and it falls on the public to bring about changes.

### **This is where STB Charity takes over**

We are essentially privately funded for care of removed horses; from point of departure at the Park gates we have sole responsibility for horses under our care.

Horses are still being shot, or are trapped in national parks and consigned directly to abattoirs for slaughter. The situation hasn't

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changed much since October 2000; it is still dead horses. This is particularly distressing as we have proved that the public value and want the tough, hardy Brumby, not only for riding but for maintaining wild horse genetics in breeding programs. The United Animals Nation has stressed that the wild horses of the world should be conserved for the future, as with continued inbreeding of our domestic horses it will not be many years before we look to our wild horses to put back strength and hardiness into our domestic breeds.

STB continues to work towards having controlled numbers of horses in the wild as part of our heritage, history and environment. As more and more land falls under the control of NPWS, particularly in areas such as the Northern Tablelands, the horses are under constant threat of death from existing Government legislation.

### **THE CURRENT SITUATION**

The Plan of Management of wild horses in Guy Fawkes River National Park has been signed off by the appropriate Minister and copies of this document are available from NPWS.

The Plan states that all horses are to be removed. Alternative control methods are in place and do receive priority, however ground shooting is still considered an option of control. Without organisations such as STB horses are trapped and consigned to abattoirs. In recent years a number of horses from Guy Fawkes went to slaughter, as we were unable to take them on agistment. At that time we did not have the land available and were unsuccessful in our request to NPWS to wait a few months until our new Sanctuary at Armidale NSW was ready to take horses.

The Plan of Management for the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park is also now complete and a similar situation exists.

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Again, it is a case of no funding or agistment land for the ongoing preservation of the horses and the personal cost to individuals and the private sector is huge. Without donations and constant media exposure such small groups of dedicated people would simply not survive and a great many more horses would die.

The success rate STB has had in placing horses in caring homes has been exceptional. This is directly due to the hard work and personal commitment of our volunteers who give their time and expertise so generously to the horses for their future welfare. Money, or lack of, is our constant and ongoing concern.

### **OUR PROGRAMS**

#### **Adoption**

Approximately 90% of our horses are adopted/purchased by the public. It costs, on average, \$1200 to prepare a horse for his new life. This includes transport from national parks, freeze branding with our registered brand, formal identification photographs, DNA sampling as needed, gelding of colts by a qualified veterinarian, routine worming on arrival, agistment, fodder and initial training by experienced personnel. Some horses are then transported to our smaller Sanctuary at Bellingen for more advanced training and show preparation.

We have had unqualified success with our Adoption Program; we give an honest appraisal of the horse and his suitability for his new owners and we match the horse to his human in terms of temperament etc. as best we can.

The welfare and future security of the horse is always our first priority.

Financial returns from adoption/purchase assist us to care for the small percentage of horses not immediately suitable for adoption.

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All horses under STB banner receive the same level of care; none are ever destroyed except if necessary for humane reasons, to prevent suffering if nothing further can be done for them. STB is RSPCA approved and also a member of World Society for the Protection of Animals.

### **Sponsorship**

Horses needing a higher level of care are transported to our Bellingen Sanctuary for more personal attention. Here we care for orphan foals, injured horses and horses down in condition. Without Sponsorship help from the public this would not be financially possible. We invite caring people to become involved in Sponsorship; it is a highly rewarding and personal way to help our wild horses. While we care for the horses at our Bellingen Sanctuary on a daily basis, Sponsors are warmly welcome to visit their chosen horse by appointment. All horses in our Sponsorship Program are well handled and quiet.

Sponsors receive a Certificate of Sponsorship, photographs of their chosen horse and regular updates of health and development of their horse. Sponsorship is educational; young people without a horse of their own learn compassion for animals and gain an insight into practical horse care and handling. Sponsorship is inexpensive and entirely voluntary; we regularly have horses coming through this program and help is always deeply appreciated.

We publish our *Newsneigher* newsletter at regular intervals and Sponsors and Friends of STB are informed of our activities and horses for placement as they become available. Our Sponsors are special people and we value them highly.

## Our Story

### **OUR AUSTRALIAN ICON - THE BRUMBY HORSE** **A brief overview**

From our Man from Snowy River legacy to the opening of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games the horse is synonymous with the Australian lifestyle and none more so, than the Brumby Horse.

Our Nation was not built on the back of the sheep, it was built from the back of the horse. From early Colonial days the horse was the pioneer of development; on farms, in agriculture, transport etc., in every area of expansion of a growing nation the horse was indispensable to Australians. Ancestors of our wild horses served us in both world wars; they are tough, strong and hardy animals, able to withstand extreme conditions of climate and have survived by natural selection.

Contrary to the perceived opinion that Brumbies are diseased, inbred animals not worthy of preservation, they are, in fact, exactly the opposite - free ranging horses in the wild look after themselves very well. DNA testing of Guy Fawkes Brumbies has shown less inbreeding, (less than 5%), than is found in the thoroughbred industry and we have not seen one genuine case of inbreeding in any horse that has gone through our programs. The horses we handle are in good condition and certainly, disease free.

Mainly Galloways, our horses have strong bone, sound conformation and are able to carry weight; they are sturdy and sure footed, have excellent, hard feet and are highly intelligent, thinking animals. Their perception, sight, scent, hearing, is well developed and given the right, non- threatening, early training bond closely with their owner in a way domestic horses rarely achieve. The Brumbies are their own advertisement; ask any owner of a Brumby horse and they will swear to the Brumby's loyalty, trust and trainability.

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The name 'Brumby' may have several origins, the aboriginal word 'baroomby' means wild horse but it is generally thought that the name originated from James Brumby. Horses owned by him were released into the wild in the early 1800's and our Brumbies are descendants of some of those horses. The Northern Tablelands Brumbies have a mixed background of breeding, Arabian, Thoroughbred, Clydesdale, Waler to name a few; horses from these areas were drafted for use in the Lighthouse Regiments and were valued for their ability to cope with harsh conditions.

This brief overview only gives a bare outline but argues strongly that our wild horses deserve, not only to have protection and preservation for their bloodlines and endurance but also to be treated with dignity, respect and humane handling. The Brumby is a vital part of our Nation's history; how tragic and senseless to lose this rich Heritage for lack of economic, sensible and sustainable management and lack of foresight and adequate funding from our Government. Will our history books of the future contain photos of slaughtered horses ? Or will they display our Australian Icon, our Brumby Horse, as a symbol of strength and endurance to be valued and prized by future generations of Australians ? It is up to us now, to set the standards for the future.

### **THE AUSTRALIAN BRUMBY HORSE REGISTER**

Until our Brumbies stand alongside their peers and take their rightful place as a registered breed at agricultural shows they have little hope of true recognition and value.

Today, the Mustang horse of the US is renowned the world over; this is due to the protection given to the breed by the US Government over the last forty years.

We ask, why not our Brumbies ?

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To this end the Australian Brumby Horse Register has been established. Registered Brumby horses, Australia wide, may now compete at selected shows and are doing so with outstanding acclaim; proving that owners of Brumbies are more than prepared to take part in this exciting development in the equine industry. Controlled breeding programs will ensure that the genetics are continued and instead of being a 'feral pest' to be destroyed our wild horses will contribute financially towards their own preservation. **Wild horse Sanctuaries are where it all begins.**

### **THE NEW ENGLAND BRUMBY SANCTUARY**

26<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 marked the beginning of a new era in wild horse management for NSW. In the past, without adequate agistment land available to us, managing the horses in our care has been extremely difficult. With horses banned from land where they have been free ranging for over one hundred years but now displaced and outcast by NPWS, where else could they survive.

Again, it was the private sector who tackled this problem. Due to the generosity of several people, the property now known as the New England Brumby Sanctuary (NEBS) has been made available to STB as a permanent wild horse sanctuary. This land was chosen because it closely resembles the terrain where the horses used to roam. We stress again, a wild horse is what he is because of where he is; to take him away from his chosen environment is to take away the very essence of what we need to preserve.

There are 1375 acres of natural, unspoilt, good Brumby country at NEBS. Enough land to temporarily agist horses prior to adoption and enough to permanently home those very few horses we consider not suitable for adoption. It has taken eight years to reach this stage but at least the horses we care for can now lay claim to a permanent home.

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## **WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED**

Through persistent media exposure, show exhibitions of our horses, workshops, training programs and placement of horses we have raised the profile of the Brumby before the public and will continue to do so.

We have been highly instrumental in introducing management plans that actually work and show outstanding results.

We have established the Australian Brumby Horse Register.

We have negotiated with NPWS and the RSPCA in matters of humane treatment at all times regarding the welfare of horses.

We have advised and assisted with the setting up of the Australian Brumby Alliance Inc., the Victorian Brumby Assn. Inc., The Hunter Valley Brumby Assn. Inc., and the South East Qld. Brumby Assn. Inc. We have assisted and helped smaller groups involved in the welfare of Brumbies. We campaigned strongly against the ongoing aerial slaughter of Brumbies in Queensland; our web site collected thousands of signatures, world wide, condemning this action on the part of the Queensland Government.

We have found caring, knowledgeable homes for hundreds of horses.

In April 2008 STB hosted the first National Wild Horse Seminar that brought together wild horse rescue and welfare groups throughout Australia as well as the RSPCA and the Australian Horse Alliance. Out of this seminar the Australian Brumby Alliance was formed to present a united voice for wild horses in Australia.

## Our Story

Our main focus has, to date, been the welfare of the Guy Fawkes horses; however as numbers are gradually being reduced in GFRNP we will be homing horses from other regions such as the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park and other areas of the Tablelands where horses are under threat.

### **TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

As we move forward we envisage NEBS becoming not only a haven for displaced wild horses but a worthwhile tourist attraction for local communities and an educational experience. Already Armidale TAFE programs have covered horse management training for indigenous youth and we look forward to similar programs at NEBS in the future. We also hope to partner with research institutions, such as University of New England to understand more about sustainable numbers of horses in the wild.

Currently, STB is trialling fertility control to help us manage our sanctuaries in a sustainable and humane way. This is the first time such research has been done with wild horses in Australia. We also hope that our work in this area will encourage others, particularly governments, to incorporate fertility control as a humane practice of wildlife management.

The official opening of NEBS was certainly a landmark in Brumby management and is positive proof of what can be achieved, not because of, but in spite of, disregard for our heritage and the future of the Brumby by the Government. We would like to see the Government provide suitable areas for wild horse sanctuaries within non environmentally sensitive parts of national parks. Breeding could then be controlled and horses could be made available to the public on a regular basis. It could be financially

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viable for Government to run and also has significant tourism value, particularly overseas visitors.

These common sense solutions are in place in other, more enlightened nations; the same methods should be used here where the overall quality of the wild horses under threat should be protected.

STB is a current member of the Horse Reference Committee relating to Guy Fawkes River National Park and will continue to liaise and work with federal and state governments in regard to wild horse management. Above all, we will continue to care for these intelligent, tough and sturdy horses, unique to Australian conditions. Our History, our Heritage.

We sincerely hope that STB will point the way to a brighter future for our Australian Icon, the Heritage Brumby Horse.

**JAN CARTER**

**President and Founder of Save the Brumbies Inc. CFN 17516.**

# You Can Help !

Donations towards the Brumbies are gratefully accepted, our operation costs are substantial, particularly during the winter months. Tax deductible donations may be made to:

**Save the Brumbies Inc. Registered State Charity CFN 17516,**

**P.O. Box 409 Bellingen, 2454 N.S.W.**

**Or online at: [www.savethebrumbies.org](http://www.savethebrumbies.org)**

phone 02 6655-2224



October 31 1917 - 90 years ago at the Battle of Beersheba <sup>1</sup>



26 October 2000  
Guy Fawkes River National Park

26 October 2008  
New England Brumby Sanctuary  
A Time and Place for  
our Heritage



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<sup>1</sup> from [www.lighthouse.org.au](http://www.lighthouse.org.au)