



Government Paddock User Group

AUGUST MEETING 2025

Venue: Raiders Weston Club, Liardet Street, Weston

Time: 545 pm

Date: Wednesday 5 November 2025

Attendance: Jane Hedges (Rose Cottage), Natasha Walsh (Territory Agistment), Kathy Terrell, Fiona Mavris (Yarralumla), Damir Cokas, Mandy Harling Cokas (Mount Taylor), Barb Skoro (Cook), Donna Cameron, Steve Jordan, Helen Palma (Mount Neighbour), Ellie Wallis, Kerry Myers (Parkwood), Stacey James (Hume), Janet Booth (Illoura), Paula Lasersohn (North Curtin), Bianca Kallenberg (Duntroon),

Apologies: Larissa Feeney (Mount Neighbour), Kalli Samios (Hall)

MINUTES

1. Update on paddock conditions across the complexes

The horse paddocks are looking better than in May, with some good rain falling over winter and early spring. Some of the complexes on the northside, such as Cook, Kaleen and Parkwood, look good. Whereas on the southside, complexes such as Gilmore, Hume, Rose Cottage, growth has been slower as the soil type is different and they have had less rain. Kangaroos are in high numbers and continue to impact many of the paddocks.

2. Weed spray program

The broadleaf spraying (boom spray) has been completed. The serrated tussock has been spot sprayed.

After each rain event, more PC germinates. Paddocks are sprayed just before horses are rotated into them to get rid of most of the PC.

Mowing of complexes and slashing of fire breaks will be done next. After this woody weeds will be sprayed. Slashing occurs once grass curing reaches 70%.

3. Parkwood horse paddocks

Agistees mentioned that there is a lot of flatweed and PC in the paddocks at Parkwood. Horses shouldn't eat flatweed if there are other grasses available to them. Paddocks are sprayed before horses move into them.

There are problems with the fencing at Parkwood. The fencing is old and horses are pushing up against it, to eat over the fence. Fencing will be looked at and improvements made. The steel pickets need to be straightened up, caps put on the tops, and fences need to be re-strained.

There are problems with local residents feeding, patting and handling horses. They are feeding horses over the fence and pulling horses up to the fence so that children can pat them. This could be dangerous for the people and horses. Signage can be helpful, however what was useful at Kaleen was a letterbox drop in the streets directly beside the paddocks. TA is currently printing out letters for Parkwood to distribute.

TA has recently been told that Parkwood paddocks will not be required for the Ginninderry development until 2030.

Parkwood agistees are trying to get the woodpile near the yards chipped for use in the yards. They are waiting for a time that won't interrupt people trying to feed their horses. It was suggested that signage be used to warn people of the wood chipper.

Parkwood has two separate herds of horses. The two herds are currently interacting with each other through a fence. This mixing of two separate herds should not happen and will be rectified.

Dogs off the lead are causing problems at Parkwood. They are horse owners' dogs, which are chasing kangaroos in the paddocks, sometimes towards the horses, causing a risk of injury. Dogs off lead are also causing horses to shy with riders on board.

The shed at Parkwood needs a clean out by agistees as it contains mouldy bread and rotten carrots.

4. Yarralumla horse paddocks

LDK has put a "left turn only" sign up for vehicles entering the Cotter Road. This sign should be for construction traffic and LDK residents only, agistees are still able to turn right or left onto the Cotter Road.

There have been media reports about the desire of LDK residents to have traffic lights and bus stops installed at their entrance from the Cotter Road. To date, the

ACT government has not been keen to consider this because it would cause more traffic disruption on the already extremely busy Cotter Road. The residents group is petitioning the government to do more to assist them to safely drive in and out of their complex.

LDK residents are seen frequently walking through the horse paddocks, often through the horses as well. This could be dangerous for the frail aged, as horses can be pushy and can react quickly if scared. Not all horses are friendly.

LDK residents want the bridle path paved so that they can use their wheelie walkers and motorised vehicles more easily. Paving would be incompatible with the horse trails.

Equestrian Park is also having issues with LDK residents walking on the cross country course, when horses are using it as well as when competitions are being conducted. This could be extremely dangerous to both horses and riders as well as the aged residents. Cavalettis are being installed to control access to the cross country course.

The Yarralumla herd is currently across 3 separate paddocks, which is not ideal. P6 is very small, so the entire herd is usually not moved in at once, just a half herd move, with half to p6 and half to p4.

There is not much feed at Yarralumla and flatweed and PC are proliferating. There is a wide path of yellow weeds where LDK dug up p4/5 to access the river.

There is dog faeces left in. Many different areas around the paddocks, some possibly from the LDK residents who walk their dogs around the paddocks.

TA reports that the dam in p4 at Yarralumla cannot be filled in. The fence around it will be removed so that the dam will become part of the horse paddock.

5. Hall horse paddocks

TA currently has no funding for capital works, improvements to the yards will need to wait for funding (funding is provided by ACT government). P1 at Hall hasn't been grazed for years, it has weeds and wombat holes.

6. Duntroon horse paddocks

Nothing more has been happening re the RSPCA development on the Duntroon paddocks.

Further environmental studies are being conducted at Duntroon and at other places across Canberra on the legless lizard. This is why there are tiles in every paddock. The lizards gather under the tiles and can be observed by rangers.

7. Pialligo horse paddocks

No news on the opening of the paddocks. This is because the pasture conditions there are not as good as it was thought they would be. The lack of rain has limited pasture growth and the African love grass (ALG) is making a comeback in the pasture. ALG is not a nutritious feed for livestock.

8. Rose Cottage horse paddocks

Woody weeds are of concern, there are some huge blackberry infestations, lots of St John's wort and briars. The blackberries have spread out and are covering the equestrian trails, causing a tripping hazard for horses being ridden. There are many blackberries in the tree reserves which agistees walk through to get their horses from their paddocks. Foxes are plentiful.

9. Barbed wire in horse paddocks and nature reserves

A farmer in Victoria has removed 18 kms of barbed wire from his property to try to stop wildlife from being injured and killed when coming in contact with barbed wire in fences.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-31/man-removes-18km-of-barbed-wire-fencing-to-help-wildlife/105890356?utm_source=abc_news_web&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_web

Fencing in horse paddocks and nature reserves is according to specifications provided by the ACT government and includes barbed wire.

It was suggested that contact be made with the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna to find out about the issue of barbed wire.

10. Use of superphosphate on horse paddocks

Agistees were wondering whether super is used on any of the horse paddocks, and is it part of the horse paddock contract.

TA pointed out that if super was used on some paddocks, such as Illoura and Parkwood, which have fertile pasture already, then it causes clover to grow well and means that there is more pressure on the yards as more horses would risk laminitis if grazing on them. On the other hand there are poorer pastures on some horse paddocks (Macarthur Park, Hume, Rose Cottage) which may benefit from the addition of super.

11. Paddock reports/other business

Hume horse paddocks: Horse numbers have been reduced at Hume to 5 which has caused problems with the smaller number of horses and some becoming isolated in the paddock or yards because others are taken out for feeding, riding.

Eyes on the National Trail (previously known as Bicentennial National Trail - BNT)

Jenny Costin is the National Trail Section Coordinator for the ACT.

She has asked for assistance from horse riders to keep an eye out for any issues they come across when riding on the National trail.

This request and a document listing sections of the trail where she particularly needs help has been uploaded to the ACT Equestrian Association website under "ACTEA News". (ACTEA.asn.au)

Jenny Costin is currently overseas, once she returns ACTEA will send out an email about this to various horse clubs and to GPUG Coordinator - so if you have an interest in helping out please keep an eye out for that email.

Next meeting: Wednesday 4 February 2026