

Meeting Summary

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

Friday 1 November 2019

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 panel met at the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) office in Queanbeyan for its inaugural meeting.

NPWS led a discussion on the governance of the panel in accordance with the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* (the Act) and member's responsibilities under NPWS codes of conduct.

A new wild horse heritage management plan

The panel reviewed the requirements for a new plan under the Act. The Minister for Energy and Environment requires that the final plan is to be completed by 1 May 2020. To provide enough time for consultation, this means the draft plan will need to be completed by February 2020. The panel will consider at its next meeting whether this timeframe is achievable for a new draft plan.

Horse distribution and abundance

The methodology and results of the 2014 Australian Alps wild horse aerial survey were discussed. The panel requested the results of the 2019 version of the survey from NPWS to help inform population growth trends and therefore the extent of control required over the next five years. The panel discussed their general observations of increasing population distribution and abundance and the possible causes for this change including lack of effective control.

Member's shared their initial thoughts on several issues including:

- defining a sustainable population of wild horses in the park
- content of a new management plan
- management techniques to limit the spread of horses throughout the park.

The 2016 draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan

NPWS provided information on the 2016 draft plan's content, recommendations and supporting documents. The panel decided to review the 2016 draft plan and assess its perceived limitations. The panel will then determine whether the 2016 draft plan's deficiencies can be adequately rectified to create a new wild horse heritage management plan from it.

Relationship with the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel

The panel are keen to meet with the Scientific Advisory Panel and will work on questions for the Scientific Advisory Panel to consider. The panel has asked the following questions of the Scientific Advisory Panel:

- what methodology can be used for measuring the environmental impact of horses?
- consider the use of fencing, including virtual fencing, as a management technique
- can drones be utilised in population monitoring or mustering?

The panel will consider the requirement for a site visit at its next meeting.

Next meeting

10am – 2pm Monday 9 December 2019 at Queanbeyan.