



“Animal Welfare by the experts – those who keep, care for and breed animals.”

[www.animalcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.animalcareaustralia.org.au)

13<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Manager Planning Evaluation and Assessment

**Re: Draft Horse Riding Management Plan: South East Wollemi National Park: Public Consultation Submission**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Horse Riding Management Plan: South East Wollemi National Park.

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is the Peak Body advocating higher welfare standards for keeping animals in Australia as pets and companions. ACA's members are a collective of various sporting, breeding and hobbyist clubs representing the full spectrum of animals kept as pets and companions, including horses and farm animals. This submission has been prepared by ACA's Horse Representative and members.

Safe, off road horse riding opportunities around Sydney are declining making it vital that we protect areas that are still accessible, including the South East Wollemi National Park. With this in mind, ACA would like to make the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:**

No existing trails are closed or restricted to exclude horse riders. Regular use of trails is the cheapest, easiest and best way to keep trails open and clear for when they may be required for emergency vehicles and fire prevention or protection. This includes creating suitable creek crossings (bridges or weirs) where required.

**Recommendation 2:**

Existing easements via freehold land are maintained, and kept open, to ensure trails are kept clear and are fire safe, and where this is genuinely not possible, an alternative access route is created nearby from a public road or crown land.

**Recommendation 3:**

All Wollemi National Park trails that are suitable for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians be made accessible to horse riders 7 days a week without a booking (unless there's a good reason to temporarily close access – such as for booked events, trail maintenance, or following bad weather).

**Recommendation 4:**

Casual horse riders (locals and visitors) and their needs are prioritised, instead of the occasional event and competition for a selective membership. This means ensuring public access to all trails in the park 7 days a week without a booking

Animal Care Australia welcomes the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns as well as assist in providing additional input into improving on the missed opportunities of this Draft Plan. We look forward to seeing a revised second draft of the Horse Riding Management Plan: South East Wollemi National Park released for further consultation

Kind regards,

*Karri Nadazdy*

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**Draft Horse Riding  
Management Plan:  
South East Wollemi  
National Park.  
Public Consultation  
Submission 2021**

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**MARCH 13 2021**

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**ANIMAL CARE AUSTRALIA  
STAKEHOLDER SUBMISSION**

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The Hawkesbury is a beacon for nature lovers and those who enjoy spending time outdoors. Increasing opportunities for healthy outdoor activities that can be safely exercised off road should be a priority for our community as a whole. Horse riders should not be excluded from these healthy community goals, or discriminated against. Reducing access to bush trails increases the likelihood of horse owners being forced to ride on roads and in traffic. This is an animal welfare issue, as well as a health and safety issue for riders, meaning the Draft Horse Riding Management Plan is crucial given the high numbers of horse owners in the Hawkesbury, and nearby Hills District, who rely on the local areas, in particular the South East Wollemi National Park.



The public enjoy seeing horses when they visit trails and parks with their families. Our modern lifestyles rarely allow for opportunities for interactions with horses. This increases the disconnect between horses and the general public, and leads to less educated pedestrians and drivers behaving inappropriately when they do encounter horses on the roads. The less of a divide we create between community groups such as horse riders, bushwalkers, cyclists and children, the safer everyone is, and the more considerate everyone becomes towards each other. This is important for educating the community to be more tolerant of each other, encourage engagement and interaction in safe spaces.

The Draft Horse Riding Management Plan: South East Wollemi National Park is a missed opportunity to create something new and inspiring and unique in the Hawkesbury region. An opportunity to engage and unite various community groups in a shared space where they can engage with each other and learn how to cooperate, and appreciate each other's presence.

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The Draft Horse Riding Management Plan segregates horse riders by discriminating against horse owners, and isolating them from the rest of the community. This is harmful to the horse riders, the horses, and the public and is unproductive.

Animal Care Australia is also concerned by the lack of local recreational riders input into the Draft Horse Riding Management Plan: South East Wollemi National Park. We see clear consultation with organisations hosting events, and the Draft Plan making exclusive accommodations for three organisations and their members, at the expense of the more frequent users of the park, the local horse riders, who are now being almost completely excluded, but for a handful of disjointed one way trails. This raises concerns as to whether the intent of these disjointed one way trails is to in fact limit the horse riding opportunities rather the supposed goal of maintaining horse riding trails? This issue needs to be rectified, and the Plan's horse riding priorities reassessed.

Animal Care Australia welcomes the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns as well as assist in providing additional input into improving on the missed opportunities of this Draft Plan. We look forward to seeing a revised second draft of the Horse Riding Management Plan: South East Wollemi National Park released for further consultation