

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Wanda Gordon

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Animal Welfare Committee
NSW Legislative Council

via online submission @ <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lodge-a-submission-committees?committeeInquiryId=3185>

Dear Sirs/Mesdames,

Re: Inquiry into dingoes in national parks in New South Wales

I refer to the inquiry established on 19 May 2026 to inquire into and report on dingoes in national parks in New South Wales and seeking of submissions from Australians. Please accept this submission seeking the inclusion of dingoes as a protected species pursuant to the *Biodiversity Conservation Act* (2016) NSW and for the dingo to acquire a status of active **protection** across the states' public conservation and other areas.

Firstly, I must communicate that I believe parliament has long been at great fault to exclude dingoes as a protected species. It is seriously inappropriate and unacceptable for our native dingoes to be the only native mammals specifically exempt from protection under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act* as a protected species. They are a unique animal and a native Australian animal. They are recognised by First Nations people as family and hold deep cultural importance. It is especially disrespectful to First Nations people to not protect the dingoes as they hold genuine cultural and spiritual significance for First Nations peoples.

Federally, the dingo is recognised as a **native species** under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). While the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) did assess the dingo as "vulnerable," the true state of affairs is that dingoes are extinct in some areas of Australia and threatened in many more (Science Insights, 2025) because of the lethal methods used to manage populations.

As you are no doubt aware, our federal environmental laws provide that any species of Australian animal present in Australia before 1400CE is classified a native animal. Section 16 of the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (Cth) provides that a "native species" means a species that is indigenous and that was present in Australia or any external Territory before 1400. It therefore cannot be ignored that the dingo is a native canine species to Australia. It has lived and evolved in Australia approximately 6,000 to 11,000 years prior to colonial people. This means that any person who regards the dingo as an introduced species is incorrect.

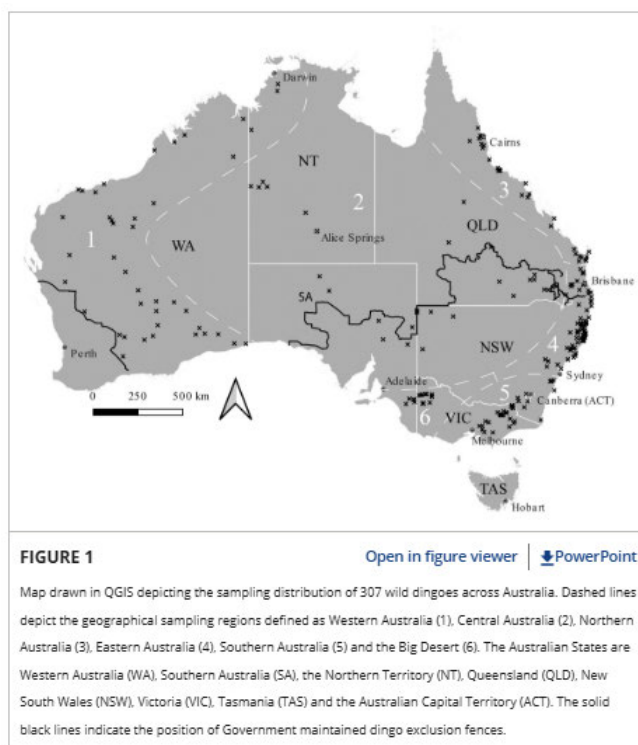
The dingo, being the only pre-1400CE native canine species in Australia, must be classified as a native animal in all Australian and state and territory legislation or be struck down by federal government for being inconsistent (s109 Australian Constitution, 1901 (Cth); Ritchie et al,

2023). It is therefore urgent and essential that the NSW and other state/territory governments raise the status of dingoes to a protected native species and that parliament amend all relevant legislation expeditiously). This failure to ensure the protection of all dingoes and dingo populations must be corrected immediately.

I am also intensely concerned about the use of lethal measures, as they are barbaric, cruel practices inflicted upon native sentient animals by the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS). The use of 1080 poison, baiting, trapping, and shooting to manage dingoes in national parks is unacceptable, excessively cruel and dangerous to other native animals and even to children, people and domestic animals. Cruel barbaric measures have no place in a modern world and are an unacceptable approach towards managing native wildlife or any non-native species. Lethal control methods be replaced with humane, non-lethal alternatives and the best conservationists and managers of the dingoes are the First Nations People exclusively.

The submission will now aim align with the terms of reference namely the treatment, cultural and ecological significance of dingoes. The main points that I will make are:

1. **The science confirms wild dogs are not hybrids**—most free-ranging "wild dogs" are genetically dingoes.
2. **The law is inconsistent and inadequate**—a native Australian species is being denied adequate protection.
3. **The current management is dangerous, cruel & inhumane**—1080 poisoning, trapping, shooting and all lethal management should end.
4. **The dingo is ecologically indispensable** as Australia's apex predator.
5. **First Nations peoples should lead future dingo conservation**, consistent with the National First Nations Dingo Declaration.



Source: (Cairns, Crowther, Parker, Ostrander, Letnic, 2023).

A. Genetic Status

Modern genetic science overwhelmingly demonstrates that the vast majority of free-ranging canids in New South Wales are dingoes—not feral domestic dogs. The continued use of the misleading term "wild dog" has resulted in native dingoes being routinely poisoned, trapped and shot under pest management programs. A native Australian species should never lose legal protection because of an inaccurate administrative label. Australia's and no doubt NSW's dingo management policies apply outdated genetic research which include only 23 genetic markers. Contemporary studies use about 195,000 markers and indicate that overwhelmingly, Australia's "wild dogs" i.e. canids living in the wild are in fact native dingoes. Claims of hybridisation is incorrect, extremely rare and uncommon in stable, undisturbed populations. In New South Wales, more than three-quarters of sampled wild canids showed over 93% contemporary dingo ancestry.

Dingoes avoided domestic dogs and have evolved in the wild for up to 11,000 years. "Phylogeny and ancient DNA studies estimate that the dingo lineage diverged from other early dogs 8000–11,000 years ago" (Cairns, Crowther, Parker, Ostrander, Letnic, 2023). There are distinct east and west populations since European colonial settler arrived in 1770 and set upon changing the natural landscape. Stretching more than 5,600km across Australia, the dingo barrier fence, (being the longest continuous artificial environmental barrier in the world), designed to keep dingoes out of the more productive sheep grazing areas in southeastern Australia, has caused these distinct east and west dingo populations. This artificial man intervention, namely the erected Dingo Barrier Fence (dog fence) intended to protect livestock from dingo predation has inflicted a physical barrier and genetic imposition. "The fence has created two separate dingo populations, with genetic evidence suggesting it acts as a barrier to gene flow" (Science Insights, 2025).

Recent scientific advances using extensive genomic testing have challenged the severity of this threat. Studies suggest that past research using fewer genetic markers may have significantly overestimated the extent of hybridisation. Newer research indicates that the vast majority of wild canines tested across Australia are predominantly dingo, with limited evidence of recent domestic dog admixture in many wild populations. This suggests that "pure" dingoes are more common than previously thought, although the risk of genetic dilution remains a genuine concern in areas with high lethal control programs (Science Insights, 2025).

It is therefore abundantly clear that, the label dingo and "wild dogs" needs to be divorced to ensure dingoes are protected as *Canis lupus dingo* under flora and fauna guarantees and other wildlife legislation.

According to Dr Cairns, the term 'wild dog' "isn't a scientific term – it's a euphemism – as a dingo is a dingo and... so it makes no sense to use the term 'wild dog'" (Cairns, Smith, Ritchie, Newsome, 2025). Dingoes have been separated from other *Canis* lineages for 8,000 to 11,000 years, have genetic distinctiveness due to their isolation from other canines and while they may share some ancestors - according to modern genetic evidence - to the New Guinea Singing Dog, the dingo is an entirely separate population (Cairns, Smith, Ritchie, Newsome, 2025). James Cook University and La Trobe University genetic researchers together with 25 researchers from four countries, used DNA sequencing technologies in their research and indicate the "Dingoes – the only native Australian dog – are thought to represent a unique event within canine evolution."

Dingoes are an iconic native Australian mammal and have a genetic status distinct to domestic dogs as they have met four conditions to be considered separate from domestic dogs: reproductive isolation, genetic distinctiveness, evolutionary path and distinctiveness and archaeological evidence (Cairns, Smith, Ritchie, Newsome, 2025). As a species living in Australia before 1400CE, the dingo is a legally regarded a native Australian mammal (s16, *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (Cth)).

Scientists recognise dingoes are their own species and also that “Australia’s wild canines have been on their own evolutionary path for many thousands of years.” Therefore, as a distinct lineage, dingos they should be recognised in their own right as a species or subspecies. Dingoes are NOT *Canis familiaris*, the domestic dog. Dingoes are correctly named either *Canis dingo* or *Canis lupus dingo* (Cairns, Smith, Ritchie, Newsome, 2025).

The recent scientific research into the genetic profile of dingoes reveals dingoes are unique as they have been geographically isolated from the grey wolves and domestic dogs for thousands of years. Queensland University of Technology geneticist confirms the isolation of dingoes from domestic dogs for many thousands years has led to “distinct evolutionary paths.” This isolation and “lack of selective breeding pressures has preserved the dingoes’ genetic makeup,” making their divergence logical and expected” (Science Insights, 2025). The 2023 study into the genetic analysis of 307 wild canid samples across Australia proved there was zero evidence of free-living domestic dogs or active dingo-hybrid populations. 103 wild canid samples analysed revealed more than three quarters had over 93% contemporary dingo ancestry and these are historic and not recent interbreeding events (Cairns, Crowther, Parker, Ostrander, Letnic, 2023).

It is therefore urgent that true conservationists consult the First Nations people who recognise the difference between a dog and a dingo. First Nations people must lead dingo protection programs. There must not be any lethal management and cruel killings of the native dingo or *Canis lupus dingo* (*canis dingo*). All management programs going forth must actively protect the native dingoes and dingo populations from the harmful effects of lethal management frameworks by including legislation to protect them and ensuring the First Nations people are able to work with conservationists to ensure the lethal management programs end.

B. Management Frameworks

Australia should replace lethal control with humane, science-based, non-lethal management strategies wherever possible. Current management practices—including 1080 poisoning, trapping, aerial baiting and shooting—cause prolonged suffering and are inconsistent with modern animal welfare standards. These methods:

- inflict unnecessary cruelty;
- kill native dingoes;
- threaten non-target wildlife and domestic animals;
- destabilise dingo family groups; and
- undermine long-term conservation.

Many Australians are unaware that dingoes are referred to as ‘wild dogs’ and as such targeted for killing during pest management programmes on public lands. Many Australian people are also unaware that government policies and communications use and apply the term “wild dogs” rather than dingo to try to push misinformation that dingoes are mixed with domesticated introduced dogs (Cairns, Crowther, Parker, Ostrander, Letnic, 2023). Using over 195,474 Single

Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) on a commercial microarray, the geneticists have gathered compelling evidence that contemporary dingoes admixed with domestic dog is not common in contemporary dingo populations (Cairns, Crowther, Parker, Ostrander, Letnic, 2023). Clearly, then dingoes are our most “mismanaged native species in Australia” (Ritchie et al, 2023). Dingoes are not “wild dogs” they are native dogs and should not be a target for lethal control. The laws, policies and conservation programs must urgently keep abreast with the science to recognise that dingoes are a distinct species and differentiate the dingo from domestic dogs introduced to Australia when colonial people arrived from England in 1770CE. Current legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks governing the management of dingoes in New South Wales in national parks is not fit for purpose. Poisoning, trapping, shooting will destabilise native dingo populations. Population stability, ecological function and conservation science must be prioritised in managing dingo populations.

The prevalence of free-ranging domestic dogs in Australia was very low with less than 1% of samples identified as feral dogs (Cairns, Crowther, Parker, Ostrander, Letnic, 2023). So, currently the dogs being **lethally managed** in national parks are in fact pure dingoes. The lethal culling management programs must end immediately as “wild dogs” are in fact native animals. The First Nations peoples know their dingoes and can immediately verify which canine is a dog and which is a dingo. They do not approve the killing of the dingoes which are their family and have great significance to their people, culture and management of their native ancestral lands. Dingoes are “under threat from lethal culling programs” and “understanding dingos’ genetic origins, including their distinction from domestic dogs, advances the argument to preserve them” (Smaglik, 2024).

There appears to be a widespread and **mistaken belief** that interbreeding between dingoes and the colonialist’s domestic introduced dog species was widespread across Australia – but this view is wrong (Ritchie et al, 2023). Research demonstrates that dingoes in Namadgi, previously regarded as having crossbred with modern domestic dogs because of varying pelt colours, have turned out to be **pure dingoes** in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). This has led the ACT to review its policies about poisoning, trapping and shooting dingoes near the around the Namadgi national park (The Senior, 2025). In fact, recent DNA research shows dingo-dog hybrids are extremely rare (Ritchie et al, 2023). Therefore, it is very clear that NSW state government must immediately change its dingo policies.

The management frameworks must align with the proven genetic science and First Nations knowledge holders who have long distinguished between dingoes and dogs (Cairns, Smith, Ritchie, Newsome, 2025). In the Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria, dingoes are managed as protected wildlife in National Parks and conservation areas but they’re unprotected on private land. In Western Australia, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales, dingoes are unprotected wildlife. That means they are afforded no protection, even in conservation areas (Ritchie et al, 2023). It is now time NSW government fixes this imbalance and stops treating dingoes as a target species given its ecological benefits to ecosystems.

It is noted that the conservation status of the dingo is complex and reflect the existing conflict between ecological preservation and agricultural interests in Australia. However, the dingo is Australia’s native terrestrial apex predator and it has significant contributions towards the land. While currently the dingo is not federally listed as “endangered,” this status will arise because their future existence continues to be fraught with regional threats and inconsistent protection

due to poor government management or managers who choose to lethally destroy dingo populations.

The fact is that “Wild dogs” suffering from NSW wildlife agencies and farmers lethal and torturous measures, are actually dingoes. So, the use of the term “wild dog” by farmers and wildlife agencies pursuant to the NSW legislation terminology is failing to apply the correct term being “dingo”. Genetic research undertaken by geneticists has confirmed that dingoes are the free ranging canines and not “wild dogs” (Souilmi, Nguyen, Ravishankar, 2026).

The current New South Wales poor and wrongful “management” of the dingo under the umbrella term “wild dog,” has allowed the NSW NPWS to target dingoes, feral dogs, and hybrids and is a blind refusal to protect a native species of canine. This means NSW’s inferior legislation is inconsistent with federal legislation. This inconsistent NSW legislation means the dingo populations can be both conserved and lethally controlled. This is making proactive conservation difficult if not impossible and the dingoes as a species will face extinction if proper conservationist action is not prescribed. The future existence of our native dingoes is grim if agricultural interests continue to drive inhumane ‘eradication programs’, eliminating this native animal from the Australian ecosystem (Cairns, 2024).

If NSW looks to other states and territories, (ACT previously mentioned), it will appreciate some of its findings including genetic realisations that “wild dogs” were pure dingoes. The dingo is eligible to be listed as “vulnerable” in Victoria. Obviously, the current population of dingoes in NSW needs to be properly determined and not by using an-inaccurate-outdated-survey-guestimates but by doing this quantitative measurement with accuracy using current technology which is verified.

Obviously, any person pushing an ignorant, and inexcusably relentless “*Canis familiaris*” label onto the dingo must be cautioned and reminded that science has proven dingoes in fact, hold a distinct evolutionary pathway and genetics. This “wild dog” label must be removed from all legislation as it is endangering the native dingo species. To allow dingoes to continue to be lethally managed as “wild dogs” category and not as a protected species is imposing a toxic state of complacency towards the dingo and threatens their existence. It is time that any identified *canis familiaris* advocates be listed and excluded from discussions, as their continued ignorance, anti-dingo agenda has no play or place on any steering committee which seeks to ensure dingo protection.

After two centuries of the dingoes persecution by colonial agricultural interests, Australia’s iconic dingo is finally being recognised as an ecological saviour within our imperilled environment (Cairns, 2024). The fact cannot be ignored that having dingoes around can be beneficial for graziers by reducing the total grazing pressure of kangaroos, feral goats and the impacts of feral pigs (Ritchie et al, 2023). Dingoes must be allowed to continue to persist in the Australian landscape. There are other ways to best manage dingoes. Guardian animals, for example, establish protective bonds with livestock and deter dingoes from approaching, reducing livestock losses and serve to diminish the attractiveness of livestock as a prey for dingoes (Ritchie et al, 2023). There is an enormous consensus that lethal approaches do not align with the values of most Australians and First Nations peoples (Ritchie et al, 2023). The government policies and any management of dingoes must reflect this.

This committee must put to an end, the NSW National Park and Wildlife Service (NPWS) “**control**” of dingoes by clumping them underneath an erroneous/mistaken umbrella category

of “wild dog” to meet its general biosecurity duty to manage **pest animals** and align with the NSW Dog Management Strategy. Dingoes are not “wild dogs” they are native Australian animals which First Nations people recognise as family and they have shown their commitment to saving their dingoes from continued acts of genocide of the NSW NPWS as per their Dingo Declaration. The essential role that dingoes play as an apex predator in the environment must be recognised and all management programs must seek to allow dingo populations to thrive so they can continue to eradicate foxes, cats, pigs without the use of dangerous poisons such as 1080 that are no longer in use in the majority of our world because of the dangers the poisoning poses to domestic animals, waterways and human life.

C. Ecological role

The dingo is Australia's apex terrestrial predator and a keystone species. Healthy dingo populations regulate invasive predators such as foxes and feral cats, suppress feral herbivores, promote biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience. Destroying dingoes weakens Australia's ecosystems rather than protecting them.

The dingo (*Canis dingo*) is an iconic, Australian native wild canid, which is instantly recognised by the world as an Australian native dog and is loved by a huge majority of the populace. It is a medium-sized canine adapted for speed and agility, typically weighing between 12 and 24 kilograms with a lean, hardy build (Science Insights, 2025). Dingoes possess unique vocalizations and hunting strategies. Dingoes exhibit a unique behavioural repertoire, including complex social structures and hunting strategies (Gale, 2025).

The university researchers who studied the dingo genetics also researched and determined the role of the dingo in the Australian ecosystem. This has led to a noticeable / marked shift in the public and scientific communities' attitude toward the dingoes role. Consequently, there is an acknowledgement that the protection of dingoes in Australia is necessary and this has been a view held and officially recognised over the past decade. This is primarily due to their important ecological function as Australia's *only terrestrial top predator*, where regulation and suppression of many species such as kangaroos, rabbits, foxes and cats, naturally promotes ecosystem balance (Dingo Foundation, 2024). Unfortunately though, the dingo continues to suffer just as the grey wolf has (*Canis lupus*) because of the actions of graziers, poor management policies and weak laws which allow dingo populations and dingoes to be the convenient scapegoat for livestock losses. Dingoes suppress introduced domestic cats and foxes through predation and ease pressure on smaller native wildlife. A stable dingo population would in fact eradicate fox populations more effectively than dangerous and cruel poisoning programs (Hunter, Letnic, 2022). Dingoes also suppress pig populations and ease pressure on the landscape.

The fact is that the re-introduction of the dingo into previously occupied habitat ranges, is needed to return balance to environmentally degraded areas, as a result of unregulated and out-dated farming practices (Dingo Foundation, 2026). As the largest terrestrial carnivore on the Australian mainland dingoes provide great benefits and are necessary to Australian ecosystems. Dingoes are Australia's apex predator, and this status and role, shapes the entire Australian ecosystem. Dingoes play a very important heroic role in the protectors of the landscape. Their trophic cascade effect of the dingoes as Australia's sole and predator, provide a “cascading” effect through many layers of an ecosystem to help other native mammals and species survive.

Dingoes help regulate the populations of large herbivores and suppress invasive species like feral cats and foxes. This ecological influence makes them a keystone species, contributing to healthier, more biodiverse landscapes. The species is highly adaptable, inhabiting every state and territory of mainland Australia, from deserts to rainforests (Science Insights, 2025). According to Cairns, dingoes are “extraordinary animals (that) perform an outsized role in keeping our ecosystems in good health by reducing the number of introduced predators, such as cats and foxes, while protecting plant species and even the soil” (Cairns, 2024). Apart from humans, dingoes are Australia’s largest land-based predator, and they actively support and maintain healthy ecosystems (Ritchie et al, 2023). It is therefore of major ecological importance that dingoes, as apex predators are recognised for their major role in maintaining healthy ecosystems within national parks and an end to lethal programs is committed to by the NSW government and the NPWS service immediately. An end to lethal management programs must be guaranteed immediately. **Dingoes are not pests, they are in fact, the superheroes of the Australian ecosystems.** So, stop treating them as “wild dogs.”

D. Cultural significance

Dingoes are deeply sacred to Australia’s First Nations People. They are family (HIS, 2026). First Nations people demand an immediate end to the genocide of dingoes on Country. Dingoes hold strong cultural significance and hold deep values for our First Nations peoples (Ritchie et al, 2023). A healthy dingo population is regarded as paramount and essential for health country and healthy people. Many First Nations people regard dingoes as the protectors, teachers and they see how much they belong to the health country.

First Nations people continue to feel and nurture their connection with dingoes and it is the rights of First Nations peoples to protect their sacred animal the dingo. They are a culturally identified species for many New South Wales Traditional Owners. “Dingoes feature prominently in stories, songlines and are described as having intrinsic (totemic) relationships with many Traditional groups. Traditional Owners have a holistic understanding of Country and dingoes are an important part of many cultural landscapes” (Victorian Government, 2024).

In September 2023 in Cairns, at the National Inaugural First Nations Dingo Forum First Nations peoples produced a powerful statement signed by more than 20 First Nations people. Their Dingo Declaration has made it abundantly clear the genocide, that is the **deliberate killing of dingoes** on Country **must stop**. The First Nations people regard lethal control of dingoes as being completely unacceptable and not capable of being justified by any person. They regard the use of the term “wild dog” to be wrongful, misleading and disrespectful of the sacredness of the dingo to them. The dingo is the First Nations’ totem and is family. So, culturally significant is the dingo as an animal the killing of dingoes will never be accepted. The First Nations peoples also know that dingoes are **not** hybrid mixed wild dogs. In fact he previously mentioned genetic testing has also proven what First Nations peoples already knew.

First Nations people demand their dingo be reinstated as “the boss of Country” and demand governments at all levels – federal, state and territories - immediately involve First Nations peoples in decisions relating to dingo management, to implement and support educational programs across a variety of platforms and organisations, and to ensure that their family, their totem, their sacred dingoes are protected under legislation (Ritchie et al, 2023).

The National First Nations' Dingo Declaration provides as follows, and the NSW government needs to stop the killing and let First Nations people decide how they want to manage their native dingoes:

"National First Nations' Dingo Declaration Dingoes are known by many names across Australia: Binure, Buyubarra, Dwert Mooyel, Ganibarra, Jinabara/ Madla Yalpa, Mirragang, Ngalmu, Ngawa, Ngugum, Ngwangwal, Ootalkarra, Warrigal, Wartaji, Wabubarra, Wilkerr, Wetya, Wongari, and many others.

The Dingo is deeply sacred to Australia's First Nations peoples. They are family.

Dingoes are a part of our individual and collective identity, important for men and women, and **our totems, Dreaming, lore / law and customs. They are embedded in our spirit through Storytelling, a part of our creation**, rituals, ceremonies, art, dances, and songs. We are one being, **spiritually connected from the Dreamtime to eternity**.

The Dingo is a cultural icon representing a vital connection to Country whose significance cannot be put into words. As Creator and Dreamtime Beings they formed the lands, the waterways, and constellations. They mapped our ancestral Songlines across this continent. The Dingo is essential to keep our storylines, custom and culture alive.

Dingoes remain deeply embedded in the daily lives of First Nations peoples as companions, hunting partners, protectors, and family members. They share our same experience of atrocities and journey of survival.

Dingoes are the Boss of Country. They belong in the landscape. Their presence in the ecosystem ensures natural systems remain in balance. This role is greatly under-appreciated. The direct and indirect effects of the Dingo on native and pest species are clear and apparent.

Dingoes are genetically, physically, and behaviourally different to domestic dogs, and must not be treated as such. If it looks and behaves like a Dingo, it is Australia's Dingo.

We **do not support** the use of **the term 'wild dog'**. This term **diminishes the Dingo**. It is a deliberate misrepresentation to justify killing. It **disrespects and disregards culture**.

Colonisation has and still impacts our relationship with the Dingo. Since European colonisation and introducing livestock, assumptions around Dingoes have led to them being cruelly targeted by trapping, shooting, poisoning, exclusion fencing, desexing, and bounty programs across Australia. These practices seek to eradicate the Dingo from Country, and are inhumane, ineffective, unnecessary, and have devastating consequences.

We do not, and have never, approved the killing of Dingoes. Killing Dingoes is killing family. We demand an immediate stop to this 'management' across Australia. Lethal control should never be an option.

We advocate for a different model: caring for Dingoes on Country. This model sees Dingo recognised in legislation as—a culturally significant and protected native species. This model must use traditional knowledge, and evidence-based practice, focusing on peaceful co-existence between Dingoes and all stakeholders. This brings together cultural and western knowledges.

We demand our rights to have our voice, and capacity to apply culture in all matters relating to the Dingo. We have the right as Traditional Custodians to be directly involved in decision-making in all legislation and management actions that impact Dingoes, across all levels of government.

In 2009, Australia endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but has yet to honour its commitment. In defence of our inherent sovereign rights and the preservation of the Dingo, we the undersigned, invoke UNDRIP articles 25 and 26.

To honour and revitalise our ancient relationships with Dingoes, we, the undersigned, collectively welcome Dingoes back to our care as our Creator Beings, companions, and kin. By doing so, we seek to uphold custodial responsibilities to restore balance across the lands and waters. We exist in a symbiosis. When you remove Dingoes, Country gets sick, we get sick. **A healthy Country is essential for spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing.**

We assert the truth of this statement as the basis to restore our cultural obligations and rights in alignment with our lore/law and custom. These are intrinsically connected to the Dingo as kin.

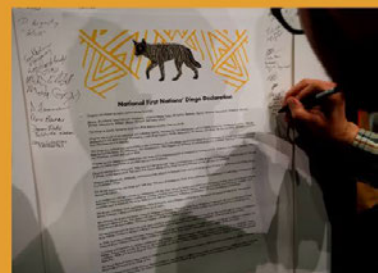
As the undersigned individuals from our respective Nations, together with our allies across society, we are determined in walking together to make real the demands of this Declaration. We commit to empowering people to effectively uphold cultural and environmental obligations, and aspirations, of protecting the Dingo.” (HIS, 2026).



Jirrbal Elder - Lillian Freeman is one of the first to sign the National First Nations Dingo Declaration.



Girringun Aboriginal Corporation staff - Whitney Rassip, Sonya Takau and Chris Muriata stand proudly with the National First Nations Dingo Declaration



Over 20 First Nations Groups from across Australia participated in the creation and signing of the 'National First Nations Dingo Declaration'!

Source: Dingo Culture website, 2023

E. Current government policies and programs in national parks

For thousands of years, First Nations peoples have recognised dingoes as family, cultural kin and the "Boss of Country." The National First Nations Dingo Declaration makes it clear that the continued killing of dingoes is culturally unacceptable. Future dingo management must therefore be co-designed and led by First Nations Custodians, combining Traditional Knowledge with contemporary ecological science.

Despite Australia's small population and its vast land, a 2015 review of extinction rates revealed that since European colonialists and convicts arrival in the past 256 years, 29 of Australia's mammals had become extinct and Australia leads globally for mammal extinctions (The Senior, 2025).

The continued genocide of dingo populations is because of the "sophisticated weaponry" being aimed at Australia's only native wild dog species. Lethal control is causing extinctions of native dingo populations. Lethal control is destabilising stable dingo family groups and pack structures. 1080 poisonings and aerial baiting programs can kill 90.6 per cent of dingoes. A trap can now be placed where a movement-activated camera has recorded a dingo's habits meaning that extinction rates will now rise further in Australia to the loss of between one and two species lost per decade unless government policies and programs focus on protecting Dingos. Removal of dingoes leads to introduced predators having no competition because our native apex predator has been removed. Trapping raises welfare concerns as the native dingo has no access to food or water.

Current NPWS programs are cruel, barbaric and do not reflect ecological science, First Nations perspectives. Current NPWS programs towards Australia's only native canine, is focussed on protecting introduced agricultural animals and is failing woefully with its biodiversity outcomes. It is again abundantly clear, that there is a conflict of interest with NPWS having any role in the management of native dingoes and dingo populations. The NPWS just want to kill, poison, trap, inhumanely treat these native animals because they are lumbered by the term "wild dog" and "pest" instead of recognising the important role of the dingo as Australia's only apex land predator with an important role and more effective way of managing the land safely without use of dangerous poisons and traps. Just as the First Nations peoples have previously said in their declaration, colonisation has caused the genocide of their peoples and their dingoes who are their family. Just as First Nations people suffered genocide so have their dingoes. The Dingo Declaration informs the government what the First Nations peoples require for the dingoes – legislative protection and Boss of Country status for the dingoes. It is time the exclusion of the First Nations peoples of their dingo and dingo populations ends. They must have the exclusive role of steering the management of their native dingos. Currently, no funding is allocated towards researching and developing non-lethal coexistence strategies for agricultural properties neighbouring the national parks and it would be ideal right now to consult with First Nations peoples about this.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources changed the status of the dingoes from low risk, ignoring the threatened category and placing it straight into the vulnerable category (The Senior, 2025) but this needs to be increased further to their threatened status immediately. Dingoes have faced ongoing cultural persecution via bounty hunts, trapping and 1080 baiting ever since European settlers and convicts arrived in Australia. Consequently, they are under severe threat of eradication, particularly along the south-eastern seaboard of Australia, where agricultural and urban developments dominate. Dingoes are currently considered *threatened* by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), but it has

been largely left up to sanctuaries, to fight for the protection and future of the dingo (Dingo Foundation, 2024).

The current government policies and programs in national parks will never provide adequately or fairly for dingoes and dingo populations at any time that the National Parks and Wildlife Service of New South Wales (NPWS) has any role in their management. In fact, it is not reasonable or possible to continue to allow NPWS to have any role in conserving the dingoes in Australia. NPWS will never be able to adequately protect the species of dingoes populations because it continues to be an “active practitioner in advancing the dog pest label” and “wild dog” label on dingoes. Indeed, that same NSW NPWS has indicated it will continue to utilise aerial baiting using both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft within national parks that adjoin agricultural lands to target dingoes / wild dogs.

Clearly, there is an immediate and apparent conflict of interest with NSW NPWS having any role in the management of dingoes and dingo populations. This conflict is apparent because the NPWS “serve the livestock industries under its *Biosecurity Act 2015*” and NPWS does not properly, or adequately address the needs to protect the dingoes from trapping, lethal management it continues to use. NPWS is not capable of meeting the expectations and Dingo Declaration demands of First Nations peoples. Take for example, the NSW NPWS in its 2018 presentation to a 2018 vertebrate pest symposium displayed “a photograph of a staff member setting a dingo trap, deliberately positioned to show the iconic NPWS lyrebird badge on his sleeve,” (The Senior, 2025). NSW’s NPWS stance demonstrates it refuses to adequately and properly protect the dingoes in labelling dingoes “pests” and “wild dogs” - which again is enormously disrespectful to our First Nations peoples’ sacred animal the dingo (Dingo Declaration, 2019). The NPWS is not an independent assessor of science that informs dingo management but an active practitioner in advancing the wild dog pest label (The Senior, 2025). The NPWS cannot claim to be practising nature conservation in Sturt National Park while its own policies and two dingo barrier fences protect kangaroos in the absence of their apex predator. The question many I ask is: Can the NPWS be trusted to meet its responsibilities to manage dingoes when their past actions reveal their aim is to destroy the dingo populations?

The management of dingoes should be returned to First Nations peoples.

It is essential that a conservationist group be established with First Nations peoples at the lead, to ensure the best management of the dingoes and the dingo populations. First Nations people oppose lethal management of dingoes whereas, NPSW has continued to allow aerial assault of 1080 “backed up by extensive ground baiting operations aimed at eradicating dingoes in large swathes of the country to appease agricultural interests” (Cairns, 2024). Furthermore, dingoes face significant trauma, suffering and inhumane treatment as “If caught in barbaric leghold traps, dingoes whimper in terror and pain, and can frantically struggle for 24 hours or more before “wild dog” controllers return to shoot and kill them,” (Cairns, 2024). This is not acceptable and is not appropriate “management” and must cease immediately. This is not how First Nations peoples want their family – their dingoes – to be treated. They demand an end to the suffering and genocide NSW government policies and NPWS management is inflicting on their sacred animal. These measures of trapping and poisoning and shooting native dingoes and treating them as pests must be ended and any person trapping, injuring, maiming, shooting, poisoning or causing any harm to, must be prosecuted and face mandatory jail time.

The first priority of the NSW government needs to be the removal of NPWS and any other party that has a competing interest that impacts its ability to provide protection or care for the dingoes as a protected native species, or any other protected species of animal. A conservationist group led by First Nations peoples must be established. It is essential that government policies recognise the fact habitat loss and fragmentation and lethal control are ongoing threats to dingo populations (Victorian Government, 2024). Genetic decline and climate change are emerging threats. The most terrible threat to dingoes are humans and disrespectful government policies which allow dingoes to be killed as “wild dogs” in order to protect farmland animals despite the clear data showing these slaughtered dogs are in fact **pure dingoes**.

1080, or sodium fluoroacetate, poses a danger to animals and humans. According to the Coalition Against 1080 Poison, 1080 is **banned nearly everywhere else in the world** and yet “Australia remains one of the very few countries where it continues to be deployed at scale — a position that is increasingly difficult to justify in light of the available evidence” (CATP, 2026). 1080 is a torturous, colourless, odourless, tasteless and it is ingested by domestic companion animals and native species and causes a slow and agonising death of up to 48 hours which cannot be halted (PETA, 2026). 1080 is also linked to cancer and animals that have been poisoned by 1080 can spread the poison into water ways and food chains because this deadly poison is highly water soluble. This deadly terrible poison has been banned in most countries including the United States of America because it has caused people to die. Allowing the torture of native animals, domestic animals is not a reasonable solution and it endangers humans and cannot be regarded a reasonable solution to reducing already decimated populations of native dingoes or other animals. Using chemicals to cause animals to die a torturous, slow, agonising death is not acceptable and Australia governments including the New South Wales government needs to practice humane civilised policies such as immunocontraception solutions.

The misconception that 1080 could be used selectively to poison the Canidae family as they were 10 times more susceptible to 1080 to other mammals has led to the decline of many other native species (Parr & Barron, 2021). The welfare of both target and non-target animals must be considered when dropping poisons for ingestion. Clearly, Compound 1080 presents unacceptable risks to the health and safety of non-target species at risk and domestic animals. Toxicology tests are expensive and time consuming, so under-reporting incidents of related dog-deaths is likely (Parr & Barron, 2021). The relatively slow toxic action of Compound 1080 allows poisoned individuals to disperse widely across the landscape, preventing accurate monitoring of primary and secondary poisoning (Parr & Barron, 2021).

1080 poisoning and other lethal control measures are causing dingo populations in Australia to decline and in south-eastern Australia they are becoming locally extinct (Victorian Government, 2024). This is impacting genetic diversity and this will decline further if adequate and appropriate government action is not made to ensure legislation includes dingoes as a protected species and ends lethal measures and bans 1080. Compound 1080 poses a serious threat to native wildlife **including the canis dingo or canis lupus dingo**, domestic pets, and even people. It causes prolonged and extreme suffering and can no longer be accepted as an ethical wildlife management practice. Like strychnine Compound 1080 is unacceptable in light of its inherent inhumaneness and adverse effects on non-target organisms, both wild and domestic (Parr & Barron, 2021).

Victoria's legislation recognises the dingo as *Canis lupus dingo* pursuant to its *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic) and it is also listed as protected under its *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic) and has further been fully proclaimed protected in its national park and in private agricultural lands around both the Big Desert National Park and Wyperfeld National Park. The government provided assistance with exclusion fencing and guardian animals (The Senior, 2025). The dingo protected area encompasses nearly a million hectares of public land and includes national parks, forestry land, agricultural land. The protection in Victoria means these dingoes cannot be baited and the bounty to kill dingoes was terminated in the protected zone (The Senior, 2025). Victorian government has sought the support of Traditional Owners to lead healthy country programs and management of its dingoes and to pursue non-lethal methods of dingo management (The Senior, 2025).

F. Dingo management opportunities for Indigenous leadership to incorporate Indigenous knowledge in dingo conservation in national parks

It is essential that the government establish a First Nations-led dingo conservation framework. As a starting point, after reading the Acknowledgement to Country, the committee must read and reread the First Nations people's Dingo Declaration. This is essential. For upwards of 11,000 years, the First Nations peoples have cared for dingoes and Country harmoniously. They have maintained a deep, harmonious relationship with their dingoes to support healthy landscapes and the biodiversity of their world. First Nations peoples have the knowledge systems and understanding of dingo behaviours, ecology and their importance to the ecosystem. They complement science and ecology but have great knowledge and understanding and will never treat a dingo as a "wild dog" or "pest" as this is deeply disrespectful of their totem dingo. Cultural Custodians have an essential role to play in improving cultural, ecological and conservation outcomes for Australia's only wild canid species, the dingo.

Since colonisation, Australian governments and land managers have trapped, shot, poisoned and excluded dingoes from significant parts of the country and in doing so they have ignored the First Nations Perspectives which seek for the dingo to be returned as the "boss of country," (Ritchie et al, 2023). Too often the First Nations people are ignored in terms of management of their lands and the animals that they have been caretakers of including the wild brumbies. Dingo management inclusion opportunities must incorporate our Indigenous peoples.



An 1843 sketch by Henry Godfrey showing First Nations women in Victoria gathering yam daisy with dingoes. Picture supplied by Allen & Unwin

Source: The Senior, 2025.

The leadership of First Nations people is essential. Indigenous ranger groups have an important role in ensuring there is no longer any poisoning, trapping, baiting or lethal measures used by NPWS towards dingoes or dingo populations. It is time First Nations people led the way to ensure the dangerous poisoning and harm caused on 1080 and other trapping events ends so the dingoes can restore the lands to health by eradicating and controlling the pigs, goats, deer, foxes that are placing pressure on the landscape.

The 2023 National First Nations Dingo Declaration is very clear and must inform future policies and ensure the First Nations people are custodians of their dingoes, their totem, their family.

G. Other related matters

The Committee should recommend that New South Wales:

- recognise dingoes as a protected native species under relevant legislation;
- remove the misleading "wild dog" classification when applied to dingoes;
- prohibit routine lethal control of dingoes in national parks;
- prohibit the use of 1080 poison, aerial baiting and other inhumane control methods against dingoes;
- establish a First Nations-led dingo conservation framework; and
- invest in proven non-lethal coexistence measures including guardian animals, exclusion fencing, education and ongoing scientific monitoring.

The government needs to play a role in ensuring guardian dogs, compensation and fencing support are provided to neighbouring landowners. Dingoes reduce macropod populations on grazier lands and protect their livestock from foxes and birds of prey. Given that donkeys are also useful to guard livestock from dingoes, perhaps livestock guardian dogs and donkeys could be offered to neighbouring farms.

An education program that instantly removes the use of the term "wild dog" and lets people know the purity of the dingoes in the park and that they are a native **protected species** that belongs in Australia to return the country to healthy is necessary.

Communicate the role of the dingo in killing wild pigs, foxes, deer instead of the use of deadly, dangerous poisons and traps is important. People need to know that their waterways, children and domestic animals will no longer be exposed to the deadly poisons NPWS has historically dropped.

The government must review its existing staffing in NPSW as a commitment to the National Dingo Declaration will require the protection of Australia's native dingo and a cultural change of dingo from being labelled "wild dog" and "pest" which some persons may be unwilling or incapable of committing to. There is a clear conflict of interest in the present management of NPWS with the role of agriculture competing directly with the need to conserve and protect Australia's only native canid species.

It is strongly recommended that a separate government body be involved, led by First Nations Custodians to protect, conserve and end the lethal measures and programs targeting dingoes and dingo populations. It is time to return the Dingo to "Boss of Country" to return native lands and national parks and country to a poison free, healthy landscape. I ask you place high

importance to the dingo, the Dingo Declaration, the role of First Nations peoples and ensure legislative protection of the Dingoes.

This inquiry presents New South Wales with an important opportunity to correct a longstanding injustice. The scientific evidence confirms what First Nations people have long known, that dingoes are a distinct native Australian lineage deserving of protection. Their ecological importance is well established. Their cultural significance to First Nations peoples is profound. Their continued treatment as "wild dogs" has enabled the destruction of one of Australia's most important native species.

History will judge how we respond to this knowledge.

It is essential that any legislation that requires the NPWS care for agriculture and the conservation of native animals be reviewed immediately. The NPWS responsibilities and roles for agriculture and/or native animals must be suspended until such time as there is a legislative termination, separation or divorce of NPSW management of native animals if there is a competing claim or responsibility towards introduced farm agriculture animals. This is a clear and direct conflict preventing the ability to properly conserve native species and native populations including protecting and conserving dingo populations. There may be a cultural shock for some or more of the NPSW personnel to be required to no longer regard dingoes as "wild dogs" or "hybrid species" as has been the long term view held by this department, and this will require the gentle steering of First Nations rangers, ecologists and conservational managers to bring about cultural and system changes required to ensure the preservation of stable dingo populations in national parks and elsewhere. I would suggest a caretaker foundation be established to ensure the safeguarding of dingoes in national parks in the interim until such times as cultural and system change in NPWS has been implemented and guaranteed. The Committee must use the opportunity to ensure legislation is enacted that ends unnecessary cruel treatment and mismanagement of dingoes and that a framework is established that respects First Nations leadership, and which aligns policy with contemporary science, and secures the future of Australia's iconic dingo for generations to come

Many thanks,

Wanda Gordon

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