

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Date Received: 13 July 2026

Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Animal Welfare Committee

Inquiry into the Treatment of Dingoes in New South Wales National Parks

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important inquiry. I write as a resident of the Bellingen Shire on Gumbaynggirr Country, with a strong interest in biodiversity conservation and evidence-based environmental policy. I urge the Committee to recommend genuine and lasting protection for dingoes in New South Wales National Parks, and I support the following recommendations for inclusion in the final report.

1. An end to dingo killing within NSW National Parks

Dingoes are Australia's apex land predator and play an essential ecological role in regulating ecosystems. By suppressing introduced mesopredators such as foxes and feral cats, dingoes indirectly protect smaller native mammals, birds, and reptiles that would otherwise face intense predation pressure. Removing dingoes from a landscape does not simply remove one species, it destabilises the entire food web beneath it, often leading to a documented increase in fox and cat numbers and, in turn, greater harm to the very biodiversity National Parks exist to protect.

National Parks are meant to be sanctuaries where natural ecological processes can function with minimal human interference. Continuing to trap, poison, and shoot dingoes within these protected areas, often under a "wild dog" classification that fails to distinguish dingoes from feral dog hybrids, undermines the conservation purpose of the parks themselves. I ask the Committee to recommend an end to lethal dingo control within National Park boundaries, allowing this keystone species to fulfil its ecological function.

2. Greater involvement of Cultural Custodians in decision-making

Dingoes hold deep cultural significance for Aboriginal peoples across New South Wales, including as kin, as spiritual figures, and as a species intertwined with Country and Lore for

tens of thousands of years. Current dingo management frameworks were built without meaningful Aboriginal leadership, and this has come at a cost, both to cultural wellbeing and to the quality of the management decisions made.

I support recommendations for legislated, place-based involvement of Cultural Custodians in decisions affecting dingoes in National Parks. This should go beyond token consultation and instead ensure Traditional Owners have real authority in shaping how dingoes are managed on their Country, consistent with the growing recognition across Australia that Indigenous knowledge systems produce better environmental and welfare outcomes than management approaches that exclude them.

3. Financial support for landholders to implement non-lethal coexistence strategies

I recognise that landholders neighbouring National Parks have genuine and legitimate concerns about livestock protection, and any recommendation to end lethal dingo control must be paired with real, practical support for coexistence. Evidence-based non-lethal alternatives, including livestock guardian animals, exclusion fencing, and improved husbandry practices, have been shown to protect livestock more effectively and sustainably than lethal control, which is frequently indiscriminate and only temporarily effective as dingo populations recover.

I encourage the Committee to recommend dedicated funding and extension services to help landholders adopt these approaches. This would ensure the interests of neighbouring landholders are genuinely protected, while allowing dingo populations to persist and fulfil their ecological role within National Parks. Supporting this transition is not just good animal welfare policy, it is good agricultural and conservation policy that serves everyone's long-term interests.

Conclusion

This inquiry represents a genuine opportunity for New South Wales to modernise its approach to dingo management, replacing outdated and often ineffective lethal control with a framework grounded in ecological science, cultural knowledge, and practical coexistence support. I urge the Committee to adopt the recommendations above in its final report.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely, Dr Troy Coyle