

PHHVV is a non-profit organisation committed to providing hope for Victorian equines through education, rehabilitation and advocacy.

Press Release

Drought Drying Up Horse Welfare Funds

Calls for assistance from horse owners and concerned members of the public to Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc (PHHVV) have more than doubled in the past six months and are at record numbers since the organisations conception over 34 years ago. This is due to the effects of the ongoing drought and the dramatic rise in feed costs; with average weekly costs rising by 80% or approximately \$70 per horse. It's not surprising the dedicated volunteers of PHHVV desperately need your help to provide a better life to neglected and mistreated horses in Victoria.

The human face of the Victoria drought is well documented, less well known is the plight of horses. All too often horses are the forgotten victims, often being left in paddocks with no food or water, and PHHVV's tireless efforts to change this is becoming increasingly difficult.

"I think the public would be shocked to know the extent of the problem, even the horse owning community doesn't realise its magnitude." spokesperson Samantha Forrest said. "Unfortunately it can be easy for owners to leave retired horses to roam huge properties and forget that their once adequate dams and grazing land just isn't enough to sustain them. This is evident by a number of calls we have received from distressed owners who have gone to visit their horse on agistment that they haven't seen for sometime, only to discover it is skin and bone, or worse still, dead".

Samantha advises, "Coming into the winter months owners need to ensure they have their hay supply guaranteed until around November or December and not rely on their local produce store to always have hay available - if they do, it will be at a premium price. The average size horse will eat about two and half small bales a week, in addition to hard feed."

Despite the lack of funds and the strain associated with what volunteers are witnessing, PHHVV continues to do what they can by providing emergency care, treatment and assistance to horses on a daily basis. Members from all over Victoria are working tirelessly to offer the information needed to improve horse health care and support owners to rehabilitate their own horses.

Samantha says, "We have been fortunate to have rehabilitated so many horses over the years. There was one little pony recently that when I first met I thought didn't stand a chance. But thanks to his carer Kerryn, along with his sheer will to live and the fight he put in... well it was just awe inspiring! Four weeks on, and heaps of TLC, and he is well on his way to recovery. But in our current financial situation it's going to be tough to have to say no to horses like this."

PHHVV believes with the right information and offer of support to the community the situation will improve. "There's a lot of love out there for these magnificent creatures. We hope to encourage people to extend that caring nature and generosity Australian's are renowned for to our cause." Samantha says. "Horses are a huge industry, especially in Victoria, so we know there are a lot of people out there that share our concerns."

PHHVV relies solely on memberships and donations to undertake the task of rehabilitating neglected horses. At the current feed prices, and excluding veterinary bills, it is costing an average of \$700 per horse for the first six weeks of care. However, due to the severity of the neglect most horses require six months of care or more.

"PHHVV desperately needs monetary donations to be able to offer these younger horses that have fallen victims to this drought a chance." Samantha says. PHHVV has trained carers ready to assist these horses however due to lack of funds many of these horses may have to be euthanised. Understandably this is considered a more humane option than leaving horses to slowly starve to death.

If you would like to find out more about PHHVV or make a much needed tax deductible donation please visit www.phhvw.org.au or call 1300 881 606.

For Release by 28 March 2007