



An authorised Ambassador of the Treaty Council Worldwide for NSW.

Community | Volunteering | Response |
Environment | Conservation | Sustainability
ACN 662 157 011 | ABN 21 662 157 011

Wednesday, 14 June 2023

The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC
Minister for Environment and Heritage

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**RE: Horse cull in Kunama Namadgi (Kosciuszko National Park),
Snowy Plain, May 2023**

Hundreds of thousands of hectares of the national park lie decimated by the catastrophic 2003 and successive 2019-2020 bushfires which shadowed Australia's anthropogenic emissions.

Dear Minister,

We recognise that all introduced species are a threat to biodiversity. Culling of introduced animal species is unfortunate yet necessary to control populations. We write to you not to disparage the humane culling or removal of introduced species, but to condemn validated reports of that the cull in question was poorly managed and executed. The facts are disturbing.

The wild horse cull took place several days ago around the Snowy Plain region. The horses appeared to be professionally shot under the directive of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. However, some horses were not humanely put down and left to rot in plain site along sensitive watercourses.

What is particularly disturbing was the methods utilised by authorities. This is the second time in 12 months. Their complete disregard for public health, safety and visibility is beyond sensibilities. Rotting in the public eye, hundreds of metres from campgrounds, access roads and walking trails. Visitors to the park and community members witness the smell of carcasses from the campgrounds. Additionally, the carcasses have started attracting feral dogs and pigs, which along with goats, deer, foxes, rabbits and et al, we recognise as a greater threat to biodiversity. The destruction to our environment by all other introduced species is not openly discussed and disclosed by park bureaucrats in the public realm.

There is nothing 'pristine' left in Ngarigo country, in the background of the rotting horse carcasses are the skeletons of crown fire affected snow gum woodlands. The grassy plains are all that grow albeit riddled with weeds. The private properties of Snowy Plains are the only fully intact and remnant biospheres left in the region which resemble the endemic environment. The lands are still managed by generational graziers, regularly burnt and seasonally grazed. The evidence is black and



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Treaty Council acknowledges the traditional custodians and pay our respects to the Elders past, present, and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Indigenous on the continent of Australia. We must always remember that under the concrete and asphalt, the land, sea, and waterways were, and always will be, traditional Indigenous land.



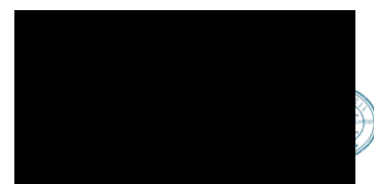
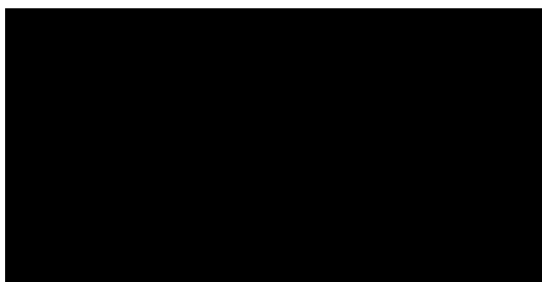
white. The private properties rising to 1,700m have not been affected by crown fire, but proceed into the national park, you observe widespread ecological destruction as far as the eye can see. Minister, you must visit the private properties surrounding the park to witness for yourself how thousands of years of endemic prescriptions have saved the environment from the 2003 and 2019-2020 bushfires. The land managers are plagued with significant issues which originate in the park and encroach on their properties, this includes pests, disease, scorching fire and restrictions which impede on their private property rights. Notwithstanding all the issues plaguing Ngarigo Country, I note the Snowy and Snowy 2.0 infrastructure project.

We have a national park in complete ecological ruin due to decades of neglect and poor fire regimens. Polarising politics and scientific bias have been used in the park for decades to substantiate current management plans and practices, yet we have seen continued destruction of sacred Ngarigo Country and species extinctions. The horses represent a small part of the problems plaguing the biospheres, this is a fact. As a new minister, you should not allow the bureaucracy and their mechanisms to govern the soundness of your common sense and sensibilities. You must fight for the local indigenous mobs and the people of NSW in bringing liberal and scientific balance back into the service.

As an independent indigenous-backed environmental organisation and as an ambassador of the Treaty Council Worldwide we call for the restoration of indigenous management, autonomy, and freedom when it comes to the management of the land. For the sake of the environment, human life, property, indigenous heritage and sacred sites, we must return to naturally regulated fire regimes which shaped Australia for millions of years continued by indigenous Australians. Ngarigo are the owners of the area that encompasses the park they should have precedence over how the land is managed. We refer to grassroots mobs and not those self-appointed by the bureaucratic constructs.

As a veteran volunteer fire fighter with the NSW Rural Fire Service, I have personally risked my life to defend the environment and continue to do so in my capacity with both organisations. I was proud to receive the Premier's Citation and the National Emergency Medal for my service on the front line. The lives of volunteers must not be put in jeopardy fighting fires fanned by unnatural fire regimes that are against the fabric of natural law and order. We are not alluding to climate change; this is environmental change since the 1960s furthered by inadequate management prescriptions. Those entrusted with managing sacred country are not even keeping up with natural law, let alone with a changing climate.

We acknowledge the great rangers and frontline staff of the NSW NPWS and their efforts and cohesive approach with protecting country. Unfortunately, we are subjected to bullying, harassment, intimidation, and vilification by a minority of frontline NSW NPWS staff and their agents. This occurs on country as we mind our own business and online via social channels. Discrimination toward Back to the Bush is equally directed at the Treaty Council Worldwide and the Ngarigo mob.



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About Back to the Bush

Back to the Bush is an indigenous-led and registered social and environmental charity that actively focuses on Australia's diverse environments, including advancing conservation, heritage and bush culture across all land and community frameworks.

Established in 2010, Back to the Bush's community philanthropy extends to a wide-ranging social enterprise strategy. That includes volunteering time and deploying physical resources in imperilled communities and environments.

Additionally, the charity engages in grassroots community initiatives and First Nations interests in partnership with the indigenous Treaty Council Worldwide, as well as myriad land management practices and frontline responses to natural disaster arrangements.

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