

# Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel



## Meeting minutes

### Details

**Location:** National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), 11 Farrer Place, Queanbeyan

**Date/time:** 1 – 5 pm  
Thursday 13 February 2020

**Chairperson:** [REDACTED]

**Deputy Chair:** [REDACTED]

### People present

1. Chairperson: [REDACTED]
2. Deputy Chair: [REDACTED] (via telephone)
3. Member: [REDACTED]
4. Member: [REDACTED]
5. Member: [REDACTED]
6. NPWS representative: [REDACTED] Director Southern Ranges Branch
7. Secretary: [REDACTED] Project Officer- Wild Horses, NPWS

### Apologies

1. Member: [REDACTED]

### 1. Opening and Welcome

[REDACTED] opened the meeting and offered an Acknowledgement of Country.

### 2. Apologies

[REDACTED]

### 3. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest

Nil.

### 4. Correspondence

Nil

The Chair thanked all members for their contribution to the large amount of out-of-session internal correspondence which was significantly progressing the panel's work.

### 5. Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes

Panel members accepted the previous minutes.

### 6. Matters arising from minutes of previous meetings

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
6 November 2019 meeting			
1	Secretary to provide members a copy of the letter from the ITRG to the Minister for Environment.	Secretary	21 November 2019

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No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
2	Secretary to resend invitations to the panel's SharePoint page. USBs will be mailed to those members that continue to experience difficulties accessing the page.	Secretary	12 February 2019
3	NPWS to provide a recommended reading list to members.	Secretary	13 November 2019
4	Secretary to ensure agreed discussion points are added to future meeting agendas.	Secretary	Ongoing
5	NPWS to confirm whether sitting fees can be increased to include travel time	Secretary	20 November 2019
6	██████████ to provide an update on fertility control at the next meeting.	██████████	24 December 2019
7	Secretary to distribute member contact details amongst the panel.	Secretary	13 November 2019

### 17 December 2019 meeting

8	NPWS to confirm the format in which final recommendations from the panel need to be provided to NPWS.	NPWS	13 February 2020
9	██████████ to prepare a summary of the 16 December 2019 site visit.	██████████	10 January 2020
10	NPWS to email the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory panel questions to the Scientific Advisory Panel. Members are to provide their response to the Chair by 4 January 2020.	All	6 February 2020
11	Where available, NPWS to provide relevant media reports of the 2019 Australian Alps wild horses survey to members for their information.	NPWS	18 December 2019
12	Members prepare comments on the 2016 <i>draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan</i> and Kosciuszko Wild Horse Independent Technical Reference Group final report by 23 December 2019. Comments should be sent to all members. The Chair, assisted by the Secretary where required, will summarise the review outcomes and provide to members.	All	6 February 2020

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No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
13	Panel to decide whether there are any other key documents that require member's review.	All	Ongoing
14	Secretary to disseminate the update on fertility control prepared by ██████████ to all members.	Secretary	24 December 2019
15	██████████ to review the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Independent Technical Reference Group's welfare assessment of control methods for the next meeting.	██████████ ██████████	13 February 2020
16	██████████ to work with NPWS to develop simple animal welfare checks for the next passive trapping and removal program.	██████████ ██████████ and NPWS	
17	Members to review the biographies prepared by ██████████ and return to NPWS by 4 January 2020 so that they can be added to the NPWS website and distributed to the Community Advisory Panel prior to the joint panel meeting on 13 January 2020.	All	6 February 2020
18	NPWS to invite NPWS pest management staff to the panel's next meeting.	NPWS	

### Action No. 8: Format for submission of recommendations

NPWS recommended that the panel's outcomes are provided in a formal report developed with input from all members. The report could be divided into sections dedicated to differing topics, similar to the former Kosciuszko Independent Technical Reference Group's (ITRG) report. The panel's report may update the ITRG report but should avoid duplication. Recommendations should be supported by scientific evidence where available.

### Action No. 10: Questions from the Community Advisory Panel

Answers have been formulated but will be reviewed again by members before providing a written response to the Community Advisory Panel.

### Action No. 11: Australian Alps Wild Horse Aerial Survey 2019

The panel discussed whether the recent bushfires may have affected the results of the 2019 population survey. 25% of the horse distribution area was impacted but those areas had lower density and the fire severity was considered low in most of these areas. The assumption is that the population has not significantly altered.

### Action No. 15: Review of the ITRG humaneness assessment of control methods

██████████ provided an overview of the review document.

### Action No. 18: Invitation to NPWS pest management officers

Attendance of staff at this meeting was postponed due to the full agenda. The staff will be invited to the panel's next meeting.

## 7. Revised timeframe for a new wild horse management plan

NPWS advised that the Minister for Energy and Environment informed the Deputy Chair of the Community Advisory Panel that a 1-month extension was given to finalise the new wild horse management plan (meaning that the plan will now be finalised in June). It is hopeful there will be additional opportunities of extension of the deadline if post-fire control can commence soon. [REDACTED]

## 8. Post-fire impacts and control

The panel discussed control methods suitable for removing large numbers of horses.

The panel discussed population dynamics associated with control. Complete removal of horses from specified management areas was effective at keeping densities at zero for a longer periods of time without management. Elimination of all horses from specific management areas is possible, but it is difficult to locate and remove the last few remaining horses. At higher densities (carrying capacity) populations will retain their current density without management. Maintaining populations at higher densities but below their carrying capacity is management intensive.

There was general support from members to conduct post-fire control, which will integrate into the new management plan. The panel acknowledged scientific concern for post-fire recovery of waterways, bogs and fens, and the potential impact of wild horses on vegetation in these areas during recovery.

A map with three management areas proposed by the panel to be targeted as part of post-fire recovery efforts was discussed. The map is part of a post-fire recovery plan to be further developed after consultation with the Community Advisory Panel. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The post-fire program is an opportunity to trial control methods.

The panel discussed that while the post-fire plan was being implemented, work on the new plan can start using the panel's comments on the 2016 draft management plan.

**ACTION:** [REDACTED]

**ACTION:** NPWS requested scientific evidence to support the removal of wild horses from the proposed management areas in the post-fire management plan.

**ACTION:** The Chair will present the post-fire control plan to the Community Advisory Panel at the joint meeting on 14 February for comment and endorsement.

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### 9. Outstanding topics for discussion

#### Dealing with extreme views

[REDACTED]

#### Legislative requirements

NPWS explained the legislative requirements of the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018*. The Act does not prescribe or preclude the use of any control methods and requires formation of a Community Advisory Panel to provide advice on a sustainable population of wild horses in parts of the park. The Act does not override the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* but does override the *Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management*. There is no conflict between the two Acts.

### 10. General business

The panel discussed the status of a recent collaring trial.

[REDACTED] stated that he was to undertake post-fire monitoring of wetlands, with comparison to the 2003 post-fire monitoring results.

The panel acknowledged there may be out-of-session work required by members in order to commence post-fire control as soon as possible.

### 11. Next meeting

The next meeting dates will be:

- 1 – 5 pm Thursday 2 April 2020 – panel meeting
- 9 am – 12:30 pm Friday 3 April 2020 – joint meeting with the Community Advisory Panel

Both meetings will be held at the NPWS office, 11 Farrer Place Queanbeyan.

### 12. Meeting close

5:11 pm

[REDACTED]  
**Chairperson**



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### Actions from this meeting

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
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3	The Chair will present the post-fire control plan to the Community Advisory Panel at the joint meeting on 14 February for comment and endorsement.	Chair	

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