

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission to the Animal Welfare Committee Inquiry into the Treatment and the Cultural and Ecological Significance of Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

Introduction

I am making this submission as an individual with a strong interest in animal welfare, environmental conservation, and the protection of Australia's unique wildlife.

I support the recognition of dingoes as an important part of Australia's natural and cultural heritage. I believe that the management of dingoes within New South Wales national parks should be guided by animal welfare principles, contemporary scientific evidence, and respect for Aboriginal cultural knowledge.

The Cultural Significance of Dingoes

Dingoes have shared the Australian landscape with Aboriginal peoples for thousands of years and hold significant cultural and spiritual importance for many First Nations communities. They feature in Dreaming stories, cultural traditions, and traditional ecological knowledge.

The cultural significance of dingoes should be recognised in all policies and management plans affecting their future. Traditional Owners should be meaningfully involved in decisions regarding dingo management within national parks.

The Ecological Importance of Dingoes

Dingoes are Australia's largest terrestrial predator and play an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. As apex predators, they help regulate populations of other animals and contribute to ecological balance.

Research suggests that healthy dingo populations can assist in controlling overabundant herbivores and suppressing invasive predators such as foxes and feral cats. These ecological functions can have positive flow-on effects for native wildlife and biodiversity.

National parks exist to conserve native species and ecological processes. For this reason, dingoes should be recognised as a valuable component of healthy ecosystems rather than being managed solely as a pest species.

Animal Welfare Concerns

Animal welfare should be a central consideration in any management approach involving dingoes.

Control measures that cause suffering, prolonged distress, or disruption of family groups should be carefully scrutinised. Dingoes are highly social animals that form family structures and display complex behaviours. The welfare impacts of lethal control methods extend beyond individual animals and can affect entire social groups.

Where management action is necessary, non-lethal approaches should be prioritised whenever possible. Such approaches may include improved livestock protection measures, exclusion fencing, community education, and coexistence strategies.

Conservation of Dingoes

National parks should provide safe habitats for native wildlife, including dingoes. Protecting viable dingo populations within protected areas is important for preserving ecological function and maintaining Australia's natural heritage for future generations.

Management decisions should be based on independent scientific evidence and long-term conservation outcomes rather than short-term pressures or perceptions.

Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that the Committee:

1. Recognise dingoes as a native species of significant ecological and cultural importance.
2. Strengthen protections for dingoes within New South Wales national parks.
3. Ensure animal welfare considerations are central to all dingo management decisions.
4. Prioritise non-lethal management methods wherever practical.
5. Support ongoing research into the ecological role of dingoes and the impacts of management interventions.
6. Increase the involvement of Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owners in dingo management and policy development.
7. Develop management frameworks that promote coexistence, conservation, and ecosystem health.

Conclusion

Dingoes are an important part of Australia's biodiversity and cultural heritage. Their management should reflect their ecological value, cultural significance, and capacity to contribute to healthy ecosystems.

I encourage the Committee to adopt a balanced, evidence-based approach that prioritises conservation, animal welfare, and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal communities. By doing so, New South Wales can help ensure that dingoes continue to fulfil their ecological role and remain a valued part of Australia's natural environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.