

**Submission
No 196**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Opposing the Lethal Control of Dingoes on Gundungurra Country

1. Introduction

I write to oppose the lethal control of dingoes on Gundungurra Country. For Gundungurra people, dingoes—often known as Mirrigan—are not pests but cultural beings woven into story, kinship, and the responsibilities of caring for Country. Any policy that permits their killing disregards Gundungurra cultural law, undermines ecological balance, and continues the pattern of excluding First Nations authority from land management decisions.

2. Ecological Importance of Dingoes on Gundungurra Country

The southern highlands and Blue Mountains ecosystems depend on apex predators to maintain balance.

- Regulation of herbivores — Dingoes suppress kangaroo and wallaby overgrazing, protecting fragile upland vegetation and preventing erosion in steep valleys and gullies.
- Control of invasive predators — Dingoes reduce fox and feral cat numbers, supporting the survival of small mammals and ground-nesting birds native to Gundungurra Country.
- Landscape health — Where dingoes are removed, Country becomes stressed: vegetation thins, soil becomes exposed, and biodiversity declines.

Non-lethal coexistence strategies—guardian animals, improved fencing, and husbandry changes—are effective and far less damaging to the landscape.

3. Gundungurra Cultural Beliefs, Law, and Responsibilities

Gundungurra people hold deep cultural relationships with Mirrigan. These relationships are not symbolic—they are obligations.

- Mirrigan in story and lore — Dingoes appear in Gundungurra Dreaming narratives, teaching lessons about survival, loyalty, and the rhythms of Country.
- Kinship and identity — For many Gundungurra families, dingoes are kin. They are recognised as beings with spirit, agency, and place within the cultural landscape.
- Totemic responsibilities — Some Gundungurra people carry responsibilities to protect Mirrigan as part of their totemic identity. Lethal control directly violates these cultural duties.
- Caring for Country — Gundungurra cultural law emphasises balance. Dingoes are part of that balance. Removing them disrupts the relationships between people, animals, and Country.

Policies that ignore these relationships continue the colonial pattern of erasing First Nations authority. Embedding Gundungurra leadership in dingo management is not optional—it is necessary.

4. Ethical and Social Considerations

- Animal welfare — Poisoning (including 1080), trapping, and shooting cause prolonged suffering and kill non-target species, including domestic dogs and native carnivores.
- Community expectations — Dingoes are iconic Australian animals. Many residents and visitors to the Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands expect humane, culturally respectful wildlife management.
- Cultural tourism and identity — Gundungurra Country is known for its cultural heritage and natural beauty. Protecting dingoes enhances cultural tourism and strengthens community connection to Country.

5. Policy Recommendations

I urge the Inquiry to adopt the following:

- End lethal control of dingoes on Gundungurra Country and across NSW.
- Legally recognise dingoes as native wildlife, not “wild dogs”, in all policy and communication.
- Embed Gundungurra leadership in all dingo management decisions, ensuring cultural law and knowledge guide policy.
- Invest in coexistence strategies, including guardian animals, fencing upgrades, and community education.
- Fund ecological monitoring to track the positive impacts of dingoes on biodiversity and landscape health.

Conclusion

On Gundungurra Country, dingoes are cultural beings, ecological stabilisers, and part of the living identity of the land. Lethal control is scientifically unsound, culturally harmful, and ethically indefensible. Protecting Mirrigan is part of protecting Country itself.

I urge the NSW Parliament to adopt a modern, humane, and culturally grounded approach that respects Gundungurra law, supports ecological health, and ensures dingoes continue to live and thrive on Country for generations to come.

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