

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Dear Committee Members,

I welcome the establishment of this inquiry and strongly support meaningful reform to protect dingoes living in New South Wales national parks.

Although I am based in Queensland, dingoes are part of Australia's shared natural and cultural heritage. How they are treated in one state affects their conservation, public perception and long-term survival nationally.

Dingoes have been misunderstood and persecuted for generations. They continue to be grouped under the broad and prejudicial label of "wild dogs", alongside feral and roaming domestic dogs. Under current NSW policy, this term includes dingoes, domestic dogs living in the wild and hybrids, despite these animals having different ecological, genetic and conservation significance.

Recognition and legal protection

Dingoes are presently excluded from the general protection provided to native mammals under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. The NSW Government's own information states that native mammals are protected under this legislation except for the dingo. This exceptional treatment is difficult to justify, particularly inside national parks established to conserve native landscapes and wildlife.

Recent genome-wide research also challenges the longstanding claim that most free-living canids are merely domestic-dog hybrids with little conservation value. A major 2023 study found limited domestic-dog admixture across Australian dingo populations. In the NSW samples examined, more than 60 per cent were classified as genetically pure dingoes, and only two animals had less than 70 per cent dingo ancestry.

Policy should reflect contemporary genetic evidence rather than outdated assumptions. The term "wild dog" should not be used to erase the identity and conservation value of dingoes.

Ecological importance

Dingoes are Australia's largest land-based predator and can influence populations of herbivores and introduced predators such as foxes and feral cats. Their ecological effects vary between environments, and not every claimed benefit has been conclusively demonstrated. That uncertainty is an argument for properly funded, place-based research and precautionary management—not indiscriminate killing.

Removing dingoes can disrupt established family groups, alter territorial behaviour and potentially create ecological instability. National park management should protect functioning dingo populations and investigate their role within each ecosystem before undertaking lethal intervention.

Animal welfare

Current NSW management permits ground baiting, aerial baiting, trapping and shooting. These methods raise serious animal-welfare concerns, particularly when applied broadly without proof that the individual animals targeted have caused harm.

A native animal living within its natural habitat should not be killed merely because it belongs to a species classified as a pest elsewhere. National parks should provide dingoes with genuine protection, not simply become another location in which they may be poisoned or destroyed.

Lethal action should be considered only in an exceptional and clearly demonstrated situation involving an immediate threat to human safety or a specific threatened population, after reasonable non-lethal measures have been exhausted. Any such action should be independently authorised, targeted to identified individuals and publicly reported.

First Nations leadership

I acknowledge that I cannot speak on behalf of First Nations people. However, dingoes have deep and continuing cultural relationships with Aboriginal communities, and those relationships existed long before current pest-management frameworks.

Traditional Custodians should not merely be consulted after management decisions have effectively been made. Indigenous knowledge, cultural authority and leadership should be embedded in the governance, research and conservation of dingoes within national parks. This is expressly within the inquiry's terms of reference and should become a central part of any future framework.

Supporting neighbouring landholders

Protecting dingoes in national parks does not require dismissing the legitimate concerns of neighbouring farmers. Landholders should be supported through

properly funded coexistence programs, including improved fencing, livestock guardian animals, changes to animal husbandry, rapid-response assistance and independently evaluated deterrent programs.

Public money currently directed toward routine lethal control should increasingly support practical measures that protect livestock without destroying ecologically and culturally important native animals. National parks should not be emptied of dingoes to compensate for an absence of effective assistance outside park boundaries.

Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that the Committee:

Recognise dingoes as native wildlife distinct from feral and roaming domestic dogs.

Remove the dingo's exclusion from protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

Prohibit broadscale poisoning, trapping and shooting of dingoes within NSW national parks.

Introduce an immediate moratorium on routine lethal control while a new conservation framework is developed.

Require modern genomic testing, ecological assessment and independent animal-welfare review before any exceptional intervention.

Establish genuine First Nations leadership and co-governance in dingo conservation and management.

Fund non-lethal coexistence programs and practical assistance for properties adjoining national parks.

Publish annual information about the locations, methods, expenditure and outcomes of all dingo-control activities.

Fund long-term research into dingo populations, pack stability, ecological functions and interactions with livestock and threatened species.

Conclusion

Dingoes should not continue to be treated as pests simply because this has historically been convenient. They are living native animals with ecological importance, distinct genetic heritage and profound cultural significance.

This inquiry provides an opportunity for New South Wales to replace persecution with evidence, respect and responsible coexistence. I urge the Committee to

recommend strong legal protection for dingoes in national parks and an end to routine lethal control.

Yours sincerely,