

ISSUE ALERT

Tuesday, 30 June 2020 **Criticality High** Southern Ranges Branch NPWS

Removal of wild horses from Kosciuszko National Park will commence on 6 July 2020

Issue – The post-fire emergency control of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park is ready to commence with the first horses being removed from the park on 6 July 2020. Removal will be ongoing. Injunctive proceedings were foreshadowed in legal correspondence received on 29 June 2020 against the control. There has been increased media coverage and social media interactions by wild horse advocates.

Background

On 3 April 2020, the Minister approved interim measures for the emergency post-fire control of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park (CM9 ref: MD20/2025). The emergency measures will occur in three key areas – Nungar Plain, Cooleman Plain and Kiandra Plain and surrounding areas.

The program is highly targeted and confined to 9% of the park. All horses will be removed from the Nungar Plain area. Horse populations will be reduced towards sustainable levels in the management areas around Cooleman and Kiandra plains.

As with all wild horse control programs since 2002, the aim is to rehome as many horses as possible. If horses cannot be rehomed, they will be sent to a knackery. Mustering is planned to occur later in the year. At this stage of the program only sick or injured horses will be euthanised in traps yards.

The program was developed with advice from the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel and engagement with the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel.

Key facts

Trapping and removal

- Lures were set on 3 May 2020 at trap sites. Trap yards have been constructed at four sites within the Cooleman Plain management area.

Rehoming

- Despite external communications to-date, including an emailed update to almost 100 community members and stakeholders, and adverts in four local newspapers, interest in rehoming has been limited. Five applications have been approved thus far, totalling up to 65 horses.
- Financial assistance towards the cost of transport of horses to a rehomer's property (up to 400 km) was publicised in May 2020 stakeholder communications, in recognition of the impact private travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19 may have on rehoming rates. The offer was only valid whilst COVID-19 restrictions were in force. Given travel restrictions have been eased and regional Department offices have re-opened to the public, the financial assistance for rehomers will be withdrawn prior to the commencement of the removal of horses.

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Next steps

- Commence the removal of horses from Kosciuszko National Park on 6 July 2020.
- Advise approved rehoming that the financial assistance towards rehoming will no longer be provided given the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Continue to promote rehoming of wild horses in accordance with the Communication and Engagement Plan for the control program.



Contact and approval

Contact	Position	Phone Number
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Clause 3(f)

Approved by	Position
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Date: 1/07/2020