

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Richard Orr

Date Received: 2 July 2026

SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO DINGO TREATMENT IN STATE NATIONAL PARKS

To: The Chair and Members of the Legislative Council Portfolio Committee

Regarding: Inquiry into Dingo Treatment in State National Parks

Status: Formal Advocacy Submission

Submitted By: Richard Orr

Contact Email: richard@equitech.com.au

Contact Phone: 0417 449 910

1. Executive Summary

The current legislative and operational approach to dingo management across New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland relies on an outdated, ecologically damaging paradigm. Classifying dingoes (*Canis dingo*) as "pests" or "wild dogs" inside National Parks fails to recognize their status as native apex predators. This submission outlines the ecological, genetic, and cultural necessity of halting lethal control methods (such as 1080 aerial baiting and trapping) within public conservation lands. Furthermore, it demonstrates that transitioning to non-lethal, co-managed strategies yields profound economic benefits for regional tourism and state expenditure.

2. Core Arguments for a Mindset and Policy Shift

A. Ecological Integrity and Trophic Cascades

- **Apex Predator Function:** Dingoes are Australia's only terrestrial apex predators. Their presence regulates the entire food web.
- **Suppression of Invasive Predators:** Lethal culling of dingoes leads to "mesopredator release." Without dingo competition, feral cat and European red fox populations surge, decimating endangered small mammals and ground-nesting birds.
- **Herbivore Management:** Dingoes manage overgrazing by kangaroos and wallabies, allowing native vegetation and ecosystems to regenerate naturally.

B. Genetic and Evolutionary Protection

- **Sanctuaries for Native Lineages:** National Parks must serve as genetic strongholds. Lethal control and fractured populations increase the likelihood of domestic dog cross-breeding.
- **Functional Apex Status:** Emerging science confirms that even dingoes with minor domestic ancestry continue to fulfill the vital ecological role of a top predator. Policy must protect the animal's *ecological function*, not just a rigid genetic percentage.

C. Cultural Recognition and First Nations Co-Management

- **Living Heritage:** The dingo holds profound cultural, spiritual, and totem significance for First Nations Peoples, such as the Butchulla Traditional Owners of K'gari.
- **Self-Determination:** Destroying dingoes without explicit, culturally informed consent from Traditional Owners undermines state commitments to Indigenous co-management and reconciliation.
-

D. The Failure of Culling as a Management Tool

- **Pack Destabilization:** Lethal baiting frequently kills dominant alpha pairs. This disrupts pack structure and social hierarchy.
- **Increased Conflict:** Fractured packs result in chaotic breeding among juvenile dingoes. These unsupervised juveniles are statistically more likely to wander onto agricultural land, target livestock, or approach tourists for food.

3. Regional Priorities & Legislative Harmonization

- **New South Wales:** Remove the ambiguous "wild dog" label from biosecurity laws. Reclassify the dingo strictly as protected native wildlife under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*.
- **Victoria:** Immediately abolish the 3km "unprotection" buffer zones bordering public land. These zones effectively lure protected dingoes out of National Parks to be killed.
- **Queensland & Fraser Island (K'gari):** Shift the management burden from wildlife eradication to strict human behavior modification. **Enforce heavy penalties for tourist non-compliance, ensuring the "wild" integrity of the island is preserved.**

4. Cost-Benefit Summary: Tourism Impact & Fiscal Savings

A transition from lethal control to non-lethal coexistence represents a highly profitable shift in state asset management.

Category	Current Lethal Model (Status Quo)	Proposed Coexistence Model (Non-Lethal)	Net Economic Impact & Savings
State Government Expenditure	High Cost: Millions spent annually on 1080 bait manufacturing, aerial helicopter drops, bounty programs, and trapping infrastructure.	Targeted Investment: Redirection of funds into permanent exclusion fencing, smart deterrents, and agricultural subsidies for Maremma guardian dogs .	Long-term Fiscal Savings: High upfront infrastructure costs phase out recurring, indefinite annual baiting expenditures.

Ecosystem Remediation	Compounded Expenses: High taxpayer cost to fund secondary programs targeting feral cat and fox explosions caused by a lack of dingoes.	Free Ecological Service: Dingoes naturally suppress feral pests and overgrazing 24/7 at zero cost to the taxpayer.	Millions Saved: Drastic reduction in state-funded threatened species recovery and feral pest trapping programs.
Ecotourism Revenue	Reputational Risk: Global backlash from international tourists witnessing wildlife culling or aggressive hazing (e.g., on K'gari).	Premium Brand Value: Enhanced promotion of National Parks as pristine, intact ecosystems where tourists pay to view wild apex predators.	Increased Income: K'gari attracts ~400,000 visitors annually; maintaining a healthy dingo population secures hundreds of millions in ongoing regional tourism GDP.
Agricultural Protection	Ineffective Control: Disrupted packs continue to cause cyclical livestock losses, leading to continuous payout demands and conflict.	Proven Defense: Guardian animals and exclusion fences drastically reduce stock loss compared to perimeter baiting.	Private Sector Growth: Farmers experience lower stock mortality rates, stabilizing regional agricultural economies.

5. Key Recommendations

1. **Immediate Ceasefire:** Enact an immediate moratorium on aerial 1080 baiting and trapping inside all state National Parks.
2. **Harmonized Legal Status:** Amend state environmental laws to legally define all wild dingoes as native fauna, regardless of arbitrary genetic purity thresholds.
3. **Transition Funding:** Subsidize farmers to transition from lethal control to modern, non-lethal predator deterrents (guardian animals, fencing, and auditory alarms).
4. **Human-Centric Management:** Implement strict tourist capacity caps and heavily policed behaviour boundaries in high-interaction zones like Fraser Island - K'gari to protect both visitors and dingoes.