



**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MEMBER FOR FARRER**

MS21-000806

The Hon Matt Kean MP
Minister for Energy and Environment
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

17 JUN 2021

office@kean.minister.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister

I am writing to notify you of my intention to enact regulations to address the damage caused by feral horses to the biodiversity and heritage values of Kosciusko National Park, a key component of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage Place.

The results of the 2020 spring Kosciuszko National Park survey estimated 14,000 feral horses remained in the park. This increased number of feral horses has significantly damaged the heritage and biodiversity values of the park, particularly in nationally significant ecological communities such as the Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens, as well as associated fauna like the critically endangered Southern Corroboree Frog.

The Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage Place was included in the National Heritage List in 2008. As such, it is a matter of national environmental significance protected under the Act. Under the overarching *Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022 for the Australian Alps National Parks Co-Operative Management Program* and the *Management Plan for Kosciusko National Park*, the New South Wales Government is responsible for protecting the extensive national heritage values of this park.

I consider the NSW Government is currently failing in its obligations to protect the National Heritage values of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage Place from feral horse damage. For this reason the Australian Government is considering the development of regulations under the Act that oblige protected area managers to take specific action on feral horses, including the responsible, evidence-based, and humane reduction and management of populations, to safeguard the unique biodiversity and heritage values of this nationally significant place.

I consider that the NSW Government's Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan is a key opportunity to reset the approach to management of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park. It is unclear as to when this plan will be released for public comment or when it will be implemented. The Australian Government considers it is critical that this plan has sufficient ambition to meaningfully protect the biodiversity and heritage values of the park and in turn the Australian Alps.

The Australian Government stands ready to support the implementation of an effective plan, including through funding support for effective feral horse control activities to address bushfire impacts. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has been in discussion

with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on potentially relevant activities that could be undertaken in 2021/22 to support bushfire recovery.

I am committed to decisive action to reduce the impact of feral horses on our unique alpine and sub-alpine environment. Together we can ensure we preserve this internationally recognised natural asset for future generations to enjoy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Susanna Ley', written in a cursive style.

SUSSAN LEY