

**Submission
No 225**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Patrick Murphy

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Committee Members of the
Inquiry into dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
NSW 2000

Dear Members of the Animal Welfare Committee,

I thank you for the opportunity to allow me, as a member of the general public, to make a submission into this Inquiry.

I will address the points listed in order of the terms of reference listed below.

Dingoes Submission (INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(1) That the Animal Welfare Committee inquire into and report on the treatment and the cultural and ecological significance of dingoes in national parks in New South Wales, and in particular:

(a) the genetic status of dingoes, the distinction between dingoes and dogs and recent research into the genetic profile of NSW dingoes

Recent news released by The University of NSW Sydney shows: "Dingoes are not domestic dogs – new evidence shows these native canines are on their own evolutionary path" [1]

It stated "Domestication is a long, messy continuum. Some domesticated species such as cattle and modern dog breeds depend on humans for their survival. But dingoes are different. They have lived alongside people but are also entirely capable of surviving without us, and have done so for thousands of years."

A study by leading dingo expert, Kylie Cairns; in "The Australian Mammal Society" Journal (vol 47 issue 3) [2] titled - Taxonomic tangles posed by human association – the urgent need for an evidence-based review of dingo and domestic dog taxonomy and nomenclature; came to the conclusion that:

"Significant advances in genomic research provide robust evidence that dingoes are on a biologically meaningful and divergent evolutionary trajectory from both domestic dogs and extant populations of wolves. Our existing knowledge of morphological and biological differentiation between dingoes, wolves and domestic dogs (Crowther et al. 2014; Smith et al. 2019), along with the new evidence of reproductive isolation (Cairns et al. 2023; Weeks et al. 2024), highlights the need for a reconsideration of the taxonomic status and nomenclature used for dingoes."

An article from The Conversation titled - New DNA testing shatters 'wild dog' myth: most dingoes are pure,[7] has found the below:

"Our new research used the latest genetic testing methods to establish the ancestry of wild dogs across Australia. Most of the 307 wild animals we tested were pure dingoes. Only a small proportion of wild dingoes had dog ancestry, probably from a great- or great-great-grandparent. There were no "first-cross" (50/50) hybrids or feral dogs in our wild-caught sample.

Essentially, all the "wild dogs" were dingoes. The results challenge public perceptions and call into question well established management practices."

[\(b\) the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks governing the management of dingoes in New South Wales in national parks](#)

The Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 [3] says; "The purpose of this Act is to maintain a healthy, productive and resilient environment for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development"...

If the NSW Government is serious about a healthy, productive and resilient environment for the greatest well-being of the community into the future, then they should legislate to stop the shooting, trapping and 1080 poisoning of these important apex predators, who have been unpaid ecological guardians of the Australian environment and its ecosystem for thousands of years.

[\(c\) the ecological role of dingoes in national parks](#)

As reported by the "Humane World for Animals" [4]- Dingoes help maintain healthy ecosystems by preying on introduced animals such as foxes and cats, while also influencing the abundance, movement and behaviour of kangaroos, wallabies, and other wildlife across the landscape.

As the Humane World for Animals says [4]; "Protecting farm animals and protecting dingoes are not mutually exclusive.

Across Australia, landholders are successfully using non-lethal approaches to manage dingoes while allowing them to remain in the landscape. These approaches are often referred to as predator-smart farming.

Predator-smart farming focuses on preventing dingo predation on farm animals before it occurs. Depending on the property and animals being managed, this can include guardian animals to protect sheep and cattle, exclusion fencing and deterrents to keep dingoes away, and changes to farm animal management practices such as closer supervision during lambing, bringing vulnerable animals into safer paddocks, and the prompt treatment or removal of sick and injured animals.

These methods can help protect farm animals while reducing reliance on lethal control.

Evidence shows that coexistence approaches can reduce conflict while recognising the important ecological role dingoes play in Australia's environment."

We definitely need to be smarter in the way we farm. Killing dingoes is not the smart solution, it is the dumb solution.

The Great Ocean Road Wildlife Park acknowledges the important role of Dingoes in our ecosystem [5]:

"These iconic canines are far more than symbols of the outback. They are KEYSTONE predators with an irreplaceable ecological role."

"Australia's only native canine, the dingo (*Canis dingo*), arrived on the continent thousands of years ago. Sleek, intelligent, and highly adaptive, they've evolved into one of the continent's most effective apex predators. To meet Australian dingoes is to witness strength and sensitivity in harmony.

Dingoes live in complex family groups and communicate through howls, body language, and scent marking. They're curious, cautious, and incredibly attuned to their environment. Their presence in the landscape keeps natural balances in check—something no introduced species can replicate."

"The ecological role of dingoes is profound. By qualifying in an elite category or group of animals known as TOP ORDER TROPHIC REGULATORS, also known as KEYSTONE predators, they help regulate populations of herbivores and invasive species. By naturally controlling animals like kangaroos, rabbits, and feral cats, dingoes reduce overgrazing and give native vegetation and small fauna a chance to recover.

Without dingoes, ecosystems can spiral out of balance. Scientific studies show that areas where dingoes are removed often experience increased erosion, biodiversity loss, and pest outbreaks. These knock-on effects reverberate through food webs, affecting everything from insects to bird and animal life, to plant health.

In short, the dingo's presence—or absence—can transform an entire landscape. That's why their protection is not only a wildlife issue but an environmental one."

[\(d\) the cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities](#)

Dingoes are considered kin by many First Nations peoples across mainland Australia, and have deep connections with Indigenous culture and Country. [2]

For many First Nations peoples, dingoes are family. They have long been recognised as important cultural companions and are deeply connected to stories, knowledge systems and caring for Country. [4]

"Since colonisation, Australian governments and land managers have trapped, shot, poisoned and excluded dingoes from large parts of their Country. Policy and practices have frequently overlooked First Nations' perspectives.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can hear the diverse voices and values of First Nations peoples, livestock producers, ecologists, and others as we shape future policy and practices. By collaborating and drawing from both Indigenous and Western knowledge, we can find ways to live in harmony with our apex predator." [6]

Dingoes are a native species that have been maligned since the arrival of white man, and their desire to raise non-native farm animals for food on this land.

First Nations people had been surviving just fine for over 60,000 years, on what this continent had provided for us. Instead, the white man thought they knew best, fought against and ignored the indigenous people on this land, instead of learning from them.

(e) the impact of current government policies and programs for the management of dingoes in national parks

Central Queensland University has a news article titled - The boss of Country, not wild dogs to kill: living with dingoes can unite communities [6]

It shows how maligned the dingo is, and how the narrative surrounding dingoes is forming incorrect, non-evidence based public policy.

"The state definitions of "wild dogs" includes dingoes and dingo-dog hybrids. This is based on the mistaken belief that interbreeding between dingoes and dogs was widespread across Australia.

But recent DNA research shows dingo-dog hybrids are rare. Most wild dingoes have little to no dog ancestry. This has led scientists, conservationists, and First Nations peoples to call on state governments to change dingo policies."

The governments in Victoria and NSW have mis-identified the dingo. More up-to-date DNA evidence shows [7]:

"Scientific support for the idea that few pure dingoes remain in eastern Australia came from skull measurement tests developed in the 1980s and a DNA test developed in the 1990s.

Applying these approaches, Victoria listed dingoes as a threatened species after finding just 1% of animals killed in pest control programs were pure dingoes. Similarly in NSW "predation and hybridisation by feral dogs (*Canis familiaris*)" was listed as a key threatening process in 2009.

But DNA testing methods have improved since then. When we compared old and new DNA testing methods in our study, we found the original method frequently misidentified pure dingoes as hybrids. This is because the technique used a relatively small number of DNA markers, only 23. We used 195,000 DNA markers."

Evidence suggests that lethal management is often counterproductive.

Killing older, dominant dingoes destroys the social cohesion of established packs. This disruption can cause younger, inexperienced dingoes to disperse, leading to an increase in attacks on livestock on the borders of national parks

(f) dingo management including opportunities for incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and leadership in dingo conservation in national parks

The information I provided earlier under point (d) above, referring to sources [2], [4] & [6] provides a lot more context worth investigating further by this committee. I recommend you go over those sources more closely.

(g) any other related matters.

To help to understand how misunderstood dingoes are and the unjust public persecution they face, particularly in rural areas, by those who are armed and dangerous; I recommend your res more about them on the Coalition Against 1080 Poison website, regarding their statement "Dingoes deserved better". [8]

Why are Dingoes are the only native animal in NSW not protected under the Biodiversity Conservation Act?

They are a natural apex predator, who play an important role in maintaining a balanced ecosystem.

Dingoes have a greater impact on the reduction of foxes than 1080 poison does, because they are a larger, more dominant animal, which has a multitude of flow on effects for biodiversity in the Australian ecosystem. There is research showing the negative impacts of removing dingoes from their habitat.

I would also like to mention the subject of 1080 poisoning on animals and the environment as sources from the below sites:

1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) is a highly effective but controversial pesticide primarily used in Australia and New Zealand for controlling invasive pests like rabbits, foxes, and wild dogs. Its primary negative impacts include severe risks of accidental poisoning to non-target wildlife and domestic pets, highly distressing and prolonged deaths for affected animals, a lack of any specific antidote, and the potential for secondary poisoning in scavengers.

Key Negative Impacts

Accidental Non-Target Poisoning: Because 1080 is odorless and tasteless, it can be accidentally ingested by non-target native wildlife and beloved pets like dogs. Dogs are particularly sensitive and vulnerable to 1080 poisoning. [9]

"The relative toxicity of 1080 to various animals is shown in Table 1. Dogs and cats are highly susceptible. Next are all herbivores, including the target species, Bennetts wallaby, Rufous wallaby, Brushtail possum and rabbit. Rats, wombats and humans are less susceptible, while quolls, Tasmanian devils and nearly all birds have a high tolerance to 1080 poison.

If a dog or cat ate a rufous wallaby poisoned with 1080, it could receive a lethal dose of the poison. In fact, one dead rufous wallaby could contain enough 1080 to kill 12 dogs or 9 cats. Other carnivorous animals and birds are not likely to be killed by secondary poisoning as they would need to eat their own weight in poisoned carcass to obtain a lethal dose".

"The poison is present in larger concentrations in the stomach and some other organs such as liver, heart, lung, kidneys and brain. Carnivores which show a liking for these organs therefore have an increased susceptibility to secondary poisoning."

Severe Animal Welfare Concerns: The death caused by 1080 is often distressing to witness. Symptoms in mammals can include uncontrollable vomiting, tremors, frenzied

running, screaming, and convulsions before the animal loses consciousness and dies from heart or respiratory failure.

Secondary Poisoning: The poison can remain in the organs (such as the stomach, liver, and brain) of target animals. Predators or scavengers that consume the carcasses of poisoned pests are at a high risk of dying from secondary poisoning.

No Specific Antidote: There is no known specific antidote for 1080 poisoning. Veterinary or emergency medical treatment can only provide supportive care (such as sedation and life support) and is only effective if administered immediately after ingestion.

Coalition Against 1080 Poison [10] has an abundance of evidence, as to why 1080 should not be used for; not just dingoes, but other animals too.

Long-term Population Concerns: Some animal welfare organizations argue that 1080 culling fails to provide permanent solutions to ecological damage. When a baited area opens up, pests from surrounding regions may quickly repopulate the territory.

Dingoes deserve full protection under NSW law. I urge the committee to recommend that lethal management methods, including 1080 poisoning, trapping, and shooting, be replaced with humane, non-lethal alternatives that support coexistence with dingoes.

Some political parties see animals as the enemy of mankind, rather than friends of mankind. The sooner we humans realise that all animals are here with us, not for us. The sooner we stop discriminating against certain species over other species, the more balanced nature and the environment will be.

Humans don't have a very good track record when it comes to learning from and respecting animals. We are slow learners, and that lack of education is harming us every single day. We need to do better.

Sincerely,

Patrick Murphy.

Sources:

[1] <https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2025/08/dingoes-not-domestic-dogs-new-evidence-shows-native-canines-are-on-own-evolutionary-path>

[2] <https://connectsci.au/am/article/47/3/AM24052/199699/Taxonomic-tangles-posed-by-human-association-the>

[3] <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2016-063#frnt-lt>

I request you keep the below in mind when looking into this inquiry [3a]:

The purpose of this Act is to maintain a healthy, productive and resilient environment for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development (described in section 6(2) of the Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991), and in particular—

(a) to conserve biodiversity at bioregional and State scales, and

- (b) to maintain the diversity and quality of ecosystems and enhance their capacity to adapt to change and provide for the needs of future generations, and
- (c) to improve, share and use knowledge, including local and traditional Aboriginal ecological knowledge, about biodiversity conservation, and
- (d) to support biodiversity conservation in the context of a changing climate, and
- (e) to support collating and sharing data, and monitoring and reporting on the status of biodiversity and the effectiveness of conservation actions, and
- (f) to assess the extinction risk of species and ecological communities, and identify key threatening processes, through an independent and rigorous scientific process, and
- (g) to regulate human interactions with wildlife by applying a risk-based approach, and
- (h) to support conservation and threat abatement action to slow the rate of biodiversity loss and conserve threatened species and ecological communities in nature, and
- (i) to support and guide prioritised and strategic investment in biodiversity conservation, and
- (j) to encourage and enable landholders to enter into voluntary agreements over land for the conservation of biodiversity, and
- (k) to establish a framework, reflecting the avoid, minimise and offset hierarchy, to avoid, minimise and offset the impacts of proposed development and land use change on biodiversity, and
- (l) to establish a scientific method for assessing the likely impacts on biodiversity values of proposed development and land use change, for calculating measures to offset those impacts and for assessing improvements in biodiversity values, and
- (m) to establish market-based conservation mechanisms through which the biodiversity impacts of development and land use change can be offset at landscape and site scales, and
- (n) to support public consultation and participation in biodiversity conservation and decision-making about biodiversity conservation, and
- (o) to make expert advice and knowledge available to assist the Minister in the administration of this Act.

[3a] <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2016-063#sec.1.3>

[4] <https://hsi.org.au/australian-wildlife-habitats/dingoes/>

[5] <https://greateoceanroadwildlifepark.com.au/dingo-ecological-importance-their-role-in-australias-wildlife/>

[6] <https://www.cqu.edu.au/news/1044791/the-boss-of-country-not-wild-dogs-to-kill-living-with-dingoes-can-unite-communities>

[7] <https://theconversation.com/new-dna-testing-shatters-wild-dog-myth-most-dingoes-are-pure-206397>

[8] <https://www.ban1080.org.au/articles/dingoes-deserve-better>

[9] <https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/management-of-wildlife/managing-wildlife-browsing-grazing-losses/1080-poison>

[10] <https://www.ban1080.org.au/evidence>