

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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I am the proprietor of Lightning Rock Conservation Area, established in 2007 through Conservation partners with National Parks under Bob Debus and currently covered under the biodiversity trust. I have lived on this 305-ha conservation reserve for nearly 20 years, Lightning Rock is surrounded by Birriwal Bulga National Park.

When the conservation area was first established, a intensive baiting campaign killed the small family of dingoes holding territory on the conservation area and national park. There were NO FERAL CATS. There were NO FOXES.

Once the dingoes were gone, the mesopredators moved in. Cats, pigs and foxes have become abundant as have rabbits. I regularly trap cats now. It is a most unpleasant but necessary task. I am trying, unsuccessfully, to eliminate the feral pigs.

I have no accurate accounting of the number of native animals that dies in the 2019-20 fires, but all these years later, I have yet to see an echidna, a padymelon, a glider, or any of the smaller possums that were once numerous. The presence of numerous feral animals has markedly slowed wildlife recovery in this area. Sadly, a 1080 program is again on-going, whilst the pigs continue to do massive damage.

The dingo is our native apex land predator, NOT a 'wild dog'. Current research makes this abundantly clear, and I am certain that the work of scientists such as Kylie Coombes, Phd, is known to this committee. It fills an important ecological niche. It is not a pest animal.

Funds used to carry out massive and continual poisoning and trapping programs would be better employed to aid farmers with stock protection such as flag fencing and guardian animals, all of which are effective, non-lethal management tools.

I encourage the committee to consider recent science and facts and protect our native wildlife, including our dingo.