

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Sharon Constance

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To Whom It May Concern

Re: Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

I run a 2230 acre grazing property at Badja, in South East NSW, along the Great Dividing Range. I run an enterprise consisting of approximately 1000 head of merino sheep and 100 head of beef cattle.

My boundary neighbours consist of a large scale sheep and cattle grazing farm to my west, one small beef producer, three privately owned non-grazing bush blocks, NSW State Forest and Badja Swamps Nature Reserve – a part of the Deua National Park. Both the Deua and Wadbilliga National Parks run as a divide along the mountain range between farming families on the Monaro and the Far South Coast to the east.

I am an active member of the Local Land Services SE Wild Dog Management Group, which meets twice a year to discuss ongoing management of wild dogs and their impact upon farmers in our region. Wild dogs and predatory attacks have long been a problem on my property and in this region in general. As a result, other sheep graziers in the Badja area have made the decision to remove sheep from their properties, as on-going dog activity is making it non-viable or humane to keep sheep anymore. I remain the “last man standing” for sheep grazing on the Badja. These other graziers have stated that they will not bring sheep back to this area. It has also been reported that since they have removed their sheep, their cattle are now starting to be targeted and calves have been attacked.

Great expense has been spent on my property to try and prevent dogs entering from the adjoining National Park. An electric dog fence has been installed and runs the entire length of my northern and eastern boundaries. In addition to the install costs, the system requires a substantial input of my time to maintain it. It is, however, imperative to my operation and being able to continue sheep grazing. Other graziers have also undertaken, at their own expense, to install electric dog fences, however a 1.9km gap through National Park and a privately owned bush block continues to leave farmers vulnerable to dog predation.

Despite current management practices by the LLS Working Group, which includes representatives of both Forestry and National Parks, wild dogs continue to grow as a problem for livestock graziers. Any proposed changes to the management or protection of dingoes or wild dogs in National Parks will be disastrous to those of us trying to remain in business.

Current National Park aerial baiting and aerial cull programs are doing little to keep current dog populations under control. Dingoes and wild dogs hold no differentiation

in the wild and further protection of these animals will no doubt lead to continued population growth and more livestock operators being forced out of business. Not to forget the impact these predators are having on our native residents, such as wallabies, quolls and the like. There is no differentiation between a dingo and wild dog when it comes to control and management, just as they do not differentiate when they are hunting prey - dingoes and wild dogs alike will kill livestock and native fauna.

With so much unmanaged bush surrounding me, I am already dealing with constant incursions of pest animals from neighbouring blocks. The National Park and Forestry land goes largely unmanaged apart from costly aerial shoot programs that yield a small percentage of the pest populations inhabiting these densely bushed areas. As a result, feral pigs, for example, are already in plague proportions, damaging pastures and waterways. Their control forms part of my daily work routine. Any change to legislation governing dingo, and consequently wild dog management, will see a similar result. I will then be completely over-run by government housed predators and pests.

Sharon Constance
"Big Badja"