

**INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW
SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Management of Dingoes in National Parks

I am writing as a member of the public and resident of the Mid North Coast of New South Wales. I live near National Parks and spend a great deal of time enjoying the natural environments that make this region so special. As a wildlife enthusiast, I value the opportunity to observe native species in their natural habitats and have a strong interest in the conservation of Australia's unique ecosystems.

I welcome this inquiry and the opportunity to contribute to discussions regarding the future management of dingoes in New South Wales National Parks.

Over the years, I have occasionally observed dingoes in my local area. One particularly memorable experience was seeing a dingo on an otherwise empty beach near my home. The animal was calmly moving through the sand dunes, minding its own business and behaving naturally within its environment. I kept a respectful distance, and the dingo did the same. It was a privilege to witness such an iconic native animal in its natural habitat. Experiences like this have reinforced my belief that dingoes are an important part of our environment and should be protected within the landscapes they have occupied for thousands of years.

I strongly support an end to lethal control programs within National Parks, greater recognition of the ecological and cultural significance of dingoes, and increased investment in non-lethal coexistence measures for neighbouring landholders.

Recent advances in genetic research demonstrate that our understanding of dingoes has evolved considerably. Contemporary studies indicate that the majority of wild-living canids in New South Wales retain overwhelmingly high dingo ancestry, challenging long-held assumptions that hybridisation is widespread.

These findings suggest that current management frameworks may not reflect the best available science. Importantly, dingoes should not be assessed solely through genetics. Their ecological role, behaviour, social structure and function within ecosystems distinguish them from domestic dogs.

Research also indicates that lethal control can disrupt stable family groups and pack structures, increasing social instability and potentially increasing the likelihood of interbreeding with domestic dogs. This raises concerns that current management practices may undermine the very outcomes they seek to achieve.

I am concerned that current legislation and policy continue to treat dingoes primarily as pest animals rather than recognising them as an ecologically important native species.

The broad use of the term "wild dog" fails to adequately distinguish dingoes from domestic dogs and hybrids. As a result, dingoes are managed under pest control frameworks rather than biodiversity conservation frameworks.

I find it difficult to reconcile the fact that dingoes are Australia's only native canid and yet remain the only native mammal specifically excluded from protections under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. National Parks exist to conserve native species and ecological processes. The routine lethal control of dingoes within these protected areas appears inconsistent with these objectives.

I encourage the Committee to consider reforms that recognise dingoes as native wildlife and ensure management reflects contemporary ecological and genetic science.

As someone who lives near National Parks and values the natural environment of the Mid North Coast, I believe the ecological role of dingoes should be central to any discussion about their management.

Dingoes are recognised as apex predators and play an important role in maintaining ecological balance. They help regulate populations of herbivores and suppress introduced predators such as foxes and feral cats, reducing pressure on native wildlife and vegetation communities.

Scientific research has demonstrated that the removal of apex predators can have significant consequences throughout ecosystems, contributing to trophic cascades, habitat degradation and biodiversity decline.

The presence of dingoes serves as a reminder that we still have functioning natural systems in parts of New South Wales. National Parks are intended to protect ecological integrity, and allowing dingoes to fulfil their natural ecological role within these landscapes should be viewed as an important conservation outcome.

I acknowledge that dingoes hold deep cultural significance for many First Nations peoples across Australia.

While I do not speak on behalf of Traditional Owners, I recognise that dingoes are connected to culture, kinship, stories, lore and Caring for Country practices that have existed for thousands of years.

I support greater involvement of Cultural Custodians in decisions relating to dingo management within National Parks. The perspectives and knowledge of Traditional Owners should play a meaningful role in shaping future management approaches.

The National First Nations Dingo Declaration provides an important framework for understanding the cultural significance of dingoes and should be carefully considered by the Committee.

Current management programs rely heavily on lethal control methods including poison baiting, trapping and shooting. I am particularly concerned about the welfare implications of lethal control methods used against dingoes in National Parks. The use of 1080 poison can result in prolonged suffering prior to death, while trapping can leave animals exposed to stress, injury, dehydration and extreme weather conditions before they are attended to. As a member of the public, I find it difficult to reconcile the use of these methods within National Parks, which are established to protect native wildlife and biodiversity.

Regardless of one's position on dingo management, animal welfare considerations should form an important part of any decision-making process. I believe there is a strong case for prioritising humane, non-lethal management approaches wherever possible.

The widespread use of lethal control within National Parks risks undermining the ecological benefits that dingoes provide. Disrupting family groups may reduce their ability to regulate prey and competing predator populations effectively and may contribute to increased social instability.

I am also concerned about the welfare implications associated with trapping and poisoning programs. These methods can result in prolonged suffering and appear inconsistent with contemporary expectations regarding the humane treatment of wildlife.

Current management approaches appear to focus largely on agricultural protection rather than biodiversity outcomes within conservation areas. While the concerns of neighbouring landholders should be acknowledged and addressed, I believe greater investment should be directed towards non-lethal coexistence strategies that support both rural communities and healthy dingo populations.

Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that the Committee consider:

1. Ending routine lethal control of dingoes within New South Wales National Parks.
2. Reviewing legislation and policies that classify dingoes within broad pest animal frameworks and ensuring management reflects contemporary scientific understanding.
3. Recognising the ecological role of dingoes as apex predators and incorporating biodiversity outcomes into management decisions.
4. Increasing the involvement of Traditional Owners and Cultural Custodians in decisions regarding dingo management on Country.
5. Providing funding and support for non-lethal coexistence measures for landholders neighbouring National Parks.
6. Supporting further research into the ecological, genetic and conservation value of dingoes in New South Wales.
7. Review the animal welfare impacts of current lethal control methods, including 1080 poisoning and trapping, and prioritise the development and implementation of humane non-lethal alternatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry. I hope this process results in a modern, evidence-based approach to dingo management that recognises the ecological importance of dingoes, respects their cultural significance, supports coexistence, and ensures that National Parks fulfil their purpose as places for the conservation of Australia's native wildlife.