

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Stuart Perera

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Dear Chair and Members of the Animal Welfare Committee,

I am writing as a concerned Australian citizen who believes the dingo deserves far better than what our current laws provide. I urge the Animal Welfare Committee to use this Inquiry as a turning point – one that finally aligns NSW dingo management with contemporary science, First Nations wisdom, and basic compassion.

It is a profound injustice that the dingo – Australia's only native canid, a keystone species woven into this continent's ecology for thousands of years – is the only native mammal specifically excluded from protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Act. This means dingoes can be legally poisoned, trapped and shot inside our National Parks, the very places meant to safeguard our natural heritage. Between 2020 and 2025, more than 1.5 million 1080 poison baits were deployed by NSW Parks and Wildlife Service targeting dingoes. This is not conservation. It is contradiction.

Modern genetic science has fundamentally changed our understanding of Australia's wild canids. Contemporary studies using up to 195,000 genetic markers confirm that overwhelmingly, wild-living canids in NSW are dingoes – with more than three-quarters of sampled animals showing over 93% dingo ancestry. The "wild dog" framing that drives current policy is scientifically outdated and morally convenient. It allows us to kill a native species by calling it something else.

Ecologically, the dingo is irreplaceable. As an apex predator, dingoes regulate kangaroo and wallaby populations, suppress introduced foxes and feral cats, reduce feral pig and goat numbers, and shape the behaviour of herbivores across vast landscapes. When dingoes are removed, these ecosystems unravel. Trophic cascades follow – vegetation declines, threatened species lose ground, and the very biodiversity our National Parks exist to protect is undermined. Ironically, lethal control also destabilises dingo pack structures, increasing social disruption and the very interbreeding with domestic dogs that policy claims to prevent.

For First Nations Cultural Custodians, the dingo is not a pest – it is kin. Dingoes are connected to lore, kinship systems, Songlines, and ceremonial life across NSW and the wider continent. The 2023 National First Nations Dingo Declaration, developed by 100 Traditional Owners from 20 nations, calls for a new approach centred on Caring for Dingoes on Country. For too long, Cultural Custodians have been excluded from decisions about dingo management on their own Country. This must change.

I also acknowledge the genuine concerns of landholders neighbouring National Parks. But decades of broad-scale lethal control have not eliminated predation risk – and some research suggests 1080 baiting may actually increase calf predation by destabilising pack territories. The answer is not to keep doing what isn't working. Livestock Guardian Dogs have proven highly effective. Donkeys show real promise. What is missing is funding, extension services, and political will to invest in coexistence rather than killing.

I respectfully urge the Committee to recommend:

An immediate end to lethal dingo control within NSW National Parks

The removal of the dingo exemption from the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

Genuine co-management frameworks that place Cultural Custodians at the centre of dingo decision-making on Country

Reallocation of lethal control funding toward non-lethal coexistence strategies and extension services for neighbouring landholders

Dingo management policy grounded in contemporary genetic and ecological science

The dingo has shaped this continent for millennia. It belongs here. We have the science, the cultural knowledge, and the tools to do better. What we need now is the courage to act.

Stuart Perera

Keysborough, Victoria

1 June 2026