

Statement from the President of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association

Brumbies should not be shot from the air.

The Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV) is against the proposal by some academics and environmentalists to cull brumbies in the Alpine National Park by shooting them from helicopters.

The President of the MCAV, Charlie Lovick, said today the proposal is barbaric and without doubt would leave a string of maimed horses which will escape the "kill shot" but be mortally wounded. "The people who are proposing this method of culling do not understand the difference in terrain which exists in the High Country compared with the Plains or places such as Kakadu. They also do not understand animal welfare and practical issues and are only promoting the environmental angle of this complex issue."

"Conditions such as altitude affect the helicopter's stability which will interfere with a steady aim. The Brumbies will quickly come to understand the danger and make for the trees and gullies as soon as they hear the helicopter, making accurate kill shots very difficult."

"We wish to make it clear that the MCAV supports a practical cull of the Brumbies as numbers have increased dramatically since the cattlemen were removed from their runs. We just do not agree with the method of this proposal."

Mr Lovick made the observation that the MCAV families have proved over 100 years the tried and true techniques used by the families kept the numbers at sustainable levels. "The removal of the families from the Alpine National Park means this local effective control in the Park no longer exists and wild horse numbers have dramatically increased. Those two factors are connected" he said

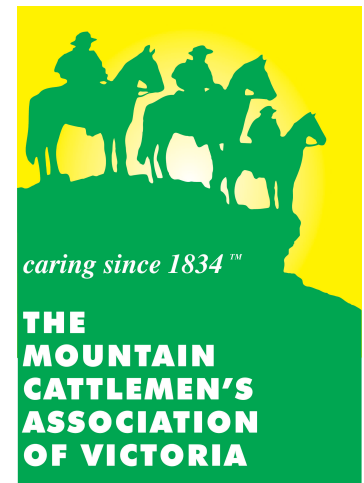
"Those families knew that horse numbers had to be managed and they went and did that. That free service to the environment was lost with the removal of the Cattlemen."

"The MCAV is suggesting the culling techniques used by the Cattlemen be reintroduced" he said

"It is not acceptable for armchair land managers to suggest that Brumbies should be shot from the air and then some left to drag themselves across the High Plains to die in agony over some days. Have these people thought about the welfare issues with orphaned foals left behind with this hit and miss process? Either way, if the horses were killed outright or left to die a slow death, the carcasses would be left to aid the increase in the numbers of wild dogs."

"The MCAV will resist such "management" with all avenues open to it and promote its own solutions."

"I ask the public to carefully consider the way the three big issues facing the High Country are being handled. The issues are 1. Fuel loads and fire, 2. Deer numbers and down to third place are Brumby



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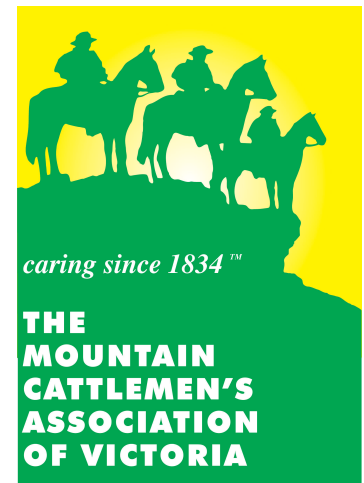
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numbers. For its part, the Cattlemen are disgusted at the way the management of the High Country is going and we have had enough” Mr Lovick concluded.

The MCAV makes the following points about Brumbies

- A sustainable but significant number of Brumbies should remain in the Alpine National Park for heritage reasons because the traditional, cultural and heritage aspects of the brumby are very important. That sustainable figure should be set in consultation with knowledgeable and practical groups such as the Cattlemen.
- Brumby numbers have exploded due to the removal of traditional control measures.
- The MCAV agrees the numbers must be reduced and then maintained at a sustainable level.
- If the Mountain Cattlemen and the traditional pursuit of Brumby running weren't removed by the authorities, the wild horse numbers and the landscape would vastly different now.
- It is clear that Victorians overwhelmingly support the retention of the iconic brumby in its rightful place in Victoria's High Country.



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Control Methods promoted by the MCAV

The MCAV supports 3 types of Brumby (wild horse) control:

1. Trap yards – Trapping with inducements such as feed or salt and then relocated, or being accurately put down in the yards with the carcasses transported out to be used.
2. 'Brumby running' with ropes by experienced horse riders, who would be licenced to undertake this activity. The horses would be taken out of the Park by the runners.
3. Mustering in suitable conditions into yards using a suitable number of experienced and licenced riders. The captured horses would then be relocated or put down accurately and where possible the carcasses transported out.

Note; These methods are inter-connected and should be able to be used in conjunction with one another. They are proven methods, they were used for generations, and they have proved their known effectiveness. The licencing and probably some payment to Brumby Runners provides the department with a mechanism to bar irresponsible people from taking part in the Brumby culls.

More info, Charlie Lovick, 0429775510