



Australian Brumby Management Organisation

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18th June 2024

Mrs Penny Sharpe, Minister for Energy and Climate Change, Minister for Environment and Heritage
Naomi Stephens, Acting Deputy Secretary, National Parks and Wildlife Service
Mr Steven Coleman, CEO RSPCA NSW

Courtesy Copy:

Mrs Tanya Plibersek, Minister for the Environment and Water
Mr Sean Sullivan, Director Parks Australia
Mr Richard Mussell, CEO RSPCA Australia

We are a newly formed organisation of Brumby rehomingers, trainers and experienced equine and welfare people, who have come together to propose a way forward regarding Brumbies in national parks and similar wilderness areas. We believe that we can provide a solution for the Brumbies, and for the NSW Government, Parks and the RSPCA, and would like to engage with you for an optimum outcome for all concerned.

As you are aware, dealing with Brumbies in these areas has been a vexed topic for many years, never more so than with the response to the current aerial culling of horses in the Kosciuszko National Park (**KNP**). In addition, following the discovery of an estimated 500 horse carcasses at a property in NSW, a pause in Rehoming pending investigative actions has occurred, removing the ability to get some horses to safety.

Key to the organisation's success will be funding from the Government. It is our hope that the ABMO will be eligible for Government support to undertake its key functions in a similar way to that in which the RSPCA, Invasive Species Council and many other organisations are supported.

This funding will help enable a single organisation to oversee the management of Brumbies from end to end, including maintaining numbers in retention areas, welfare and reporting at all stages of the process, reporting to key bodies for transparency and, importantly, community engagement to retain adoption and tourism opportunities.

We would like to engage with you early in the establishment of this organisation to ensure optimum collaboration and shared priorities.

I have outlined our focus areas and structure, a phased approach and our funding requirement, and welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further. I have also attached the press release intended to go out to the media.

Kind regards,

Nikki Alberts
Chair, Australian Brumby Management Organisation
0434 493 090

Our proposal

About the ABMO

The ABMO has been formed from a collaboration between the following groups:

Nikki Alberts, White Alpine Equine Care and Brumby Rescue

Jill Pickering, Australian Brumby Alliance

Lynnette Sutton, Hoofs2010

Kelli Sinclair-Hicks, Indigo Brumbies

Colleen O'Brien, Victorian Brumby Association

Jan Carter, Save The Brumbies

Jill Brown, Waler Database

Pat Hoelmer, Friends of Wild Horses

Geoff Court, Rivergums Brumby Horses

Should a working agreement and funding be obtained, we will engage further with reputable rehomingers, trainers and experienced horsemen/women to build a strong network of successful Brumby supporters.

Should a working agreement and funding not be obtained, we will continue working as we are as individual groups under our own funding model and approach.

Mission statement

To assist in the definition and implementation of humane management strategies for displaced Brumbies by:

- Defining and providing guidance on best practice management, including passive trapping, handling, transport and ongoing care (rehoming, adoption, sanctuary) to all member associations, groups and individuals
- Providing financial support to all member associations, groups and individuals working in the field of rescue, rehoming and sanctuary of Brumbies across Australia
- Providing advice and working with non-member associations to share best practices and better welfare outcomes
- Providing ongoing review and recording of all Brumbies involved with ABMO to ensure visibility of outcomes achieved

The Brumbies need an optimum solution that addresses the many areas that impact them, both with remaining in the Parks, and being removed.

Key focus areas

Key factors for our focus are:

Brumby welfare and maintenance of numbers	Fertility control
Herd and horse health – both in the Parks and when rehomed/adopted	Handling and training
Keeping in Retention Zones	Safe transport guides
Passive trapping	Rehoming
Weaning	Sanctuaries
Elderly/injured horse management	Tourism,
Inspection of properties/advice/support to potential rehomers/adopters	End to end tracking of, and reporting on, Brumby welfare once removed from Park

Table 1: Key factors for focus

Proposed structure

The below model is not meant to indicate hierarchy – it reflects the different areas of engagement. In addition to those groups mentioned, we also intend to engage with local Ngarigo Elders, First Nations peoples from other relevant areas, and experienced local horsemen/women who know the area and the herds well.

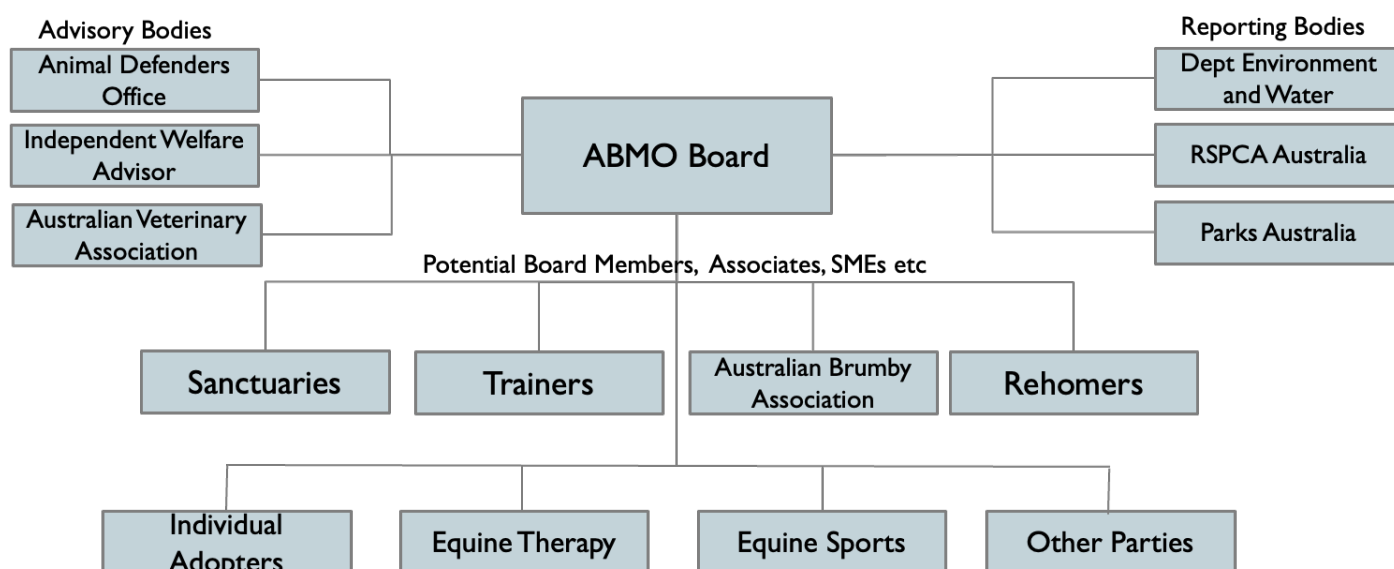


Figure 1: Proposed Structure

Benefits

This approach benefits the Government as it removes the pressure on the Government, RSPCA and National Parks and Wildlife to manage the Brumbies' complex needs.

The benefits to the ABMO is from being able to draw on decades of consolidated experience regarding the horses' welfare, well-being and retention of their heritage values to take accountability for the results.

Phase one – focus on Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) Northern Block, NSW

To ensure a sustainable model is created, we recommend a phased approach:

1. Assess 'size' of need
 - Understand final number of horses remaining in KNP (NSW)
2. Agree plan of action
 - Horses requiring trapping for welfare, weaning, rehoming, fertility control testing
 - Horses to be moved to Retention areas
 - Facilities available (ie; Blowering for NSW KNP)
 - Resources available/needed
 - Agree funding model
 - Receive funding
 - Implement and report on Plan
4. Engage with individual State representatives (Parks, RSPCA, Rehomers, Sanctuaries)
5. Engage with Trainers to ascertain numbers and level of training provided
6. Engage with the public to request EOIs for rehoming/adoption/training/sanctuary
7. Commence Management Plan and reporting processes on welfare
8. Assess success/remediation and agree next Phase focus area

Funding requirements

Government funding

The NSW Government has generously funded the RSPCA to enable them to meet their legislative obligations under the State's animal welfare laws and to be a leading source of animal welfare science, who work with governments and industries to progress animal welfare across a range of issues. The ABMO would seek funding from the NSW Government to enable them to provide the same level of focus and care to the Australian Brumby.

Self-generated from sale of handled brumbies to approved adopters, training and other activities

The ABMO aims to be partially publicly funded/income generating from adoption, training, tourism and other (welfare approved) activities. This will take some time to achieve and will need the organisations facilities, processes and procedures to be established and working smoothly.

Sponsorship

For horses who are unable to be rehomed or require additional time for training or sourcing the right adopter, Sponsorship from the public will be requested.

Summary

We believe our solution works well for the Government, the RSPCA and National Parks and Wildlife as it provides a structure and organisation for experienced Brumby people to take accountability for the horse's welfare.

We hope you will consider this proposal and refer questions and suggestions to us prior to an initial meeting so that we can build a collaborative and productive working relationship with you.

For further information, please contact Nikki Alberts on australianbrumbymanagement@gmail.com or 0434 493 090.

Attachment 1: Press release to be distributed 19th June 2024

PRESS RELEASE 19/6/2024

Australia can do better to humanely manage its wild heritage horses

A group of experienced Brumby advocates, rehomers and trainers have come together to propose a solution to managing the welfare of Brumbies across Australia and are asking for the Government to support the initiative.

The Australian Brumby Management Organisation (ABMO) has been formed to provide a sustainable approach to a decades long issue.

A proposal has been sent to the State and National Ministers of the Environment and Water, Directors of the National Parks and Wildlife Services and CEOs of the RSPCA with a view to building a solution that shifts the accountability for the Brumbies to the people.

The ABMO's initial focus will be on the Brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park. It will be vital to access the horses for a check of welfare and the numbers remaining after the recent aerial and ground culling activities.

Parks NSW have already spent significantly on infrastructure with trapping sites, holding yards at Blowering, and forming and training a Wild Horse Management team. We propose to complement this infrastructure by managing the horses ongoing needs and implementing better practices in the process.

The ABMO's main goal is to ensure that the 3,000 horses that the Government has committed to leaving in the relevant zones in the Park are well managed through non-lethal measures.

The ABMO will work with recognised rehomers and sanctuaries *nationally* to help them access funds to continue to provide support for Brumbies that need to come out of the Park. The ABMO will also look at local and international models for successful management of Brumby welfare and come together as a knowledge group to offer mentoring to those new to helping Brumbies.

The organisation will also approach local horsemen and horsewomen with a vast knowledge of the herds, their behaviours and their habitat, to find better ways of working with these people and involving them in the plan of management, and its implementation.

There are years of experience at our fingertips that are not learned from – now is the time to reach out for a better way.

The Government has willingly funded the demise of these horses, now we would like to see them commit to their promise to maintain a herd of 3000 in the retention areas of the Park.

Now is the time for them to support the people who want to be accountable for the outcomes for our Brumbies.

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