



Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment  
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events  
Minister for Outdoor Recreation

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Robert McDonald  
Clerk of the Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
[council@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Mr McDonald

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2023 regarding a petition tabled in the Legislative Council about feral horse management. In accordance with Standing Order 11.04(2), I provide the following response.

I am advised that Parks Victoria continues to rely on an evidence-based approach to managing feral horses in Victoria's national parks and has developed plans for the management of feral horses and their impacts for both the Barmah and Alpine National Parks.

The impacts of feral horses in these areas are serious and long-lasting, destroying critical habitat for many threatened species, damaging waterways, degrading fragile vegetation and disturbing soil resulting in erosion or compaction. These impacts are all detrimental to the superb alpine landscapes that consistently attract visitors to the alpine regions of Victoria.

Monitoring the numbers of horses in these parks helps determine the scale of the impact on the environment and the change in horse numbers over time caused by population growth, environmental factors and control actions undertaken.

Parks Victoria uses scientifically credible methods to survey feral horse populations in national parks, with survey data analysed by an independent expert. Detailed information on the survey methods and results for Barmah National Park and two sections of the Alpine National Park – Bogong High Plains and Eastern Alps – are published on the Parks Victoria [website](#).

The detailed evidence of the environmental damage of feral horses is well-documented. At a conference co-convened by the Australian Academy of Science on 8 November 2018, leading Australian scientists presented scientific evidence clearly demonstrating that feral horses in alpine national parks have already caused widespread and, in some cases, irreparable damage to wetlands and streams. References to this scientific evidence are detailed in the *Protection of the Alpine National Park - Feral Horse Action Plan 2021*.

The action plan describes Parks Victoria's intention to prevent damage to sensitive alpine ecosystems caused by feral horses, using humane and effective control techniques to reduce feral horse abundance, by removing isolated populations and preventing their spread into new areas.

The plan covers a management period of 10 years from its release and was developed in consultation with technical experts, Traditional Owners, community, stakeholders and is founded on rigorous, peer reviewed scientific evidence. The plan is currently in force and work is underway on achieving its stated outcomes.

I understand that the management of feral horses is an emotive issue for many people, who all have different experiences with feral horses and the areas they inhabit. The history of horses is important to some members of the community as a link to the pioneer and grazing history in the Alps and Barmah and adjacent cultural lands.



I recognise that the 'brumby' is considered by some to be a part of Australian folklore. However, feral horses are not unique or native to Victoria's national parks, whereas many native species in these parks can be found nowhere else. Parks Victoria has an obligation to protect the native species that are restricted to these environments.

Thank you once again for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Dimopoulos'.

**Steve Dimopoulos MP**  
**Minister for Environment**

27/2/25