

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel



Meeting minutes

Details

Location: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Snowy River Avenue, Jindabyne

Date/time: 9 am – 1 pm
Tuesday 17 December 2019

Chairperson: [REDACTED]

Deputy Chair: [REDACTED]

People present

1. Chairperson: [REDACTED]
2. Deputy Chair: [REDACTED]
3. Member: [REDACTED]
4. Member: [REDACTED]
5. Member: [REDACTED]
6. Member: [REDACTED]
7. Secretary: [REDACTED] Project Officer- Wild Horses, NPWS

Apologies

1. NPWS representative: [REDACTED] Director Southern Ranges Branch

1. Opening and Welcome

[REDACTED] opened the meeting and offered a Welcome to Country.

2. Apologies

[REDACTED]

3. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest

Nil.

4. Correspondence

Nil

5. Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes

Panel members accepted the previous minutes.

6. Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting

No.	Action	Responsible	Progress
1	Secretary to provide members a copy of the letter from the ITRG to the Minister for Environment.	Secretary	Complete
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	Secretary to re-send the SharePoint email invitation to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] email address

Meeting minutes

No.	Action	Responsible	Progress
3	NPWS to provide a recommended reading list to members.	Secretary	Complete
4	NPWS to confirm whether sitting fees can be increased to include travel time	Secretary	Complete
5	██████████ to provide an update on fertility control at the next meeting.	██████████	To be discussed as part of the agenda.
6	Secretary to distribute member contact details amongst the panel.	Secretary	Complete

██
 ██
 ██
 ██

██
 ██
 ██
 ██

██
 ██
 ██
 ██
 ██

NPWS explained that sitting fees would be paid to members for the site visit and meetings. Members can seek recompense for their time spent working on panel business outside of meetings. In this instance, detailed records should be kept and submitted to NPWS for consideration.

ACTION: NPWS to confirm the format in which final recommendations from the panel need to be provided to NPWS.

7. Resignation of Dr Diana Day

NPWS confirmed that Dr Diana Day, who has expertise in soil and catchments, resigned from the panel due to conflicting work commitments. The panel agreed not to seek a replacement for Dr Day, given ██████████ also has experience and expertise in soil processes. A potential gap left by Dr Day was expertise in water quality. It was agreed that external consultation could occur with relevant experts to address any knowledge gaps within the panel.

8. Outcomes from the 16 December site visit

Comments from the panel on the site visit undertaken on 16 December were:

- ██
- ██

Meeting minutes

- Appreciation for the rugged terrain and lack of access, which may limit the use of some control methods
- Recovery from historical cattle grazing seen in some areas. However, recovered vegetation is now being impacted by horses.

A similar tour for the community advisory panel members was suggested. It was also noted that the landscape has sustained grazing for some time now, but that wetlands are being altered by grazing.

ACTION: [REDACTED] to prepare a summary of the 16 December 2019 site visit.

9. Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel

NPWS presented outcomes and questions for the Scientific Advisory Panel from the 9 December 2019 Community Advisory Panel meeting. The panel discussed some of the questions.

The panel discussed avoiding the use of the terms 'lethal' and 'non-lethal' to describe control methods. The terms can be misleading, especially when 'non-lethal' control, such as passive trapping and removal, can still result in animal deaths via knackereries. [REDACTED]

Some members preferred the use of the term 'welfare outcomes' rather than 'humaneness' when describing control, since it is less subjective. The actual welfare outcomes of control methods can be different from the community's perceptions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In recognition that 'humaneness' incorporates other ethical values, it was suggested that an ethical framework was formed which objectively balances animal welfare alongside other values.

[REDACTED] The effect of other species would need to be considered. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ile.

A comparison of monitoring pig populations using drones and helicopters was undertaken in Queensland. Use of the helicopter proved to be more accurate. Drones used in surveying would need to have a long range.

ACTION: 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.

10. 2019 Australian Alps wild horse aerial survey

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Population estimates are very important for pest management as a baseline for commencing control. Recruitment from other areas outside the survey area may account for some of the population increase.

Distance sampling is also used for birds.

ACTION: Where available, NPWS to provide relevant media reports of the 2019 Australian Alps wild horses survey to members for their information.

11. Feedback on the 2016 draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan

Preliminary comments on the 2016 draft plan made by members were:

- The literature review needs to be updated
- All statements need to be supported by science (empirical evidence).
- Improved explanations are needed to support some statements. There are assumptions made as to the reader's pre-existing knowledge of the issues.
- Lack of information regarding Aboriginal heritage. Need to address the potential impact of management to Aboriginal heritage.
- Lack of progress monitoring. Need for measurable outcomes.
- Ways to engage and involve the community need to be specified.
- Lack of demographic information, including how distinct populations are and movement between populations. This may affect how effective control methods will be. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- Avoid the use of the terms 'lethal' and 'non-lethal' control, and 'humaneness'. Instead use 'welfare outcomes'. Use 'negative impact' rather than 'impact' when describing negative environmental impacts.
- Lack of acknowledgement of the variations in herd sizes and breeding rates between populations.
- Field-based measures of welfare outcomes of control is needed.
- Improve transparency about where the knowledge gaps lie. These could become recommendations for future research.
- Improve the background to the plan so that it becomes more issues-focussed.
- Consider a supplementary document with research to support the main plan.

ACTION: Members prepare comments on the 2016 draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan 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.

ACTION: Panel to decide whether there are any other key documents that require member's review.

12. Reproductive control update

[REDACTED]

ACTION: Secretary to disseminate the update on reproductive control prepared by [REDACTED] to all members.

13. Revising the humaneness assessment of control methods

There is some updating required to these assessments as further studies are now available on some methods. Welfare implications of transport, and of no intervention, should also be considered.

ACTION: [REDACTED] to review the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Independent Technical Reference Group's welfare assessment of control methods for the next meeting.

14. Opportunities to improve the animal welfare outcomes of current control methods

Community criticism of NPWS' current use of passive trapping and removal, particularly with regard to concerns around temperature differentials between trap sites and the holding site, may be unfounded.

[REDACTED]

ACTION: [REDACTED] to work with NPWS to develop simple animal welfare checks for the next passive trapping and removal program.

15. Methods of increased population control

Members discussed mustering and that skilled personnel were required. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The ITRG have previously assessed the theoretical welfare outcomes of different control measures when performed using standard operating procedures. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Meeting minutes

16. Member biographies

ACTION: Members to review the biographies prepared by [REDACTED] 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.

17. Next meetings

The next meeting dates will be Monday 13 January 2020 (joint meeting with the Community Advisory Panel) and Tuesday 14 January 2020 (panel meeting).

18. General business

ACTION: NPWS to invite NPWS pest management staff to the panel's next meeting.

19. Meeting close

12:45 pm

Dr David Berman

Chairperson

Actions from this meeting

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
1	NPWS to confirm the format in which final recommendations from the panel need to be provided to NPWS.	NPWS	
2	[REDACTED] to prepare a summary of the 16 December 2019 site visit.	[REDACTED]	
3	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	
4	Where available, NPWS to provide relevant media reports of the 2019 Australian Alps wild horses survey to members for their information.	NPWS	
5	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	

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel



Meeting minutes

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
6	Panel to decide whether there are any other key documents that require member's review.	All	
7	Secretary to disseminate the update on fertility control prepared by ██████ to all members.	Secretary	
8	██████ to review the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Independent Technical Reference Group's welfare assessment of control methods for the next meeting.	██████	
9	██████ to work with NPWS to develop simple animal welfare checks for the next passive trapping and removal program.	██████ and NPWS	
10	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	
11	NPWS to invite NPWS pest management staff to the panel's next meeting.	NPWS	

Actions from previous meeting

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
1	Secretary to provide members a copy of the letter from the ITRG to the Minister for Environment.	Secretary	21 November 2019
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	
3	NPWS to provide a recommended reading list to members.	Secretary	13 November 2019
4	NPWS to confirm whether sitting fees can be increased to include travel time	Secretary	17 December 2019
5	██████ to provide an update on fertility control at the next meeting.	██████	17 December 2019

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Panel



Meeting minutes

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
6	Secretary to distribute member contact details amongst the panel.	Secretary	13 November 2019