

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
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Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into the Treatment and Cultural and Ecological Significance of Dingoes in National Parks

Sheep and cattle producer

Executive Summary: Key Points

- Strategic wild dog management is essential to protect livestock welfare, farm businesses and the economic sustainability of regional communities adjoining National Parks.
- Coordinated programs involving National Parks, Local Land Services and neighbouring landholders have significantly reduced livestock losses and improved animal welfare outcomes.
- Recommendations that limit public land managers' capacity to undertake strategic wild dog management risk reversing decades of successful collaboration and increasing impacts on livestock producers.
- Contemporary genetic research confirms that wild-living dogs in NSW exist along a continuum of dingo and domestic dog ancestry, particularly in eastern Australia. Current management programs have not been shown to increase hybridisation or compromise the long-term genetic integrity of dingo populations.
- Recent scientific reviews find no consistent evidence that reducing wild dog control will automatically improve biodiversity, or that current management programs are causing widespread ecological harm.
- Recent scientific reviews also conclude that there is no experimental evidence demonstrating that dingoes can control feral cat and fox populations.
- The current legislative framework appropriately manages dingoes through biosecurity and pest management legislation, recognising both their ecological role and the ongoing need to manage impacts on agriculture and biodiversity.
- Independent reviews by the NSW Natural Resources Commission have consistently found that the priority should be stronger coordination and more effective pest animal management, not reduced management effort.
- First Nations people hold diverse views about the cultural significance of dingoes and other native species within NSW National Parks. These views should be considered at the local level, rather than assuming a single Indigenous perspective.
- The Inquiry should ensure that any recommendations preserve coordinated, landscape-scale wild dog management and do not shift the costs of dingo conservation onto livestock producers, farming families and regional communities.

Recommendations to the Inquiry Committee

1. Retain the capacity of National Parks and other public land managers to undertake strategic wild dog and dingo management.

2. Maintain the nil-tenure approach to coordinated, landscape-scale wild dog management.
3. Ensure management decisions remain grounded in contemporary scientific evidence and local impacts.
4. Strengthen coordination, resourcing and investment in coordinated wild dog management programs, consistent with the findings of the NSW Natural Resources Commission.
5. Avoid recommendations that increase livestock losses, compromise animal welfare or transfer the costs of dingo conservation onto regional landholders.

Introduction

I appreciate the opportunity to provide a submission to this Inquiry. My family has operated in this district for approximately 100 years, and our property is located near public land, including National Parks and State Forest.

For many years, coordinated wild dog management by National Parks, Local Land Services and neighbouring landholders has helped reduce livestock losses, improve animal welfare and support the viability of farming businesses across New South Wales. I am concerned that recommendations arising from this Inquiry could unintentionally weaken these successful arrangements.

For people living and working in regional communities, this is not simply a discussion about wildlife conservation. It is a matter of livestock welfare, farm business viability, community wellbeing and the future sustainability of agricultural enterprises operating alongside public lands.

Over many years, governments, National Parks, Local Land Services, producer organisations and landholders have invested significant time and resources in coordinated wild dog management programs. These programs have reduced livestock losses, improved animal welfare outcomes and supported farming businesses across many parts of New South Wales.

Producers are concerned that this Inquiry may lead to recommendations that weaken the coordinated management arrangements developed over decades. The Inquiry should carefully consider the practical consequences of any recommendation that reduces the capacity of public land managers and neighbouring landholders to manage ongoing wild dog impacts on livestock and biodiversity.

Basis of this submission

This submission is informed by personal experience, the National Wild Dog Action Plan, the NSW Wild Dog Strategy, independent reviews conducted by the NSW Natural Resources Commission, and contemporary scientific research into dingo ecology, genetics and management.

Dingo ancestry and practical management

Research demonstrates that dingo ancestry exists along a continuum, rather than as a simple distinction between “pure dingoes” and “domestic dogs”. Most wild-living dogs retain substantial dingo ancestry, even where varying levels of domestic dog ancestry are present.

From a livestock producer’s perspective, the key issue is not whether a wild-living dog is classified as a dingo, hybrid or wild dog. The key issue is whether it is causing impacts on livestock, wildlife or neighbouring properties.

Legislative and policy framework

The current legislative and policy framework reflects decades of practical experience managing wild dog impacts across Australia.

The NSW Biosecurity Act 2015, NSW Wild Dog Strategy and National Wild Dog Action Plan all recognise a practical reality: wild dogs do not recognise property boundaries.

These frameworks were not developed in response to theoretical concerns. They were developed because governments, producers and land managers have experienced the consequences of ineffective or uncoordinated management.

A key principle underpinning these frameworks is the nil-tenure approach, which recognises that all land managers share responsibility for managing impacts, regardless of whether land is publicly or privately owned.

For many producers, this principle has been fundamental to the success of coordinated management programs.

Risks of weakening coordinated management

My greatest concern is that recommendations arising from this Inquiry could weaken the ability of National Parks and other public land managers to undertake effective wild dog management.

That outcome would place livestock enterprises, animal welfare and regional communities at considerable risk.

The National Wild Dog Action Plan was developed collaboratively by governments, conservation agencies, scientists and livestock industries. It demonstrates that effective wild dog management and conservation are not mutually exclusive objectives.

The findings of the NSW Natural Resources Commission reviews reinforce this principle. Those reviews have repeatedly highlighted the need for stronger coordination and more effective management, rather than reduced management effort.

Many local wild dog management groups have spent decades building partnerships between National Parks, Local Land Services and private landholders. These partnerships have delivered significant reductions in livestock losses and improved outcomes across large landscapes.

Weakening these arrangements risks undoing decades of progress.

Impacts on livestock producers

For many sheep and goat enterprises operating adjacent to National Parks, effective wild dog management is not simply desirable; it is essential for ongoing viability.

Without effective management:

- livestock losses increase;
- animal welfare impacts increase;
- management costs increase;
- productivity declines;
- confidence to invest declines; and
- some enterprises may become economically unviable.

The Inquiry should ensure that its recommendations do not unintentionally transfer the costs of dingo conservation onto livestock producers, farming families and regional communities.

Conclusion

As a livestock producer and member of a regional community that lives with wild dog impacts every day, I am concerned that this Inquiry may lead to recommendations that weaken existing wild dog management arrangements on public lands.

The available scientific evidence does not demonstrate that current management programs are threatening the long-term persistence of dingoes in New South Wales, increasing hybridisation or causing population collapse.

In contrast, substantial evidence demonstrates that wild dogs continue to impose significant economic, social and animal welfare impacts on livestock enterprises.

Independent reviews conducted by the NSW Natural Resources Commission have repeatedly identified the need for stronger coordination and more effective pest animal management across land tenures.

I therefore urge the Committee to exercise caution before recommending any changes that may reduce the capacity of National Parks and other land managers to undertake strategic wild dog management.

For many producers, this is not an abstract policy issue. It concerns whether farming businesses can continue to operate successfully alongside public lands into the future.

The challenge before the Committee is not whether dingoes should be conserved, but how conservation can be balanced with the practical responsibility to protect livestock, regional livelihoods and animal welfare. The current coordinated management framework provides that balance and should be strengthened, not weakened.