



Friends of Grasslands - special bulletin 2021 No. 3

Supporting native grassy ecosystems

30 August 2021

Hello everyone

Last week, ABC TV's Landline ran a story on the feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park. FOG member June Wilkinson featured in the article, and Geoff has summarised the episode and June's contribution to it below. At the end of Geoff's summary there is a link to the Landline article.

A Kosciuszko National Park draft management plan was supposed to be released by the middle of this year, but it has been sitting on Matt Kean's desk (NSW Environment Minister), while that government attempts to negotiate a way forward. Matt Kean says the draft plan will be released for public consultation soon.

June received a lot of support following the Landline program and has requested that if FOG readers would also like to add their support they could email the Environment Minister's office, and copy in the local member for Monaro (John Barilaro). I have put their contact details at the bottom of this email.

Cheers, Margaret
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June Wilkinson talks on brumbies Geoff Robertson

22 Aug. ABC Landline ran a segment, by national regional affairs reporter Jess Davis, on *the battle over brumbies* in Kosciuszko National Park, the cause of division and debate for decades. The program reported that tensions are running high in the NSW high country, as their fate is decided - plans for brumby management are emerging - yet again. The show featured some beautiful scenes of the high country grasslands, the damage being done by brumbies, and the on-again, off-again history of brumby management.

I was delighted to see my friend, mentor and FOG member June Wilkinson, talk on the matter. June is a great horse lover and has ridden horses all her life. As reported on the program, she remembers her days as a child droving in the Snowy Mountains, where her family grazed their cattle and sheep in the summer months. "It was much talked about if a brumby was even sighted and I actually was always hoping to see one but never did," she says. That's not the case anymore. "Not long ago I did go for a ride in the hills and couldn't believe it, there were brumbies just everywhere." Like many others, she is concerned about the impact they are having on the national park.

Quoting June, "They're absolutely beautiful creatures, but I don't think that's got anything to do with the fact that they shouldn't be allowed in our fragile high country. It just seems wrong to me that the wild horses are protected when there are so many threatened animals up there that are being kept on life support." The program stated that June is not afraid to say what she really thinks. Many landholders and locals told the ABC they would not speak on the record for fear of retribution, with reports of death threats, vandalism and abuse. It quoted June "Like any other animal that's out of control, they have to be brought back in control. They have to be shot, of course they do."

June and her brother helped with droving up to the family's snow lease at Currango Plain. When Kosciuszko was declared a state park in 1944 and became a national park in 1967, June's family was one of the first to lose their snow lease, but she says her father understood it was time and was never angry or bitter about it.

June holds no such sentimentality for the feral horses and she doesn't believe Banjo Paterson would either. Her grandmother was a first cousin of the famous poet. June said "I think Banjo Paterson would be absolutely horrified if he ... came back and saw what was happening now."

Richard Swain, well known Monaro conservationist also spoke on the program. The program which provides a factual and fair account of the issues, and anyone interested in brumbies and their plight should look at the segment found [here](#).



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