

**Submission
No 132**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Inquiry: Dingoes in national parks in New South Wales

Submitter: Millie Schulz

Age: 17

Location:

Date: 9/7/26

My name is Millie Schulz, and I am a 17-year-old student living in New South Wales. I am writing this submission because the management of dingos across our National parks directly shapes the health of the natural environment. I value our native wildlife, care deeply about animal welfare, and want to ensure that dingos remain present inside our National Parks for the rest of my life. Modern conservation policy in our state must move away from broad scale lethal control and instead align with contemporary scientific research, ecosystem protection, First Nations heritage, and humane standards.

The dingo is essential to Australian ecosystems as it's our continent's primary natural top order consumer. As apex predators, dingos sit at the top of the food chain, regulating the structure and health of whole landscapes. Overwhelming scientific evidence demonstrates that ecosystems with intact, stable dingo populations show a direct decrease in devastating introduced pest species, particularly the European red fox and feral cats. By suppressing these invasive mesopredators, dingos provide a biological control that is natural and as a plus will not cost the government any money. Furthermore, dingos regulate large herbivore populations like kangaroos and feral goats, preventing overgrazing and allowing native flora to regenerate. Removing apex predators triggers destructive trophic cascades, degrading the very habitats National Parks were created to preserve.

Dingos also hold immense, irreplaceable value in First Nations culture. For thousands of years, Cultural Custodians across Australia lived alongside dingos, viewing them not merely as animals, but as ancestral beings, protectors, hunting partners, and kin deeply embedded in lore, Songlines, and Country. Recent archaeological discoveries in NSW, such as deliberate ancestral dingo burials along the Baaka (Darling River), reflect the deep historical love, respect, and family like care given to these animals. Grouping dingos under the incorrect blanket administrative term "wild dogs" disrespects this cultural heritage and ignores modern genetic studies proving that wild living canids across NSW are dingos, not feral domestic dogs.

Given their vital ecological function and deep cultural history, dingos should never be classified or managed as a pest species. Dingos are the only native mammal specifically exempt from protection under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, allowing millions of 1080 poison baits, traps, and shooting programs to target them on public conservation land. Rather than treating our top predator as unwanted vermin, dingos should be granted full protection as native wildlife, if anything, considered for threatened species.

The heavy reliance on lethal management inside protected areas also raises severe animal welfare concerns. Methods like 1080 poison baiting inflict slow, agonising deaths lasting many hours, while trapping causes severe distress and physical trauma. Crucially, studies show that killing dingos disrupts stable family pack structures, which can actually worsen livestock conflicts for surrounding agricultural properties by destabilising territorial boundaries. Rather than poisoning native apex predators inside National Parks, the NSW Government should support neighbouring landholders through non-lethal coexistence strategies, such as Livestock Guardian Dogs, guardian donkeys, and smart fencing, using redirected pest management funding to support these programs.

I urge the Committee to recommend an immediate halt to all lethal control of dingos inside NSW National Parks, remove their exemption under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* to classify them as protected native wildlife, and invest in non-lethal coexistence services for farmers. As a young person, I want to grow up in a state that respects native wildlife, honors Indigenous culture, listens to modern science, and prioritises animal welfare. Dingos belong in Australian landscapes, and National Parks should be a safe sanctuary for them.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Millie schulz