

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

I am writing to express my concern about the welfare of dingoes and the complete lack of legal protection they receive under New South Wales law. Dingoes are the only native mammals specifically exempt from protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Act, allowing them to be trapped, poisoned and shot across New South Wales National Parks.

Dingoes are an important part of Australia's ecosystems. Removing them can de-stabilise those ecosystems, contribute to vegetation decline, habitat loss and increased pressure on threatened species. As native apex predators, they can help regulate other animal populations, which supports biodiversity. However, instead of allowing them to be a natural part of that ecosystem, we try and justify the current cruel management practices by re-labelling them as 'wild dogs'. This allows them to be classified as pest animals, despite contemporary genetic research recognising them as an ecologically important native species. A change of classification seems very convenient to then justify widespread lethal control without adequate welfare consideration. Methods such as trapping, shooting and baiting with 1080 poison can cause agonising, prolonged suffering and disrupting dingo packs may have unintended ecological consequences. There is a reason that 1080 is banned in most other countries in the world and has no place in humane population control. These lethal practices need to be replaced with humane, non-lethal alternatives.

Dingoes also hold cultural significance for many Aboriginal peoples, so management should involve meaningful consultation with traditional owners. We should be collaborating with them and learning from their knowledge, which will have flow-on benefits for ecosystem health and biodiversity. Integrating aboriginal knowledge with western science in National Parks management can only improve on-ground effectiveness.

I encourage the New South Wales Government to review the legal status of dingoes, strengthen protection as a native species and reduce reliance on lethal control methods. Support ongoing scientific research and work closely with Aboriginal communities to ensure conservation reflects indigenous cultural knowledge. Protecting dingoes is important for both animal welfare and ecosystem health.

We seem to be a nation that prefers culling our native animals of all species, conveniently classifying them as pests, rather than being guided by the scientific evidence that lethal controls often fail in the long term. There are humane options available, but sadly no-one in government is listening and relying on the opinions and actions of particular groups with their own agenda. I am hoping this inquiry will bring about change and fix this.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this very important issue.

Kind Regards,
Kimberley Constantine