

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
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Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Animal Welfare Committee

Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

Date: 25 June 2026

Note:

I request that my name be withheld if this submission is published given that I work in the public service, and I'm not sure it would be appropriate to comment publicly.

Submission

Summary

NSW should end the killing of dingoes in national parks, including through the use of sodium fluoroacetate (1080), because lethal control is inconsistent with animal welfare, undermines ecological function, and is increasingly out of step with contemporary evidence and public expectations. NSW should follow jurisdictions such as Tasmania that have stopped using 1080 in state parks and state forests. I support stronger incorporation of First Nations knowledge and leadership, and greater investment in non-lethal coexistence measures.

Addressing the terms of reference

1. Genetic status of dingoes, distinction between dingoes and dogs, and recent research into the genetic profile of NSW dingoes

Recent genetic research from the University of Sydney shatters the "wild dog" myth in New South Wales. DNA testing shows that most canids culled as "wild dogs" are actually pure dingoes or dingo-dominant hybrids, with over 60% of NSW wild canines retaining high-purity dingo genetics.

DNA evidence indicates widespread hybridisation has been overstated and that many wild dingoes retain little to no domestic dog ancestry. [1][2][3]

Whatever the outcome of future genetic research, the inquiry should reject the use of genetic uncertainty as a justification for killing wild-living dingoes or wild dogs in national parks. At minimum, NSW should adopt a precautionary conservation approach in national parks: where a canid is managed as a dingo or likely dingo, it should not be lethally controlled (particularly using inhumane measures) merely because of unresolved taxonomy or policy convenience. [1][2]

2. Legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks governing dingo management in national parks

The NSW framework currently permits dingoes to be treated as unprotected wildlife and also captures them within "wild dog" management settings. This creates a structural conflict inside conservation areas: an animal of ecological and cultural significance can still be poisoned, trapped or shot in places that exist to conserve nature. I welcome the inquiry's examination of whether these frameworks are fit for purpose. [1][4]

In policy terms, the present framework is unsatisfactory because it prioritises lethal control methods that are both ethically problematic and ecologically contested, rather than pursuing evidence-based alternatives. [4][5][6]

3. Ecological role of dingoes in national parks

Dingoes are Australia's largest terrestrial predator apart from humans and are widely understood to play an important ecological role. Peer-reviewed literature and research commentary indicate that dingo suppression can be associated with increased activity or abundance of herbivores and mesopredators such as cats and foxes, with flow-on effects for vegetation structure and smaller native fauna. [7][8][9]

Although some aspects of the literature remain contested, that uncertainty is not an argument for continued lethal control in national parks. Rather, it is a reason for caution: where there is credible evidence that removing an apex predator may destabilise ecosystems, governments should avoid routine lethal intervention and instead invest in monitoring, adaptive management and conservation-led policy. [7][8]

Issue	Why it matters for park management
Apex predator function	Dingoes may help regulate herbivores and suppress some mesopredators, supporting biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. [7][8][9]
Social stability	Lethal control can disrupt pack structure and produce unpredictable ecological and behavioural consequences. [6][8]
Conservation setting	National parks should privilege ecological integrity and precaution over broadscale poisoning and lethal suppression. [1][4][7]

4. Cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities

The terms of reference recognise the cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities. Dingoes are embedded in story, law, kinship and Country for many Aboriginal peoples, and past policies have frequently marginalised Indigenous perspectives in wildlife management. [1][5][10]

That cultural significance should have practical consequences. NSW should move beyond consultation-only approaches and create genuine co-design and shared decision-making structures for dingo conservation in national parks, including Indigenous-led monitoring, cultural interpretation and place-based management plans. [5][10]

5. Impact of current government policies and programs for management of dingoes in national parks

Current government policies that permit lethal control carry at least three major costs. First, they impose severe animal welfare harms on dingoes and non-target animals. Second, they may impair ecological function by removing or destabilising apex predators. Third, they entrench conflict rather than building long-term coexistence capability. [6][7][8][11]

The use of 1080 is especially concerning. The APVMA has long regulated 1080 as a dangerous poison, and the RSPCA states that the available evidence indicates 1080 is not humane. 1080 causes severe pain, suffering, frenzied behaviour, vomiting, whimpering, muscle spasms and convulsions, with the underlying literature concluding that sodium fluoroacetate should not be considered a humane poison. [11][12][13]

The Coalition Against 1080 Poison evidence hub compiles research across ethics and welfare, non-target impacts, coexistence and alternatives, reflecting the breadth of concerns raised by scientists, advocates and community members about continued reliance on this poison. [14]

Beyond the suffering inflicted on target animals, 1080 also raises non-target and public-interest concerns. Dogs and other animals are highly susceptible and no specific antidote exists. [11][15]

6. Dingo management and opportunities to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and leadership in conservation

NSW should reframe dingo management around coexistence, prevention and Indigenous leadership rather than routine killing. Recent Australian research on “pathways to coexistence” argues that transformation away from lethal control depends on preventive non-lethal innovations, capacity building, knowledge sharing, institutional reform and stronger involvement of Indigenous Australians in wildlife decisions. [6][16]

Evidence about non-lethal strategies is sufficiently developed to justify immediate policy change. Australian research and practice materials identify guardian animals, predator-smart fencing, deterrents, stronger husbandry and place-based coexistence planning as viable measures for reducing livestock losses without killing dingoes. [5][6][17][18]

Non-lethal approaches also avoid the paradox of lethal control: where killing breaks up stable social groups, it can increase unpredictability and conflict. Stable dingo populations may be easier to manage than repeatedly disrupted ones. [6][8][17] Notably, the widespread occurrence of intensive lethal control, particularly aerial baiting, may increase the likelihood of dingo dog hybridisation fracturing dingo social structures. [19]

Why 1080 should end in NSW national parks

An end to the use of 1080 and similar poisons is critical to the protection of dingoes and other animals in NSW national parks. National parks are places established for conservation. The use of 1080 in such areas is incompatible with the protection of native wildlife where there is substantial evidence of prolonged suffering and continuing concern about non-target harms. [11][12][14][15]

Even where governments defend 1080 as an operational tool, that position does not answer the animal welfare objection. A method can be administratively convenient and still be cruel. The evidence relied on by the RSPCA and others point firmly in that direction. [12][13] No animal should suffer this inhumane, horrible death – it is animal cruelty.

NSW should therefore prohibit 1080 use in national parks immediately and begin a wider phase-out across the State (starting with public lands), with investment redirected to humane coexistence and prevention programs. [6][14][16][17]

As previously noted above, there are numerous non-lethal alternatives available. However, the low cost of 1080 is likely incentivizing its continued use instead of better alternatives. If 1080 were banned, there would be stronger economic incentives for the development of even more alternative strategies.

Tasmania does not use 1080 baiting in state parks or state forests and no privately owned plantation forestry enterprises are currently using 1080 in Tasmania (according to Game Services Tasmania). NSW should work with the Tasmanian government to learn from Tasmania's approach.

A personal anecdote

My grandparents live in a small town in NSW in a residential area very close to signed 1080 baiting. As poisoned animals can travel outside baited areas, and large birds can move baits, this creates a risk in the residential and public areas where dogs are commonly walked. It is a concern for my grandparents who have a dog.

I have travelled around Australia with my dogs and although we weren't in national parks, passing through them was a cause for concern given the risk of baits or poisoned animals surrounding the parks. 1080 baiting is widely used in certain parts of Australia, and we heard from other travelers' countless stories of dogs suffered traumatic deaths. In many cases, there was no signage to warn people. The Coalition against 1080 reports on the many dogs that die from 1080 every year.

This causes me considerable anxiety and stress as even with precautions, I can not eliminate the risk to my dogs, particularly when travelling in new areas. This is compounded by the lack of information available on where 1080 is used in Australia. While travelling, I tried contacting local councils for the areas I was travelling through, and although I sometimes received helpful information, this was time-intensive and in many cases no reliable comprehensive information is available (for example, some jurisdictions publish baiting locations, however this does not capture private baiting by landowners or local council baiting).

I am reluctant to travel with my dogs anywhere near baited areas (noting dogs are permitted in some baited areas such as state and coastal parks and baits can be moved outside of national parks) and I understand many other pet owners have similar concerns. However, 1080 baiting is so widely used (eg as per NSW's map of baiting locations), that vast parts of the country are not safe. Unfortunately, many pet owners are not aware of the dangers of 1080 until it is too late.

Recommendations

1. End all routine and reactive lethal control of dingoes in NSW national parks, including shooting, trapping and baiting.
2. Prohibit the use of 1080 and similar poisons (eg PAPP) in NSW national parks and commit to phasing out its use more broadly in NSW, starting with public lands.
3. Protect dingoes as ecologically important native animals in park management and biodiversity policy.
4. Embed Indigenous knowledge and leadership in dingo conservation and decision-making.
5. Expand support for non-lethal management, including guardian animals, fencing, husbandry improvements and place-based coexistence programs.
6. Commission monitoring of the ecological effects of dingo management in NSW national parks.

Conclusion

The inquiry provides NSW with an opportunity to move beyond outdated “wild dog” control settings and adopt a modern framework grounded in conservation, animal welfare and respect for First Nations knowledge. Dingoes should not be killed in national parks or elsewhere. NSW should end lethal control in those areas, ban 1080 in national parks and elsewhere, and invest in non-lethal strategies that protect both biodiversity and livelihoods. [1][4][6][7][12]

References

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