

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: MINYUMAI LAND HOLDING ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION

Date Received: 13 July 2026



Minyumai Land Holding
Aboriginal Corporation

DATE: 13/07/2026

NSW Legislative Council
Animal Welfare Committee

E: animal.welfare@parliament.nsw.gov.au
P: (02) 9230 2262
W: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear NSW Legislative Council Animal Welfare Committee,

Parliament Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales.

Minyumai Land Holding Aboriginal Corporation (MLHAC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into Dingoes in national parks in New South Wales.

MLHAC is an Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations registered corporation governed by Bandjalang Cultural Custodians, whose Native Title recognised lands extend from Evans Head inland to Coraki and surrounds. MLHAC owns and manages the Minyumai Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) on behalf of Bandjalang custodians. The property was handed back to the Bandjalang clan by the Indigenous Land Corporation in 1999 and declared an IPA in 2011.

The IPA is a 2,000-hectare cultural and conservation reserve, which borders the Bundjalung National Park and Tabbimoble Swamp Nature Reserve, located south of Evans Head on the NSW North Coast. It is home to 28 threatened species. It employs a team of fifteen rangers who lead critical conservation projects across the region. This includes working collaboratively with NPWS in Bandjalang NP and other neighbours. We have established a strong reputation over the years with ongoing partnerships with many organisations, including WWF, NSW LLS, the NSW Government's Saving our Species Program, NSW NPWS, NSW Environment Trust, Jagun Alliance, University NSW, Macquarie University, Southern Cross University, Biodiversity Australia, Tamarind Ecological Services, Nature Glenelg Trust, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Rous Water, Firesticks, Coffs Harbour LALC, Ngunya Jargoon IPA, Envite Environment, Bangalow Koalas, East Coast Bush Regeneration, Country Needs People, NSW Aboriginal Language Trust, Evans Head School and pre-school.

A core part of our work includes research on the population dynamics of Dingoes (Ngugum) within the IPA. This work is especially important given the cultural significance of Ngugum to our people and the current lack of understanding of the positive role they play in the landscape.



In 2024, the Minyumai Indigenous Rangers initiated calls for this inquiry with a visit to the NSW Parliament speaking directly with MPs. The Corporation is thrilled those calls have been answered.

Our submission addresses;

(a) the cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities

In 2023, the Minyumai Indigenous Rangers attended the National Inaugural First Nations Dingo Forum, which brought together more than 100 Traditional Owners from over 20 Nations to discuss the future of dingo management across Australia. During the forum, the Rangers contributed to the development of the [National First Nations Dingo Declaration](#), which articulates a united First Nations vision for the recognition, protection, and management of dingoes across the continent. The Minyumai Indigenous Rangers proudly endorse the National First Nations Dingo Declaration and its guiding principles.

Bandjalang Country forms part of the broader Bundjalung Nation, where Ngugum (dingoes) are deeply woven into our cultural landscape through songlines, stories, and our ongoing responsibilities to care for Country.

Our identity as Aboriginal people is inseparable from our Country. For countless generations, our ancestors walked alongside Ngugum, caring for Country together and maintaining the balance of these landscapes. Their continued presence is not only vital for healthy ecosystems, but also for maintaining our cultural connections, knowledge systems, and responsibilities to Country.

Our rangers work to monitor and care for Ngugum on Country is representative of our living culture, the work our rangers are doing today will pave the way for future generations to continue caring for Ngugum and our Country at large. As Aboriginal people we understand that if we look after Country, Country will take care of us and Ngugum are a vital part of this. Our rangers are creating new dingo Songlines, paving the way for our Countrymen to be protected and reinstated as Boss of Country.

Since the Cairns forum, Minyumai has been engaging with other ranger groups and IPA's across Bundjalung Nation (Grafton to Tweed Heads and inland to Kyogle) who share the same cultural values and relationship with Ngugum and are working together to learn more about our Ngugum populations and how to protect them.

(b) dingo management including opportunities for incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and leadership in dingo conservation in national parks

The Minyumai IPA is managed solely by the Bandjalang people. We hold an intimate knowledge of our Country, supported by thousands of years of knowledge passed down from our Old People on caring for Country. In addition, we partner with various government and non-government organisations as described above, to combine Indigenous knowledge with contemporary science, improving conservation outcomes across the IPA.



Our Corporation has formed a strong partnership with the adjoining Bundjalung National Park, expanding our dingo monitoring project into the park. This collaborative approach allows us, as cultural custodians, greater access to Country to undertake vital conservation work, while also ensuring additional on-ground presence to support park management and monitoring.

Bundjalung National Park continues to use 1080 baiting to target foxes. This causes us great distress for the risk it poses to Ngugum. We have asked that NPWS cease 1080 baiting as there is no evidence foxes or dingoes are predating on threatened species in the park, and that where intact dingo packs are present, they have a greater impact on suppressing fox and cat populations than baiting does.

First Nations peoples have cared for dingoes and Country for thousands of years, maintaining deep, ongoing relationships that continue to support healthy landscapes and biodiversity outcomes that benefit all Australians. On Bundjalung Country, this responsibility is lived every day through on-ground management, monitoring, and cultural practice. This knowledge complements and strengthens western scientific approaches, particularly when applied through long-term, continuous presence on Country.

Across New South Wales, Indigenous ranger groups are increasingly leading dingo monitoring and management programs, providing critical on-ground insights into population dynamics, behaviour, and ecological interactions that are often missed in short-term scientific surveys.

This leadership is particularly significant given ongoing gaps in comprehensive, statewide data on wild dingo populations and their ecological role within different landscapes. We are continuing to monitor our population and dietary trends across Minyurnai IPA and the National Park to, but, require further support and resources to continue this significant work.

Importantly, this work also represents a form of restorative justice. It reflects the return of responsibility, authority, and care for Country back into the hands of First Nations peoples, after generations in which management of these landscapes was removed from us. Being present on Country in this way is not only about conservation outcomes, but about restoring cultural practice, knowledge systems, and the ability of Traditional Owners to fulfil their obligations to care for Country.

Strengthening the role of Cultural Custodians in decision-making processes would improve cultural, ecological, and conservation outcomes, with clear benefits for ecosystem health and biodiversity across NSW National Parks.

Co-management approaches provide a practical framework for integrating Indigenous knowledge systems with western science in National Parks management, improving both governance and on-ground effectiveness. If co-management in National Parks were truly realised, it would obviously need to include the non-lethal management of dingoes in National Parks.

The principles outlined in the National First Nations Dingo Declaration provide an important foundation for future policy development and support more inclusive, evidence-based, and culturally grounded approaches to dingo management in New South Wales.



The principles outlined in the Declaration provide an important foundation for future policy development and support more inclusive, evidence-based, and culturally grounded approaches to dingo management in New South Wales.

Include examples of the cultural importance and difference to the land when dingoes left alone. This is beautifully captured in the documentary “[Moort: Calling Dingo Back to Country](#)” which we urge you to watch.

(c) the genetic status of dingoes, the distinction between dingoes and dogs and recent research into the genetic profile of NSW dingoes

We have always known that so called ‘wild dogs’ are in fact dingoes and are pleased to see this is being confirmed scientifically through recent DNA research. We draw your attention to this research, particularly the work of [Dr Kylie Cairns](#).

There is a deeper problem with this genetic purity politics in conservation: it reduces a complex, living relationship between species, landscape, and culture into a simplistic categorisation exercise. Indigenous knowledge systems have long understood dingoes as part of a complex, interconnected landscape rather than a problem to be purified out of existence. These animals continue to function as dingoes in the landscape. They occupy the same ecological niche, regulate prey populations, and maintain ecosystem balance.

As stated in the First Nations’ Dingo Declaration, “if it looks and behaves like a Dingo, it is Australia’s Dingo”.

Such framing risks repeating a familiar colonial pattern - one that privileges narrow scientific categorisation over lived ecological relationships and longstanding cultural knowledge. In doing so, it can obscure the real ecological contributions dingoes make and weaken efforts toward more effective, culturally informed conservation.

(d) the ecological role of dingoes in National Parks

The Minyumai Indigenous Rangers have been monitoring Ngugum (dingoes) across the Minyumai Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) for three years. This monitoring program includes camera trapping using scent lures, systematic scat collection and analysis, and daily on-Country observations by Rangers. Throughout this period, the Rangers have deployed camera traps across the IPA and collected over two hundred dingo scats for analysis.

The success of this monitoring program has led to its expansion into the neighbouring Bundjalung National Park, where the Minyumai Rangers have established a strong collaborative relationship with the local Parks rangers. This partnership demonstrates the vital role Indigenous Rangers can play in monitoring, understanding, and managing dingoes across protected areas and the willingness of parks staff on the ground to support this work.

Our monitoring has reinforced the critical role that dingoes play on Bundjalung Country. Scat analysis shows that swamp wallabies make up the primary component of the dingo diet, indicating that dingoes help regulate macropod populations and prevent overgrazing. The analysis has also confirmed that dingoes prey on introduced pest species, including feral pigs, highlighting their function as a



natural form of biological control. As a result, dingoes are recognised within the Minyumai IPA's feral animal management approach as an integral component of healthy ecosystem function.

Most significantly, despite the Minyumai IPA supporting 28 threatened species—including koalas, greater gliders, and other species of conservation concern—we have never detected threatened native species in any of the dingo scats collected during our monitoring. This finding is particularly important because lethal dingo control is frequently justified as a measure to protect threatened wildlife. Our observations instead indicate the opposite: that healthy dingo populations contribute to the protection of threatened species by maintaining ecological balance and suppressing invasive species that pose far greater risks to native biodiversity.

Ngugum (Dingoes) are central in addressing the essential need for maintaining a healthy ecologically biodiverse environment, by helping regulate the herbivore population and prey on feral and pest animals contributing to natural pest control. These findings challenge the justification for lethal Dingo control.

If you have any questions regarding our submission, please contact our project manager, Russell Irving, on or

Kind Regards,

Kesha Wilson
Chairperson
MLHAC

W:

E:

Website: www.minyumai.org.au