

**Table 1** provides an overview of the available control methods. Of these, Trapping is the principal activity to be used between 2017 and 2020 in the Alpine National Park, and where needed in adjacent State Forest, to reduce the abundance of feral horses.

**Table 1.** Overview of the control methods to be used in the Alpine National Park.

Description	Application
<p><b>Trapping</b></p> <p>Trapping involves establishing trap yards and using lures such as salt, molasses and/or lucerne to encourage feral horses to go into the trap yards. Once inside the trap yard, a tripwire triggers the closure of the entry gate.</p>	<p>Trapping has been used with success in parts of the Victorian Alps, including the Bogong High Plains. The installation of a new and expanded trapping network in the Bogong High Plains-Cobungra area and in the Eastern Alps will increase the number of horses removed using this method. Trapping can be logistically challenging in remote areas due to the need to monitor traps and remove horses from trap yards in a timely manner. Where undertaken in more easily accessible areas, trapping can be a humane and effective control method for removing feral horses.</p> <p>Horses will be transported to holding locations and offered for rehoming by volunteer organisations where this can be done humanely.</p> <p>Where remote trap locations are established and transporting horses from these areas is likely to be inhumane, or horses are not suitable for rehoming, horses will be culled humanely on-site.</p> <p><b>Will be used as the preferred primary control method.</b> Trapping will be used as the primary method to remove feral horses from all areas in the Alpine National Park area. In 2017–18 an expanded trapping network will be established. Detailed locations for traps will be determined during planning prior to operational implementation.</p>
<p><b>Mustering</b></p> <p>Mustering involves using horse riders, ground vehicles or helicopters, or a combination of these, to gather and move groups of feral horses into a yard.</p>	<p>Mustering has not been used for controlling feral horses in the Victorian Alps. Mustering operations are best suited to open and relatively flat terrain and would not be feasible in the many parts of the Victorian Alps that are dominated by rugged or forested terrain. However, there are some locations where mustering could be a practical, effective and humane method for removing feral horses.</p> <p>Horses that are suitable for rehoming will be transported to holding locations and offered for rehoming where this can be done humanely. Where transport of horses from these areas is likely to be inhumane, or horses are not suitable for rehoming, horses will be culled humanely on-site.</p> <p><b>Mustering to be trialled as a secondary control method.</b> Mustering may be trialled as a feral horse control technique during the term of this Plan, where the terrain allows safe and humane operations.</p>

## Description

### Roping

Roping (also called brumby running) involves skilled horse riders chasing targeted feral horses on horseback and capturing them using a rope/halter.

## Application

Roping has been used in accordance with operating procedures to remove feral horses in the Victorian Alps for many years and is a useful approach where poor access precludes trapping. Historically, Roping has been used to remove more horses than trapping. Some people see roping as a traditional activity that has important cultural significance.

Roped horses will be transported to holding locations and offered for rehoming where this can be done humanely.

There are opposing views regarding the humaneness of roping. Due to this, this technique requires monitoring and evaluation through field-based trials. An independent review of roping is currently being developed.

**Roping will be suspended as a capture method while scientifically evaluated.** To date, more feral horses have been removed using roping than with any other technique. Roping will be independently monitored and evaluated for its humaneness, efficacy and cost effectiveness. Further use of the technique will be based on an expert review of the monitoring results after this review.

If deemed to be an acceptable humane practice and if it is possible to deliver this technique humanely, roping may be resumed in the Eastern Alps.

If practices do not meet sufficient animal welfare standards, roping will be discontinued as a horse control management technique.

### Fencing

Fencing (exclusion zones) involves the strategic placement of fences to prevent feral horses from accessing fragile/sensitive areas.

Fences have been used effectively to demonstrate the damage feral horses can do to sensitive high plains areas in the Eastern Alps. In areas where feral horses are unlikely to be totally removed, such as the Eastern Alps, fencing can help to provide experimental 'feral horse free areas' that can assist land managers and researchers to develop a more detailed understanding of how to restore horse damaged areas in the Alps.

Many peatlands in the Eastern Alps have been heavily damaged by feral horses, and restoration of these areas may take many decades even where the abundance of horses is reduced. Exclusion of feral horses in some key areas will allow monitoring and restoration of representative areas.

Fencing is expensive to establish and maintain in remote areas, but may be a feasible option to meet research and restoration needs.

**Research opportunity and site-specific protection:** In 2017–18 the establishment of at least two experimental restoration areas will be considered. Existing exclusion areas in the Eastern Alps may be expanded to achieve this goal. Some areas on the Bogong High Plains may be protected using fencing.

## Description

## Application

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### Fertility control

Fertility control agents can be used to manage reproduction rates of individual horses if the agent can be administered effectively and individual horses can be identified and re-treated when required. This technique has been used overseas and is generally only practical in small confined populations where an immediate reduction of environmental impacts is not required.

**Will not be used.** Due to the large population sizes, difficulty in delivering the control agent effectively in the field for large numbers of uncontained and unidentified animals, and the inability for the technique to reduce populations immediately (over a short period), fertility control is not currently being considered for horse control in Victorian parks (see Feral Horse Technical Reference Group – Control techniques issues summary 2017).

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### Shooting

Ground and aerial shooting can provide specific and humane ways of managing feral animals, using appropriately skilled shooters under suitable conditions.

In inaccessible remote areas where trapping, roping and mustering are not likely to be humane, ground or aerial shooting (or both) may be the most feasible and humane approach.

Ground or aerial shooting has not been used to remove free ranging feral horses by public land managers in Victoria due to public perceptions and preference for passive techniques such as trapping.

**Will not be used to control free ranging feral horses.** In year 3 of this plan an evaluation of trapping and other capture methods will occur. If results demonstrate that the use of additional techniques may be required to achieve adequate protection of the environment from horses, further public consultation on techniques such as shooting of free animals will be undertaken.

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