

18th December 2023

Inquiry into aerial culling of wild horses in Kosciusko National Park - Opening Statement

Good morning,

Chair – I ask that this statement be tabled.

I am Karri Nadazdy – Assistant to the President of Animal Care Australia and I am also the Horse & Livestock Representative and I have trained feral horses for rehoming.

Today I am joined by Rachel Sydenham – the Animal Care Australia Small Mammals Representative and for the benefit of today, Rachel is currently in the process of training two rescued brumbies.

The brumbies were originally trapped in Kosciusko National Park and then sent to a rehoming organization and were then rescued. We hope this Committee takes the opportunity to find out more about Rachel’s experience throughout that process.

Animal Care Australia represents keepers and breeders of pets and companion animals nationally and our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care. When rescued wild horses become someone’s horse and responsibility they become a part of our purview.

Animal Care Australia supports the protection of native flora and fauna above that of any introduced species. However, Animal Care Australia believes that good animal welfare must always be prioritised before cost and convenience.

We strongly believe there is a way forward that provides for the continued re-growth and wilding of areas of destruction while still providing for an area (or areas) where the public and heritage value of the brumbies can be maintained.

Animal Care Australia proposes the NSW Government adopts a One Welfare model - recognising that animal welfare, biodiversity and environment are connected to human wellbeing – and assist in the establishment of a multi-faceted environmental centre, brumby sanctuary and outdoor adventure activities - all open to the public.

This centre, which would be located outside of the protected areas of the Park and would manage nature conservation through rewilding, with a wildlife hospital (and attached veterinary and animal care educational facility), brumby rehoming centre, museum and tourism outdoor adventure activities, as well as accommodation and dining. We are not suggesting it is funded or operated by the Government, but that Government leadership and initiative drive the project forward.

Animal Care Australia also supports the need for greater resourcing and research into more viable and humane alternatives to the current lack of proper management of both the national park, wild horse and other feral animal numbers. For far too long that mismanagement has been resolved by massive culling in great haste, rather than proper policy that not only reduces feral numbers but maintains that reduction.

Animal Care Australia looks forward to sitting down with the government to develop sensible, practical and better strategies and regulations around the rehoming of wild horses.

We would like to thank the Chair and the Committee for inviting us to appear today and welcome your questions.