

10 good reasons why we must say no to horses and dogs



By Carol Altmann

Why horses and dogs don't belong in the conservation and conservation/recreation zones that will stretch from Killarney Beach to Warrnambool:

1. At least 54 species of "conservation significance" live there, including five listed as critically endangered, particularly the Orange Bellied Parrot, 10 listed as endangered, 20 as vulnerable, and 16 listed as threatened. (draft report p86-87)
2. There WILL be a negative impact on these species. Not "perhaps" or "maybe": there WILL be a negative impact that reduces their chances of thriving or even surviving. (p29, p33, p34-35)
3. The traditional owners of this country have made it very clear that they do not support racehorse training in the

reserve. (p22, p64)

4. Racehorse training at Levy's Beach WILL cause damage to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in this area and any artefacts will have to be removed and stored before it begins*. (p64)

5. Horse training WILL cause erosion**. Not perhaps or maybe: it WILL.

6. Every coastal plan for this area in the past 40 years has emphasised the need for MORE protection, not less. This includes the W'Bool City Council's own Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan, signed off just four years ago.

7. It ignores the Land Conservation Council framework set down for this area in 1978, knowing it would come under increased pressures. As a result of the LCC, the majority of public land in the area was officially set aside in 1979 as a conservation reserve. The LCC emphasises low-impact recreation, conservation and protection. (p83)

8. There are no numbers on exactly how many racehorses would use the most sensitive areas of Levy's Point, Golfies and Rutledge's Cutting. (p63-64)

9. Monitoring this area is already difficult because of its isolation.

The area already suffers erosion and damage caused by illegal activities. (p61)

How will the WCC, Vic Police and Parks Vic have the time and resources to monitor it in the future?

10. The bottom line? Commercial racehorse training is not recreation and it is not conservation. This is not anti-horseracing, it is just fact.

Please have your say on the draft management plan for Belfast Coastal Reserve, by March 16, here: www.engage.vic.gov.au/belfast

* The full extent of Indigenous artefacts and cultural sites in this area is not known due to either out-dated or insufficient data. The plan says more studies need to be done.

** There also needs to be more studies into the full impact of horses on beaches, but two referred to in the draft report (p80-81) confirm that horses cause erosion. Here is part of the summary from a 2001 study of horse riding in D'Entrecasteaux National Park, WA:

"Horse riding altered plant species composition, increased the area of bare ground and decreased height and cover of vegetation. Significant impacts occurred after only low levels of horse use. The findings indicate the need for a database on horse riding impact in Australia so that, where horse riding is allowed, impacts can be properly assessed and effectively managed."

<http://www.publish.csiro.au/pc/PC020256>