

Meeting Summary

Combined meeting of the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific and Community Advisory Panels

Friday 14 February 2020

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel was formed under the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* to provide advice on the preparation of a draft wild horse heritage management plan.

The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel was formed by the Minister for Energy and Environment to provide independent scientific and technical advice to the National Parks and Wildlife Service to prepare a draft wild horse heritage management plan.

Both panels met for their first combined meeting at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) office in Queanbeyan.

Post-fire recovery planning

The Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) presented a plan for the management of horses in the park as part of post-fire recovery actions. The post-fire recovery plan was deemed necessary by the SAP to reduce the negative impact of horses in sensitive waterways and to help protect threatened species that were impacted by the summer 2019-20 bushfires. The SAP's plan divided the park into management areas, with three areas prioritised for immediate management around Nungar, Kiandra and Cooleman Plains. As the newest horse population, only Nungar Plain was recommended by the SAP for removal of all horses from the area. As the other two management areas are recommended by the SAP for population reduction, a target number of horses for removal cannot be provided for these areas without further population surveys and environmental impact monitoring over time. Management of other pest species will need to occur in conjunction with horse removal.

Questions from the Community Advisory Panel

The SAP responded to questions previously raised by the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) at their meetings:

- quantitative methodology for measuring impact
- use of drones in population monitoring
- exclusion fencing
- significant conservation areas
- horse heritage areas
- Aboriginal cultural significance of wild horses

Control methods

The SAP presented the findings of their review of the former Kosciuszko Independent Technical Reference Group's (ITRG) humanness assessment of control methods. The SAP recommends utilising established scientific models to measure the welfare impacts of control methods and having a range of control methods available for use, depending on the management area.

The panels discussed a number of control methods including rehoming, fertility treatments and aerial shooting.

Next joint meeting of the CAP and SAP

Friday 3 April 2020 in Queanbeyan.