

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 16 July 2026

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Animal Welfare Committee Inquiry into the Treatment of Dingoes in NSW National Parks

Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this important inquiry.

I support the protection and conservation of dingoes in New South Wales National Parks based on current ecological science, genetic research and recognition of their profound cultural significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Dingoes are Australia's apex terrestrial predator

The dingo (*Canis dingo*) is Australia's largest terrestrial predator and occupies a unique ecological niche. Healthy dingo populations help maintain ecosystem balance through top-down regulation of prey species and introduced predators.

Research has demonstrated that dingoes can suppress populations of invasive predators such as foxes and feral cats. By limiting these predators, dingoes indirectly benefit many native mammals, reptiles and ground-nesting birds that are otherwise vulnerable to predation.

The removal of apex predators has repeatedly been shown worldwide to cause ecological imbalance, known as trophic cascades. Australia is no exception. Conserving dingoes is therefore not simply about protecting one species—it is about maintaining the health and resilience of entire ecosystems.

Stable family groups are essential

Dingoes are highly social animals that live in stable family groups with complex social hierarchies.

Typically, only the dominant breeding pair reproduces while other family members assist in raising pups, defending territory and teaching younger animals essential hunting behaviours.

Indiscriminate lethal control disrupts these family structures. The death of experienced adults can result in:

- breakdown of established pack hierarchy;
- increased breeding by younger animals;
- smaller, less coordinated hunting groups;

- inexperienced juveniles seeking easier prey such as livestock;
- greater movement of transient animals into vacant territories.

Ironically, research suggests these disruptions may increase rather than reduce livestock conflicts. Maintaining stable family groups is therefore both an ecological and practical management strategy.

Modern genetic research demonstrates that many NSW dingoes are genetically pure

For many years, dingoes have often been labelled collectively as “wild dogs”, leading to widespread lethal control regardless of their genetic status.

However, advances in genetic analysis have significantly improved our understanding of dingo populations.

Research led by Australian scientists, including Dr Kylie Cairns and colleagues, has demonstrated that many free-ranging canids in eastern Australia—including New South Wales—retain high levels of dingo ancestry, with numerous individuals being genetically pure or possessing overwhelmingly dingo genetics.

This research challenges the long-standing assumption that most eastern dingoes are heavily hybridised.

Management decisions should therefore be based on contemporary genetic evidence rather than outdated assumptions or the indiscriminate use of the term “wild dog.”

Cultural significance

Dingoes hold deep cultural, spiritual and practical significance for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Across Australia they are recognised as totem animals, ancestors, companions and important figures in Dreaming stories and cultural knowledge systems that extend back thousands of years.

Traditional ecological knowledge recognises the role of dingoes in maintaining healthy Country and healthy ecosystems.

Future management should meaningfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge and leadership alongside western scientific research. Conservation outcomes are strongest when these knowledge systems work together.

Humane and effective management

Where livestock protection is required, modern non-lethal management techniques are increasingly available.

These include:

- guardian animals;
- improved fencing;
- strategic livestock husbandry;
- deterrent technologies;
- targeted management based on evidence rather than broad-scale lethal control.

These approaches can reduce livestock losses while allowing stable dingo populations to continue performing their essential ecological functions.

Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that the Committee:

1. Recognise dingoes as an ecologically essential native apex predator.
2. Base management decisions on current peer-reviewed genetic science.
3. Distinguish genetically verified dingoes from feral domestic dogs in legislation and management policy.
4. End routine lethal control of dingoes within National Parks except where exceptional, evidence-based circumstances exist.
5. Prioritise protection of stable family groups rather than indiscriminate population reduction.
6. Expand the use of humane, non-lethal livestock protection methods.
7. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and knowledge are incorporated into dingo conservation and management.
8. Continue investment in independent ecological and genetic research to guide future policy.

Conclusion

Australia has the opportunity to manage dingoes using contemporary science rather than outdated perceptions.

Healthy dingo populations support healthier ecosystems, contribute to biodiversity conservation and hold immense cultural significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This inquiry presents an important opportunity for New South Wales to adopt evidence-based, humane management that recognises dingoes as a vital component of Australia's natural heritage rather than treating them under the broad and often misleading label of "wild dogs."

Thank you for considering this submission.