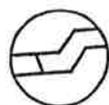


JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK

SUMMARY OF HORSE RIDING WORKSHOP

18 February 1992



Department of Conservation and Land Management



JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK

**Summary of Horse Riding Workshop
Held on Tuesday 18 February 1992**

JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK
D. J. ...
A. ...
W. ...

Edited by
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February 1992

Department of Conservation and Land Management
for the
National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority
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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP	1
SUMMARY OF TALKS.....	2
Introduction.....	2
Private Horse Riding	2
Commercial Horse Riding	3
An Environmental Perspective of Horse Riding in John Forrest National Park.....	4
BRAINSTORMING SESSION.....	4
Syndicate 1.....	5
Syndicate 2.....	6
Syndicate 3.....	7
Syndicate 4.....	8
SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP	9
CONCLUSION	9
APPENDIX I. Workshop Participants	10
APPENDIX II. Agenda.....	11
APPENDIX III. Brainstorming Questions and Responses	12
APPENDIX IV. Broad Issues.....	14
APPENDIX V. Summary of Questionnaire.....	15

INTRODUCTION

A workshop was held on Tuesday, 18 February 1992, in Swan View to discuss horse riding in John Forrest National Park. Horse riding was one of the main issues identified in the drafting of a management plan for the Park. A number of organisations and individuals who have an interest in horse riding or a concern about horse riding in the Park were invited to participate in the workshop (see Appendix I - Workshop Participants).

The aims of the workshop were to:

- provide different groups of people the opportunity to explain their views on the issue of horse riding in the Park;
- encourage representatives of groups to suggest ways to resolve problems associated with horse riding in the Park; and
- assist users to understand the Department of Conservation and Land Management's (CALM) management objectives and planning processes.

The workshop was attended by 33 people representing:

horse riders - equestrian associations, commercial riding school, riders from the general community;
conservation groups;
wildflower groups;
Local Government Authorities;
State Government (other than CALM);
National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority (NPNCA); and
CALM.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop was held in two parts (see Appendix II - Agenda).

In the first part, representatives from various groups and CALM gave short presentations for and against horse riding in John Forrest National Park (a summary of presentations is provided below). This was followed by a question and answer session. The first part also included a brainstorming session during which participants were asked to provide short answers to six different questions. A list of those questions and responses is presented in Appendix III. Based on the responses eight questions were formulated by the participants. Four out of these eight questions were chosen for group discussion in the second part of the workshop.

In the second part of the workshop participants were divided into four groups. Each group had a pre-determined mix of representatives to ensure inclusion of as wide a range of views as possible and a facilitator/spokesperson (see Appendix I). Each group was assigned one of the questions that were formulated during the first part of the workshop, and were asked to discuss issues related to the question and arrive at possible solutions. Each group spokesperson then presented their findings to the workshop.

SUMMARY OF TALKS

Introduction - Jim Sharp

I would like to welcome you all and to thank you for attending the workshop this evening. Obviously you are here because you all have an interest in John Forrest National Park. This interest could be in the Park itself and for its values or your interest could be horse riding in the Park.

John Forrest National Park, like other conservation reserves in Western Australia such as conservation parks, nature reserves and other reserves, is vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority or NPNCA. The NPNCA is the body in which national parks are vested. One of its functions is to process and monitor management plans. At tonight's workshop there are two representatives from the NPNCA.

While management plans are the responsibility of the NPNCA they are prepared by CALM. Under the CALM Act there is an expectation for management plans to be in place. Management plans are statutory documents that ensure lands are managed with due consideration for the protection and maintenance of the values of the lands in question.

According to the CALM Act, there is also an expectation to involve the public during the preparation of management plans. That's why we are here tonight. There are concerns about horse riding in John Forrest National Park. Tonight everyone will have an opportunity to air his or her views on horse riding. At this point I would like to point out that this workshop will not be writing the section on horse riding in the management plan. The aim of the workshop is to identify the problems associated with horse riding in John Forrest National Park and, hopefully, come up with some solutions. The views and comments we hear and share tonight will be considered when the draft plan is written. The plan will then be released for public comment for a minimum period of two months. You will have the opportunity at that point again to provide input into the plan.

Private Horse Riding - Graeme Rundle

Tonight I am speaking on behalf of 'private' horse riders living in the area. I would like to point out at the start that I wear different hats at different times. I am the president of the Western Australian National Parks and Reserves Association, I am a member of the Conservation Council of WA, I work for the Main Roads Department and know what track maintenance costs are like, and I also enjoy horse riding. These aspects temper my view.

Tonight I am here to represent the informal, recreational rider in John Forrest National Park. I myself have never ridden in John Forrest National Park but feel that I know the Park quite well. As well, last week at my request, George Duxbury (Park Ranger) took me on a tour of the Park and I had a special look at the tracks set out for horse riding around the Park.

I enjoy riding horses and I particularly enjoy riding in the bush. What I enjoy about horse riding is the exercise. I also enjoy the special way that one has to observe the fauna from horse back. It also gives me an opportunity to inspect the land, for example, after a bush fire. It allows me to get to places that I would otherwise not get to on foot.

I normally ride in the nearby Helena Valley, the countryside there is similar to John Forrest National Park in many respects.

In comparing John Forrest National Park with the Helena Valley area, the following landscape/vegetation similarities apply:

- there is a broad valley with steep slopes;
- ridges and higher slopes of laterite country above the valley;
- a scarp face with characteristics similar to the steep slopes of the main Jane Brook/Helena Valleys.

Tracks used for horse riding in both locations were never designed for high levels of traffic and were originally management tracks (for example firelines). Sometimes they have not been well-located, for their original purpose anyway, and in the Helena Valley might not last beyond one winter without substantial maintenance.

As with the Helena Valley area, the main problem with horse riding at John Forrest National Park is track erosion at susceptible places - mainly where there is poor track location and design, and heavy traffic on steeper valley and scarp slopes. Flatter laterite country seems to be more capable of sustaining concentrated use. Better track location, design and maintenance would be required where land is otherwise less capable of sustaining high levels of horse (or other) traffic.

There seems to be less of an erosion problem in areas allocated to informal horse riding than in the area allocated for commercial horse riding. The main problem here seems to be that the starting base (the stables) are located at the base of the scarp and the main destination is at the bottom of the valley (kiosk at Jane Brook). Accordingly, the main trail crosses unsuitable country for heavy traffic and uses tracks not originally located or designed for this present use.

There are numerous problems associated with horses. These include spread of dieback, degradation of bush caused by browsing, and weed infestation. But they don't necessarily apply significantly to all types of bushland, as many factors come to play.

When considering horse riding in John Forrest National Park it is worth thinking in terms of a regional network and to consider a horsetrail system which encompasses a greater Darling Range area. It would be worth CALM working together with the local Shires and other relevant bodies with this in mind.

One question we must also ask ourselves is: Is the land capable of sustaining horse riding? Land capability refers to the land's ability to sustain a particular use without significantly degrading the land resource. In the case of John Forrest National Park it may be that the land is capable of sustaining horse riding in certain areas but not in others. Another main point is: if horse riding is to continue in John Forrest National Park, how can it be managed?

Commercial Horse Riding - Roberts Burns

I have been riding in John Forrest National Park for 15 years. I am also the President of the John Forrest Riders' Association. Tonight I am speaking on behalf of Mrs Dear, who operates the Swan View Equestrian Lodge, on the topic of commercial horse riding in John Forrest National Park.

The Swan View Equestrian Lodge is a commercial equestrian centre and uses John Forrest National Park to take groups of people who wish to learn to ride. It provides a unique opportunity for children and adults, who do not own a horse, to gain knowledge of horses and to enjoy riding. The commercial operation of the equestrian centre also provides an opportunity for people who do not live in the John Forrest National Park area to enjoy the Park on horseback.

For these reasons commercial horse riding should not stop in the Park. By stopping the riding school operating in the Park we would be taking opportunities away from children and adults who do not own a horse. I strongly resist any reduction in the commercial use of the Park for horse riding.

Instead I would advocate a user-pay principle where the commercial operation pays an appropriate sum of money for using the Park. I also recommend that regular meetings take place between the managers of John Forrest National Park and the riding school.

An Environmental Perspective of Horse Riding in John Forrest National Park - Greg Keighery

John Forrest National Park is an urban reserve and is, therefore, an isolated unit. It has a past history of disturbance, for example, a railway line used to go through the Park. Because of the close proximity of John Forrest to human habitation it is likely to have a continuing high level of disturbance. John Forrest National Park also suffers from a high level of use and abuse from the general public.

Horse riding has some damaging ecological effects on John Forrest National Park. Some of the problems associated with horse riding include: trampling, grazing on native vegetation and dieback spread. Horses may have an adverse effect on the native fauna, although this remains to be proven.

Major problems are associated with trail riding. These include erosion and weed infestation. Erosion is caused by trampling (compaction) and by the loosening of soil caused by shod horses. The effects are worse when horses go down slopes rather than the other way around and short, intense usage has a more detrimental effect on tracks than isolated private usage.

Most weed seeds pass through a horse and this will occur for up to 10 days after ingestion with the highest dispersion occurring four days after ingestion. Horses can pass up to 700 seeds a day.

Other problems associated with horses are spread of dieback and the conflicts that can and do occur between walkers and horse riders.

Planning for the John Forrest National Park management will need to ensure that conflicts among users are reduced. The effects that horse riding has on the environment will also need to be carefully considered in the planning for management of the Park (refer to Belair Draft Management Plan).

BRAINSTORMING SESSION - Allan Padgett

Participants were asked to provide quick and short answers to the following six questions:

1. What do you like about horse riding in John Forrest National Park?
2. If horse riding is allowed to continue in John Forrest National Park, how can it be better managed?
3. What do you not like about horse riding in John Forrest National Park?
4. In what ways would John Forrest National Park be better off without horse riding?
5. What are the problems associated with preventing horses from being in John Forrest National Park?
6. Have you any other ideas on horse riding in John Forrest National Park?

Responses to these questions are presented in Appendix III (Brainstorming Session - Responses to Questions).

Following the brainstorming session each participant was asked to write five of the most important points from the responses given in Questions 1 to 6. The participants were then divided into four groups (see Appendix I) and each group was asked to come up with two broad issues from their list of five most important points. A list of those eight broad issues is presented in Appendix IV.

Four of these eight issues were then chosen by the organisers for the four syndicates to work on and find solutions to the problems. The syndicates' reports are summarised below.

SYNDICATE 1.

WHAT ARE WAYS OF STREAMLINING TRAILS, THEIR USAGE AND PROCESSING (INCLUDING FEES, CHARGES, LICENCES) IN JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK?

Design and Planning Process

1. Connecting of trails to larger system
2. Use within Park - rationalise (loops vs through trails)
3. Design - identify problem - environment
4. Put trails where they will do least harm
5. Seasonal use of track in order to minimise impacts
6. Temporal zoning as well as spatial
7. Closure of some tracks
8. Alternative usage out of Park, for example, Shire, DPUD
9. Rationalisation of access for commercial and private horse riders.

Management and Control

1. Ability for Park managers to close tracks
2. Education
3. Ability to enforce
4. Regulations and registrations
5. Park managers and vested body share full control

6. Licencing - fees and charge, education
7. Punishment for breach of regulations
8. Number on horse - permit on horse's bridle
9. Fees should be addressed in a realistic way - what does it really cost ? Fee increases not just for horse riders
10. Regular meetings with horse riders and CALM - community representative and contact
11. Commercial - say per use (daily basis - user pays)
 - also question whether commercial operations should be allowed
 - should go to tender for allowance?

SYNDICATE 2.

HOW CAN JOHN FORREST BE MANAGED WITH CONSIDERATION TO:

1. Resources
2. Education
3. General policing of use
4. Self-regulation (horse riders and bushwalkers)
(assume co-operation between managers and users)

Resources

- better education resulting in reduced environmental damage and less policing from CALM
- volunteers could help with Park maintenance, for example, local riders can get involved in maintaining horse riding tracks.

Education

- rangers could go out with groups of people on education tours
- leaflets
- media could be used for advertising
- clear and courteous signs
- education should aim at horse riders and non-horse riders alike.

General Policing of Use

- horse riders themselves could be used as educators
- peer education
- rangers on horseback.

Self-regulation

- regular educational talks at equestrian clubs
- consider giving discounted permits to club members
- monitor horse riding for next five years.

SYNDICATE 3.

HOW CAN WELL-MANAGED HORSE RIDING BE PROVIDED WITH DUE CONSIDERATION TO:

- 1. Regional Context**
- 2. User pay**
- 3. Properly designed and maintained horse trails**
- 4. Zoning**
- 5. Signs**
- 6. Legislation**
- 7. Liaison between users and management.**

Regional Context

- many other places to ride
- co-ordinate planning between agencies
- spread out the load - work with other agencies
- managers to know what is available
- educate users - literature.

User Pay

- registration must be for riders not for horses
- users to wear identification and show registration
- fee to be per person for annual ticket or day use.

Properly Designed and Maintained Trails

- less trails but properly designed and monitored.

Zoning

- horses not allowed in special conservation areas
- horse riders to respect special conservation areas
- level of usage must be controlled in areas where horses are allowed.

Signs

- user friendly signs.

Legislation

- required to control small number of offenders.

Liaison between users and management

- encourage regular contact between horse riders and land Park staff
- set up advisory committee with representation from horse riders.

SYNDICATE 4.

CONSIDER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WHEN DEVELOPING HORSE TRAILS, INCLUDING PLANNING, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND RESOURCES.

Plan

- trails to be put in right place
- dieback plan
- flora and fauna survey
- soil survey
- contour survey
- destinations required by rider - what they want from Park
- avoiding conflict with other users
- Aboriginal culture, European culture
- trail quality
- loop trails preferred - with different environmental features
- consider climatic influences - summer vs winter
- consider peak use - April to November.

Design

- well engineered in conjunction with horse riding associations
- identify problematic areas - soil erosion, drainage, water courses and dieback
- cater for users taking into account what environment can take at the same time providing quality horse riding
- design around constraints.

Maintenance

- feedback from horse riders important
- maintenance assistance from actual users
- regular assessments at intervals.

Economics

- determine at planning stage
- build in system which includes maintenance
- must do maintenance properly.

Resources

- well planned and financed

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP - Jim Sharp

The planning process almost always involves diverging opinions on some important issues. This is inevitable given the very wide range of people with various interests in the Park. The first step to resolve conflict is to understanding other perspectives. Tonight we got together to share our viewpoints on the topic of horse riding in John Forrest National Park. It is clear to me that a consensus was reached in that it was recognized that horse riding is acceptable in John Forrest National Park given a number of provisos. The provisos included:

- that trails be well developed and managed
- that an effective education campaign for all riders be implemented
- that enforcement of conditions and expectations of riders be undertaken including registration and payment of fees. This will require effective liaison and involvement between managers and riders.

It became evident throughout the workshop that there is a lack of specific knowledge about horse riding, its impacts and its management. It became apparent that whatever we do to cater for horse riding we need to monitor to ensure that we know what is happening so that we can intervene when necessary to protect the Park's values.

It was also apparent that opportunities for horse riding in the Park need to be placed in a regional context and, therefore, the focus for horse riding should not be the Park but a network of areas in the region. My impression of tonight is that we achieved to exchange and share our different points of view in a very harmonious fashion.

CONCLUSION

This workshop provided a forum for a range of people from horse riding associations, wildflower groups, conservation groups, local Government authorities, State Government (other than CALM), NPNCA and CALM to get together and discuss the issue of horse riding in John Forrest National Park. The evening was marked by a sense of collaboration from the participants, and was remarkable in that everyone felt that something was achieved during the workshop. This was evidenced in the results of a brief survey that participants completed at the end of the workshop (survey questions and results are presented in Appendix V).

The workshop produced a great deal of information on horse riding in general as well as horse riding in John Forrest National Park. The ideas obtained will provide valuable input to the preparation of the horse riding section of the draft management plan for John Forrest National Park.

APPENDIX I. Workshop Participants**Syndicate 1.**

Libby Mattiske (Group Leader)	NPNCA
Colin Cleaver	Hovea Ratepayers Association
George Duxbury	CALM
Carlyn Dyer	Walliston Pony Club Association
Simon Harrison	Adult Riding Club Association of WA
Joanna Seabrook	Wildflower Society
Anthony Sutton	CALM

Syndicate 2.

Colma Keating (Group Leader)	NPNCA
Robert Burns	Swan View Equestrian Lodge
Sue Harkness	Park Rider
Doug Jeans	Hovea Rate Payers Association
Eric Jenkins	CALM
Richard Kemp	Park Rider
Chris Portlock	CALM

Syndicate 3.

Peter Keppel (Group Leader)	CALM
Miriam Burns	Swan View Equestrian Lodge
Dan Herre	Park Riders Association
Greg Keighery	CALM
Juliette Reynolds	Darling Range Forum Association
Keith Tressiter	CALM
Steve Wilkie	WAWA

Syndicate 4.

Eleanor Bennett (Group Leader)	Wildflower Society
Bill Adams	CALM
Mrs N Dear	Swan View Equestrian Lodge
Jane McReady	Pony Club
Graeme Rundle	Rider
Allan Sands	CALM
Ron Waterhouse	CALM
Juliet Weger	Kalamunda Shire

Those listed below did not take part in the workshop session.

Allan Padgett (Facilitator)	CALM
Jacqueline Pontré (Organiser)	CALM
Jim Sharp (Chairperson)	CALM
Jim Williamson (Organiser)	CALM

APPENDIX II.

**Horse Riding Workshop
Tuesday 18 February 1992
7.00 pm - 10.30 pm**

**Bruce Douglas Sporting Pavillion
Brown Park Recreation Centre
Cnr Amherst and Salisbury Rd, Swan View**

A G E N D A

Time	Topic	Speakers
Session 1: Chairperson - Allan Padgett		
7 pm	Registration	
7.15 - 7.25 pm	Introduction	Jim Sharp
7.25 - 7.35 pm	Private Horse Riding	Graeme Rundle
7.35 - 7.45 pm	Commercial Horse Riding	Robert Burns
7.45 - 7.55 pm	An Environmental Perspective of Horse Riding in National Parks	Greg Keighery
7.55 - 8.05 pm	Questions	
8.05 - 8.45 pm	Brainstorming Horse Riding in John Forrest National Park	Facilitator Allan Padgett
8.45 - 9.00 pm	Supper	
Session 2: Chairperson - Jim Sharp		
9.00 - 9.45 pm	Workshop Session	Allan Padgett
9.45 - 10.15 pm	Syndicate Reports	Allan Padgett
10.15 - 10.30 pm	Review and Summary	Jim Sharp

APPENDIX III. Brainstorming Questions and Responses

1. What do you like about horse riding in John Forrest National Park?

- safe
- see Park at different times and seasons quickly
- peaceful riding with fauna
- health
- exercise
- educational (for youth)
- observe and interact with fauna
- opportunity to get kids into national park
- different and exciting
- access for disabled.

2. If horse riding is allowed to continue in the Park, how can it be better managed?

- educating riders who are unaware
- signs and brochures
- user friendly signs
- design rest areas for horses
- awareness of opportunities (outside John Forrest National Park by staff)
- increase number of trails
- increase maintenance
- maintenance other than graders
- study and reationalise existing trails
- sensible planning of trails
- consideration of other conservation values
- less trails better managed
- specific design for trails
- register riders
- involvement of community
- regular communication CALM
- select least environmental sensitive area
- more control to CALM officers.

3. What do you not like about horse riding in John Forrest National Park?

- distribution of weeds
- conflict with other users
- too few trails being used
- erosion
- degradation of water quality
- motor bikes in conflict
- unregistered horse riders
- lack of supervision
- risk spreading disease
- dogs
- prosecution of offenders

- storage of horses
- select few can use
- increase in number of users
- lack of resource to maintain trails
- horse riders riding where they should not be
- risk of spreading disease
- lack of control
- damage of vegetation.

4. In what ways would the Park be better off without horse riding?

- walk in peace
- less maintenance to firebreak trails
- less stress to Rangers
- unemployed Rangers
- improved water quality
- resources to conservation management
- reduced number of tracks
- less user conflict
- less disturbance to flora and fauna.

5. What are the problems associated with preventing horses from being in the Park?

- reduction amenity
- pressures on other areas
- loss creative way of introducing kids to nature
- loss safe environment for riders
- increase urbanisation in surrounding areas
- less surveillance
- two thirds of hills population own horses that's why they move there
- what would kids do.

6. Have you any other ideas on horse riding in John Forrest National Park?

- horse riding code of ethics
- if decrease horse riding change land use in surrounding areas
- integrate issues surrounding area and management authorities
- what areas most sensitive to horse riding with surrounding area
- finite numbers / camping capacity
- if limits - elite
- regional context - spread load
- spread load in Park
- overemphasises water quality
- danger of inundating numbers of artificial limits on use
- consider carrying capacity alternating State Forest areas
- increase areas available to national parks.

APPENDIX IV. Broad Issues

Syndicate 1.

1. Planning and integration of horse riding and other values of the Park.
2. Streamlining trails and usage and process (including fees/charges/licences).

Syndicate 2.

3. Rationalising tracks to be used for horse riding to meet
 - horse riding requirements
 - environmental consideration
 - integral to Park
 - other users.
4. Better management of Park with due consideration to
 - resources
 - education
 - general policing of use
 - self regulation (horse riders and bushwalkers).

Syndicate 3.

5. Environmental management to ensure horse riding is compatible with long term conservation of John Forrest National Park.
6. Well-managed horse riding with due consideration to
 - regional context
 - user pay
 - properly designed and maintained horse trails
 - zoning
 - signs
 - legislation
 - liaison between users and managers.

Syndicate 4.

7. Horse trails need to be well planned, designed, constructed, maintained and resourced considering environmental issues.
8. Integration with regional horse riding and trails.

APPENDIX V. Summary of Questionnaire

At the close of the workshop, participants were asked to complete a simple questionnaire in order to obtain overall perceptions on the running of the workshop. A total of 27 questionnaire forms were collected.

RESULTS

1. What did you expect to get from this evening's workshop?

Response	Number
An appreciation of, or information on, other people's points of view.	9
Communication / discussion between different user groups.	3
New ideas.	3
Consensus.	2
Opportunity to put forward points of view.	2
Some idea as to the future CALM has for horse riding in the Park.	2
Consideration for all users.	1
A chance for my opinion to be integrated as part of a decision.	1
Came with an open mind.	1
An improved environmental assessment and planning for horse riding in the Park and surrounding areas.	1
An understanding of the real issues.	1
To meet with the horse riding fraternity.	1
Flag water resource issues.	1
To gauge horse riding commitment to managing conservation values of the Park.	1
Not a great deal.	1

2. What do you think was achieved tonight?

Response	Number
A shared view / compromise of the issues.	6
A broader understanding of issues arising and community feelings.	5
Good open discussion / communication.	5
Some possible solutions.	4
Feedback / airing of views from wide range of interest groups.	2
Some acknowledgement that some perceptions are not quite correct.	1
Information to incorporate in plan to rationalise and manage horse trails.	1
There is a need for a different plan for the State and not just John Forrest.	1
A framework for a draft management plan.	1
A lot of good ideas.	1
People were encourage to confront the issue.	1
The belief that horse riding was expected to continue.	1
Plans for horse riding lesson.	1
More than expected.	1

3. Is there anything that you would like to say now that you did not get the opportunity to bring up during the evening?

Response	Number
No.	14
Well done.	1
Consider what the consequences might be if horse riding in other areas is constricted, e.g. Helena Valley riders moving to JFNP.	1
I would like to see trails left alone apart from checking the water run-off.	1
Damage to the environment is minimal. Please open more tracks to spread load.	1
I would have preferred that the safety aspect of kids using the Park and not the roads be more emphasised.	1
Do not allow horse riding in Parks where currently is not allowed.	1
Should the question of horse riding being allowed been addressed initially?	1
Workshop tended to be side-tracked by unrelated information.	1
Control of users - identification of people registered - continued liaison between riders and rangers.	1
Its not as big an issue as other problems in the Park.	1

4. Do you think that the workshop could have been better organised? If so, how?

Response	Number
No.	22
Perhaps the 10.30 pm close was rather late.	1
There should be some sort of follow up to this workshop.	1
Surprised the 10 -12 CALM staff and no real dominance perceived.	1
It would be helpful if interests/expertise of attendants are identified on badge or by circulated list.	1

5. Do you have any other comments?

Response	Number
No.	8
Excellent.	2
Well done.	2
Good deal of information accessed in limited amount of time.	2
Thanks for the opportunity.	1
There is better understanding now between all users of the Park and CALM.	1
Horse riders are elite - walkers are not.	1
Horse riding must be written into the draft management plan or else it will be lost.	1
Well worth attending.	1
The Park ranger expressed a view that the only horse riders that cause damage to the Park are the commercial operators. Perhaps controls on private riders are not required.	1
Riders in the Park should realize they're very priveleged people.	1
Good to hear a cross-section of ideas and concerns.	1
Interesting that each syndicate finally agreed in most ideas and concerns.	1
Impacts on ranger staff needs further comment in plan.	1
Will watch future developments with interest.	1
Good luck.	1