

**Submission  
No 139**

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

**Name:** Sarah Matthews

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To Councillors,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the ongoing inhumane culling of dingoes across New South Wales national parks and to urge the Council to advocate for stronger protections for this iconic native species.

The dingo is an integral part of Australia's natural heritage and has played a vital ecological role in our landscapes for thousands of years. Yet despite its significance, pure and wild-living dingoes in many parts of New South Wales remain inadequately protected under current legislation and are routinely subjected to lethal control measures, including 1080 poison baiting, trapping, and aerial and ground shooting.

There is also increasing scientific evidence that many free-living canids across New South Wales retain a high proportion of dingo ancestry. Recent genetic testing has challenged the long-held assumption that most wild populations are simply feral dogs or heavily hybridised animals. Despite this, these animals are frequently labelled as "wild dogs" for management purposes, a classification that does not alter their genetic heritage or ecological role. Changing the terminology does not change the evidence.

This distinction matters. By treating genetically significant dingo populations as unprotected "wild dogs," current policies permit widespread lethal control of an iconic native apex predator that should be recognised and managed as a valuable part of Australia's biodiversity. At a minimum, management decisions should be guided by the best available independent science and acknowledge the substantial dingo ancestry that persists throughout many regions of New South Wales.

The methods currently used to control these animals raise serious animal welfare concerns. The use of 1080 poison can result in prolonged and distressing deaths, while trapping and shooting carry obvious risks of injury and suffering. These practices continue even during the whelping season, when dependent pups may be left to starve after adult members of the pack are killed. Such outcomes are difficult to reconcile with contemporary community expectations regarding the humane treatment of native wildlife.

Beyond the ethical issues, there is a growing body of ecological evidence suggesting that indiscriminate dingo culling can have unintended and counterproductive consequences. Dingoes are highly social animals that live in structured family groups. The removal of experienced adults disrupts pack stability, often leaving younger, inexperienced individuals to fend for themselves. Without the guidance and hunting strategies of established packs, these younger dingoes may be more likely to seek out easy food sources around farms, livestock, and even

areas frequented by people. Ironically, culling can contribute to the very conflicts it is intended to reduce.

Healthy, stable dingo packs help regulate ecosystems by controlling populations of herbivores and invasive predators such as foxes and feral cats. Maintaining intact family groups may therefore provide broader environmental benefits while reducing the likelihood of problematic dingo behaviour.

I urge the Council to take a leadership role by calling on the New South Wales Government to:

- \* End the routine use of inhumane lethal control methods, including 1080 baiting, trapping, and indiscriminate shooting in national parks.
- \* Prohibit lethal control during the dingo whelping and pup-rearing season.
- \* Strengthen legal recognition and protection of the dingo as a native apex predator and an essential part of Australia's biodiversity.
- \* Invest in evidence-based, non-lethal management strategies that reduce conflict while preserving stable dingo family groups.
- \* Support independent scientific research and transparent reporting on the ecological and animal welfare impacts of current culling programs.

As Australians, we have a responsibility to ensure that the management of our native wildlife reflects both modern science and humane values. The dingo deserves to be recognised not as a pest to be eradicated, but as a keystone species whose survival and welfare are closely tied to the health of our ecosystems.

Future generations deserve the chance to inherit healthy, functioning ecosystems that still include the dingo in its natural role. Continuing to eradicate these animals under the blanket label of "wild dogs" risks not only unnecessary suffering, but the loss of an irreplaceable part of Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

I respectfully ask the Council to support stronger protections for dingoes and to advocate for policies that prioritise coexistence, compassion, and ecological balance over outdated and inhumane culling practices. By standing for science-based conservation and ethical wildlife management, the Council can help ensure that this uniquely Australian species is protected rather than persecuted.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah matthews