

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Ledknapper Wild Dog Action Group Inc.

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Submission to the NSW Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks

Executive Summary

The Ledknapper Wild Dog Action Group Inc. (LWDAG Inc.) represents landholders directly affected by wild dog and dingo activity in western NSW.

This submission argues that:

- Dingoes and wild dogs in NSW are predominantly hybrids and do not represent a culturally or ecologically unique species
- Their impacts undermine biodiversity conservation, agricultural production, and community wellbeing
- Effective management requires continued and strengthened **coordinated cross-tenure control**, including within National Parks

Key Recommendations:

1. Maintain and strengthen wild dog and dingo control programs within National Parks
 2. Ensure National Parks remain active participants in **regional coordinated pest management**
 3. Prioritise biodiversity protection and agricultural sustainability in management policy
 4. Base policy decisions on **evidence, not assumptions of ecological or cultural value**
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About the Organisation

The Ledknapper Wild Dog Action Group Inc. is a cross-boundary (“nil-tenure”) pest management group in the Bourke Shire region. It represents landholders and rural communities impacted by wild dog activity originating from public lands, including National Parks.

Response to Key Issues

1. Ecological Status of Dingoes in NSW

Dingoes are often described as native fauna; however, archaeological evidence indicates they were introduced approximately 3,000–4,000 years ago.

Many native species in NSW evolved without canid predators, and dingoes do not represent part of Australia’s deep evolutionary history. Their ecological role therefore cannot be assumed to be foundational or irreplaceable.

2. Hybridisation and Species Integrity

Genetic studies indicate that the majority of wild canids in NSW are hybrids between dingoes and domestic dogs.

Implications:

- Hybridisation reduces the presence of genetically distinct dingoes
 - Hybrid animals do not represent a clearly defined native species
 - Management decisions based on “dingo conservation” may not reflect current population realities
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3. Ecological Role and Impacts

While dingoes are sometimes described as apex predators providing ecosystem benefits, evidence in NSW landscapes indicates mixed or negative outcomes.

Observed impacts include:

- Predation on native fauna, including threatened species
- Disruption of reintroduction programs
- Altered ecosystem dynamics in ways that are not consistently beneficial

Their ecological role is therefore context-dependent and not universally positive.

4. Impacts on Native Wildlife and Conservation Programs

Wild dogs and dingoes prey on a range of native species, including:

- wallabies
- bandicoots
- koalas
- ground-nesting birds
- threatened mammals

In conservation areas:

- Predator incursions can undermine high-cost recovery programs
- Predator-proof infrastructure is often required to protect vulnerable species

Their presence can therefore conflict with the primary conservation objectives of National Parks.

5. Mesopredator Control Claims

Claims that dingoes suppress foxes and cats remain contested.

Available evidence suggests any effect is primarily:

- behavioural (avoidance/detection)
- not consistent lethal suppression

As such, mesopredator control should not be relied upon as a primary justification for reducing management efforts.

6. Cultural Significance

Dingoes hold cultural significance for some Aboriginal communities; however:

- this significance varies across regions and nations
- it does not uniformly apply across NSW
- it does not extend to hybrid wild dogs

Policy should recognise diversity of cultural perspectives without assuming universal cultural value.

7. Legal and Policy Context

Under the **NSW Biosecurity Act 2015**, wild dogs are classified as a priority pest species.

This creates a **statutory obligation** for all land managers, including National Parks, to:

- minimise impacts
 - participate in coordinated control efforts
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8. Biosecurity, Public Health, and Safety Risks

Wild dogs and dingoes can act as vectors for disease affecting:

- livestock
- domestic animals
- human health

They also present risks to:

- park visitors
- staff and contractors

Effective management reduces biosecurity and liability risks.

9. Impacts on Agricultural Communities

Wild dog predation has significant impacts on rural communities, including:

- financial loss
- livestock welfare impacts
- ongoing stress and mental health consequences

Research indicates prolonged exposure to predation events can result in significant psychological distress among affected landholders.

10. Movement and Landscape-Scale Management

Dingoes and wild dogs:

- occupy large territories
- regularly cross land-tenure boundaries
- cannot be effectively contained within National Parks

Implications:

- Management must operate at a **landscape scale**
 - All land tenures must participate
 - National Parks play a critical role in regional outcomes
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Recommendations

1. **Maintain active wild dog control programs within National Parks**
 2. **Strengthen cross-tenure coordination** between landholders and government agencies
 3. **Base management decisions on current population realities**, including hybridisation
 4. **Prioritise protection of threatened species and biodiversity outcomes**
 5. **Recognise agricultural and community impacts in policy frameworks**
 6. **Ensure policy is guided by evidence rather than assumptions of ecological or cultural status**
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Conclusion

Wild dog and dingo management in NSW must balance conservation, biosecurity, and community impacts.

Given their mobility, ecological impacts, and hybridised populations, effective management requires a **coordinated, evidence-based, cross-tenure approach** in which National Parks remain an active and responsible participant.

References

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