

REFERENCE NOTES RE SENATE COMMITTEE

23RD AUGUST 2023

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to take part in this discussion regarding future management of our Heritage horses.

My name is Jan Carter, Founder and President of tax deductible Charity Save the Brumbies Inc. Briefly I was directly involved with the Steering Committee established by the NSW Government following the outcry over the aerial slaughter of the Guy Fawkes Brumbies in October 2000. I am also a member of the Horse Reference Committee relating to the ongoing management of the Guy Fawkes horses. At our insistence a program of passive trapping and removal of horses on the Northern Tablelands was established. Over the last twenty years we have successfully placed many hundreds of horses in approved homes. We have been instrumental in establishing the national body, The Australian Brumby Alliance and have also established a breed register for our Heritage horses; now recognized as a unique Australian breed, competing at agricultural shows with outstanding success.

The problems facing our small Charity, run completely by volunteers are many. We have no funding from any source, our annual running costs for the period 2022 amounted to \$72,582, loss: \$19,094. Money is raised entirely by the generosity of donations from the public. Balance sheets can be tabled if desired. Many other well meaning rehoming organizations have followed our example however the realities of continuing without financial support has resulted in such groups being unable to continue. Funding is problem number one. Many more horses could successfully be rehomed if financial assistance could be provided.

Regarding excessive horse numbers and the issues relating to reducing same. We conducted a fertility control trial over a period of four years at our New England Brumby Sanctuary. This was under the control of Dr. Andrea Harvey Phd. The results were 95% successful. Further, it was cost effective. On presentation to NPWS regarding the introduction of fertility control we were informed that under legislation once trapped, horses were to be removed from the Parks. Yet such control would significantly reduce horse numbers over time. This, together with trapping and rehoming would be a major step forward.

The increase in numbers of horses is directly related to the lack of commitment on the part of Government, lack of funding to support rehoming groups and lack of serious consideration to the introduction of fertility control as so successfully used in other nations, i.e., the USA and the U.K.

To achieve the reduction of horse numbers to 3000 is attainable over time if the above points outlined are taken into serious consideration. But as mentioned, it will take commitment and financial assistance by all parties involved. Our Heritage Brumbies are a national icon and part of our history. They deserve recognition, not bullets. The vast majority of Australians value our wild horses, the media outcry that results in news of random shootings etc. speaks for itself. The images of decaying carcasses left to rot, a feeding source for carnivores is certainly not a pleasant sight for visitors to our national parks.

I won't elaborate on alleged damage to the environment caused by the horses, enough has been debated over that and enough to say that on the Northern Tablelands at present the number of wild deer and pigs moving from the south is causing major problems for farmers and even at our New England Brumby Sanctuary our horses are now competing for grazing land with deer and wild pigs have attacked several new born foals.

It is my sincere hope and wish that today marks the beginning of a new era in Brumby management. Thank you, Jan Carter.