

**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 Parliamentary Inquiry into the Treatment and Cultural and Ecological Significance of Dingoes in National Parks

Dear Committee Members,

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

I work in conservation and bushland management and have a strong interest in Australia's native ecosystems and the role apex predators play in maintaining biodiversity. I believe this inquiry presents an important opportunity to modernise dingo management in New South Wales by ensuring decisions are guided by current scientific evidence, respect for Aboriginal knowledge, animal welfare principles and practical solutions that support both conservation and rural communities.

National Parks are established to protect native species and ecological processes, yet dingoes continue to be managed largely as pest animals. This approach is inconsistent with the purpose of protected areas and overlooks decades of ecological research demonstrating that dingoes are Australia's apex terrestrial predator and play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. By regulating populations of herbivores and introduced predators such as foxes and feral cats, dingoes can help reduce grazing pressure, improve vegetation health and support the survival of many native species. The loss of apex predators can trigger trophic cascades that destabilise entire ecosystems.

Current legislation and management policies also fail to reflect advances in genetic science. Much of the existing policy surrounding dingoes was developed using outdated genetic techniques. More recent genomic research indicates that the majority of wild canids in New South Wales possess overwhelmingly high dingo ancestry, and that stable dingo populations are generally maintained when family groups remain intact. Ironically, widespread lethal control may increase hybridisation by disrupting established families and breeding structures.

For these reasons, I support formally recognising the Australian dingo as *Canis dingo* in legislation, policy and management frameworks. This classification better reflects the dingo's unique evolutionary history, ecological role and cultural significance as Australia's native apex predator, rather than treating it as merely a subspecies of the domestic dog.

I am also deeply concerned by the continued use of lethal control methods within National Parks. Poisoning with 1080, trapping and shooting raise significant animal welfare concerns and are difficult to justify on lands dedicated to biodiversity conservation. Poisoning can result in prolonged suffering, while trapped animals may remain without food, water or shelter for extended periods before being found. In addition to the welfare implications, indiscriminate lethal control can disrupt family structure, increase dispersal of younger animals and reduce the ecological benefits provided by stable dingo populations.

The continued use of the broad term “wild dog” is also problematic. It fails to distinguish between native dingoes, domestic dogs and hybrids, resulting in management decisions that often overlook the ecological and conservation value of dingoes. Management should be based on accurate identification and contemporary science rather than broad pest classifications.

I also acknowledge the profound cultural significance of dingoes for Aboriginal peoples across Australia. Dingoes have shared relationships with Aboriginal communities for thousands of years and continue to hold important spiritual, cultural and ecological values. Traditional Owners possess invaluable ecological knowledge and should be genuine partners in decisions regarding dingo management on Country. Greater Aboriginal leadership and co-management would strengthen both conservation outcomes and cultural recognition.

While I strongly support greater protection for dingoes, I also recognise that livestock producers face genuine challenges where conflicts occur. Farmers experience real financial and emotional impacts from livestock losses, and their concerns should never be dismissed. They deserve to feel heard, respected and valued as essential stewards of the Australian landscape.

Rather than relying primarily on lethal control, governments should invest far more heavily in helping farmers coexist with dingoes. Increased long-term funding should be directed towards practical, evidence-based coexistence measures such as guardian animals, exclusion fencing, improved husbandry practices, monitoring programs, extension services and compensation or incentive schemes where appropriate. Supporting landholders in adopting these approaches is essential if coexistence is to become a realistic and successful long-term outcome. Protecting dingoes and supporting farmers are not mutually exclusive goals, they are complementary objectives that can be achieved through collaboration, adequate investment and science-based policy.

I respectfully recommend that the Committee:

- End routine lethal control of dingoes within New South Wales National Parks except where there is clear, evidence-based justification.
- Formally recognise the Australian dingo as *Canis dingo* in legislation, policy and management frameworks.
- Recognise dingoes as an ecologically important native species rather than managing them primarily under pest animal frameworks.
- Update management policies to reflect contemporary genetic and ecological science.
- Review the use of the term “wild dog” where it results in native dingoes being managed as pest animals without appropriate distinction.

- Increase Aboriginal leadership and co-management of dingoes on Country.
- Significantly increase funding for non-lethal coexistence measures and practical support for livestock producers.
- Ensure farmers and rural communities are actively consulted and included in the development of dingo management strategies so they feel heard, respected and empowered to participate in coexistence solutions.
- Continue investing in scientific research, monitoring and public education to improve understanding of dingoes and their ecological role.

This inquiry presents an opportunity for New South Wales to become a national leader in evidence-based conservation. Protecting dingoes within National Parks will not only conserve one of Australia's most iconic native species, but also contribute to healthier, more resilient ecosystems. At the same time, genuine support for farmers and rural communities will help build trust and demonstrate that conservation and agriculture can work together rather than in opposition.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours sincerely,