

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Date Received: 3 June 2026

Submission to NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into dingoes in national parks in New South Wales

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Together with my wife, I own and manage a sheep and cattle breeding property which borders on the Kosciusko National Park near the Blowering Dam. Our property comprises 600 hectares of grazing land and 300 hectares of native vegetation which will soon be managed for conservation under a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement. The BSA area is home to numerous endangered species including greater glider, powerful and barking owl, as well as a breeding population of gang-gang cockatoos.

Prior to the present management strategy, up to approx. 2015, wild dog attacks and sightings were a regular occurrence on our property. Since 2016 dog sightings have been infrequent on our and neighboring properties. I am supportive of the present control strategies in place by the KNP. Anecdotally I can also say that the local emu population has expanded significantly, and koala records have also increased in the KNP during the same period.

For the balance of this submission, I refer to the terms of reference:

- (a) Genetic status of dingoes. The presence of pure or nearly pure strains of dingoes in the KNP and elsewhere is evidence of the effectiveness of the existing management strategies in maintaining this population in wilderness areas without excessive impact to agricultural areas, at least in the area I am directly familiar with. The dingo is a breed of dog, rather than a separate species, and since the populations are not in threat, their diversity or otherwise to other dog populations is irrelevant.

By the same argument, we should be surveying and preserving genetically distinct populations of other species introduced by humans in the last 5,000 years, for example rabbits, which are also genetically distinct from their parent populations as a result of local adaptation and a smaller genetic base.

- (b) The framework governing the management of dingoes. As previously described, I am supportive of the results of the present framework

- (c) Ecological role of dingoes. There is clearly much conflicting evidence on this issue. Using the example of the KNP, there are numerous other native predators in the environment which are negatively impacted by wild dogs and are often ignored in this argument, including powerful owl, wedge tailed eagles, goannas etc.
- (d) Cultural significance of dingoes. The present management strategy is clearly not threatening the viability of the existing populations in wilderness areas so in my view this should not be used to justify reducing the level of control.
- (e) The impact of existing policies and programs should be considered in context to the broader results of selective control of dingoes / wild dogs in specific areas
- (f) Opportunities for Indigenous participation should be focused on areas with clear ecological benefit for native species.
- (g) The welfare of farm animals, native wildlife and the human rural population should be considered before the welfare of dingoes and other introduced wild animals.