

**Submission
No 175**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission to the NSW Parliament Animal Welfare Committee

Inquiry into the Treatment and Cultural and Ecological Significance of Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

Submitted by: Jamie Date: 13 July 2026

Introduction

I am making this submission as a private citizen, a licensed hunter, and someone who spends a great deal of time in New South Wales' national parks. I am not a scientist or an advocate by trade. I am writing because I have seen this issue from both sides of the fence — as someone who hunts feral animals, and as someone who has had the rare privilege of encountering dingoes in the wild — and what I have observed does not square with how this state currently manages them.

I support an end to dingo baiting and culling in NSW national parks, and I ask the Committee to recommend it. My reasoning is set out below.

My experience of dingoes in the wild

Some years ago, walking through Myall Lakes National Park, I watched a dingo move through the coastal scrub at a distance — alert, unhurried, entirely at home. It is one of the most memorable wildlife encounters I have had in this state. There is something unmistakably right about seeing an apex predator doing exactly what it evolved to do, in a landscape that still has room for it. That sighting has stayed with me. It is the kind of experience national parks exist to protect.

I have had similar sightings, less frequent but no less valued, in the Blue Mountains National Park, along the Wollondilly River — one of the river systems that feeds Lake Burragorang and, through it, Warragamba Dam, the reservoir that supplies roughly 80 per cent of Sydney's drinking water. Seeing a dingo in that country is a genuine privilege. It is also, I would argue, a sign of a functioning ecosystem — dingoes do not persist in degraded country.

What I witnessed in the Blue Mountains

On a more recent trip to that same stretch of the Wollondilly, I came across active dingo baiting. I will be direct about my reaction: I was horrified. Not only because I have valued the dingoes I have seen in that exact location, but because of where the baiting was taking place. This is not a remote inland paddock. This is a waterway that drains directly into the primary water catchment for Australia's largest city.

I am not a toxicologist, and I am not asserting that 1080 poses a proven contamination risk to Sydney's drinking water — I understand there are regulatory setback distances from waterways that are supposed to apply. But that is precisely the point I want to put to the Committee: why is a lethal control programme, with known welfare and ecological costs, being run at all in a landscape this sensitive, when the animal being targeted is not only native but ecologically beneficial? The risk-versus-benefit case does not hold up. There is no upside here that justifies even a marginal, unmonitored risk to a catchment that millions of people rely on. I would ask the Committee to seek clarity from NPWS on what compliance monitoring exists for baiting setbacks within the Warragamba catchment specifically, and whether any independent water-quality testing has ever been conducted in areas subject to aerial or ground baiting.

The hunter's perspective: where is the money actually going?

I hunt. I spend my own time and money reducing feral animal numbers on the ground — pigs, foxes, goats, deer. I have no ideological attachment to predators; my interest is a healthy, functioning bush. That is exactly why the current dingo policy does not make sense to me.

New South Wales is pouring serious money into killing a native apex predator, while the actual feral animal problem — pigs tearing up creek lines, goats stripping vegetation, foxes and cats hammering small native mammals and birds — remains comparatively under-resourced. Information obtained under the Government Information (Public Access) Act shows more than 1.5 million 1080 baits were deployed against dingoes by NPWS between 2020 and 2025. That is an enormous and sustained investment directed at the one predator in the system that is native, and which the evidence increasingly shows is doing some of this control work for free.

This is the part that I think deserves the Committee's closest attention: research shows that where dingo populations are left intact and socially stable, dingoes suppress and in some cases locally eradicate foxes through territorial competition and direct predation, and comparative studies suggest that a stable dingo population can suppress fox numbers more effectively than baiting programmes alone (*Nature Communications*, 2017, <https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms15469>; *Australian Mammalogy*, <https://connectsci.au/am/article-abstract/44/3/387/36194>). Dingoes have also been shown to suppress feral cat activity through the same mechanism of competitive exclusion (published in *Ecosystems*, 2019, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10021-019-00360-2>), and to help control feral pigs and goats, easing browsing and rooting pressure on vegetation (*The Rangeland Journal*, <https://connectsci.au/rj/article/44/3/129/73350>).

Put simply: the state is spending heavily to remove an animal that, left alone, reduces the burden of the ferals we actually need to be spending on. That is not sound biosecurity policy. It is not sound fiscal policy either. Every dollar spent baiting dingoes in a national park is a dollar not spent on fox and cat control, on feral pig trapping, or on the guardian-animal and non-lethal coexistence programmes that could resolve genuine stock-protection concerns on park boundaries without removing a keystone species from the ecosystem altogether.

Why "wild dog" control is the wrong framework

Under current NSW policy, dingoes are managed under the umbrella term "wild dog," lumped together with feral domestic dogs and hybrids, and they remain the only native mammal specifically excluded from protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. This framing is out of step with the genetic evidence. Contemporary research using up to 195,000 genetic markers — a vast improvement on the 23-marker studies that originally underpinned "wild dog" policy — shows that the overwhelming majority of wild canids in this state are dingoes. In the most recent NSW sampling, more than three-quarters of wild canids tested showed over 93 per cent contemporary dingo ancestry, with no evidence of an established, free-living feral domestic dog population.

(*Molecular Ecology*, 2023, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mec.16998>)

Continuing to manage a genetically distinct, ecologically important native predator as an undifferentiated pest, inside land specifically set aside for conservation, is a policy built on outdated science. It should not survive contact with the evidence this Committee is now considering.

What I am asking the Committee to recommend

1. **End dingo baiting, trapping and shooting in NSW national parks immediately.** Lethal control inside conservation land cannot be justified against a native, ecologically beneficial species, particularly where — as on the Wollondilly — it is being conducted in or near a critical drinking water catchment.
2. **Redirect the funding currently spent on dingo baiting toward genuine feral animal control** — foxes, cats, pigs, goats and deer — where the ecological and agricultural case for lethal control is actually made out, and where dingoes are not already doing part of that work for free.
3. **Require independent compliance monitoring of any baiting setback rules within the Warragamba (Greater Sydney) catchment,** and publish the results, given the scale of the population relying on that water source.
4. **Fund non-lethal coexistence measures — livestock guardian dogs, donkeys, and exclusion fencing — for landholders bordering national parks,** so that legitimate stock-protection concerns are addressed without defaulting to the removal of a keystone species from public conservation land.

Closing

I do not say any of this lightly, and I do not say it as someone opposed to lethal control in principle — I practise it myself, against genuinely feral species. But dingoes are not that. They are a native apex predator doing a job the rest of our feral animal management is struggling to do, in landscapes that are better, richer and more alive for their presence. I have seen that with my own eyes at Myall Lakes and on the Wollondilly. I have also seen, first-hand, what the current policy looks like on the ground — and it is hard to reconcile with either the science or common sense.

I urge the Committee to recommend an immediate end to dingo culling and baiting in NSW national parks.

Jamie

13 July 2026