

**Submission
No 248**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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The Animal Welfare Committee
Parliament of New South Wales
By online submission portal

Submission to the Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

Dear Committee,

I am writing as a community member and private citizen based on the Central Coast of New South Wales to make a submission to this Inquiry. I ask that the Committee give genuine thought and weight to the voice of the dingo, an animal that cannot advocate for itself and that has, for too long, been persecuted and managed with the intent to eliminate rather than protected as a native, ecologically significant species.

My connection to this issue comes from years spent as a community member who uses and cares deeply for wild spaces, and from a background in marine wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, working hands on with native species including seabirds, sea turtles and flying foxes. I have also undertaken tertiary study in Marine Biology and Coastal and Marine Sciences. This background has given me a grounded understanding of ecology, the interdependence of species within an ecosystem, and of the responsibility we hold as a community when a native animal's future rests in the hands of policy.

I am compelled to write in my voice today as dingoes are Australia's only native apex land predator, and they are currently the only native mammal specifically excluded from protection under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, leaving them exposed to trapping, shooting and poisoning inside the very National Parks meant to conserve our biodiversity. Between 2020 and 2025, more than 1.5 million 1080 poison baits were deployed against dingoes by NSW Parks and Wildlife Service. 1080 poisoning is not a humane or quick death; it is a prolonged and agonising one, and it is being inflicted at scale on a species we claim in every other context to value as a national icon.

My concern with 1080 poison is not new. I first researched it in depth as a Year 8 student compiling a report, and what I learned about how it horrifically and slowly kills, not only target species but non target animals has haunted me ever since. This is not a humane method of control, it prolongs suffering. It is also worth the Committee noting that 1080 is not a globally accepted tool. It is banned in most countries around the world, including across the European Union. Even in the United States, where sodium fluoroacetate was first developed, its use has been so tightly restricted since the 1970s. Broad-scale field baiting of the kind still practised across NSW National Parks is not permitted elsewhere for good reason. Widespread aerial and ground baiting with 1080 is now essentially confined to Australia and New Zealand. That other nations have judged this poison too indiscriminate and inhumane for open use should give this Committee pause before continuing to authorise it at scale against a native animal who belongs here. Further, I fear for my own dog, who is my whole life, on the constraints of our own property, because of this 1080 poison being used in the bushland surrounding us and so do many other community members who have traumatically lost their companion animals.

I often relate this debate to the thylacine. We completely wiped that animal from existence through exactly this kind of policy: vilifying a native predator, killing it systematically, and only feeling the full weight of what we had done once it was gone forever. I do not want the dingo to become another entry in that same story of regret. This Inquiry is a genuine opportunity to choose differently. And we can be on the right side of history this time.

The ecological role of dingoes

As an apex predator, the dingo performs a regulating function that no other species in the Australian landscape can replace. Removing dingoes from an ecosystem does not simply remove one animal it destabilises the whole system that depends on it

- Dingoes help regulate kangaroo and wallaby numbers, easing grazing pressure on native vegetation.
- Dingoes suppress and largely exclude introduced foxes and cats through competition and predation, relieving pressure on small native mammals and birds that these introduced predators would otherwise devastate.
- Dingoes contribute to controlling introduced pigs and goats, reducing their impact on vegetation communities
- Where apex predators are removed research shows cascading effects: vegetation decline, habitat degradation and increased pressure on already threatened species.

A National Park without a functioning dingo population is not a fully intact ecosystem. Ongoing lethal control undermines the very conservation purpose these parks exist to serve

Current policy and the welfare cost of lethal control

Dingoes are currently managed in NSW National Parks under a pest control framework built around the umbrella term "wild dog," which makes no legal distinction between a dingo and a stray domestic dog. This framework treats an ecologically vital native species as a biosecurity problem and it is directed by the Biosecurity Act 2015 and the NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy rather than by conservation legislation.

- 1080 baiting, trapping and shooting are the current default tools, despite mounting evidence that they cause serious animal suffering. A trapped dingo can be left without food, water or shelter for extended periods before it is found.
- Lethal control breaks apart stable dingo family groups and pack structures. When packs are disrupted, surviving dingoes are more likely to disperse and interbreed with domestic dogs, which is the opposite of the outcome that pest control policy claims to want.
- Current management is oriented almost entirely around agricultural protection at park boundaries, not biodiversity outcomes inside the parks themselves and it is not backed by transparent, comprehensive data on dingo population status across the state.

I ask the Committee to recommend an end to lethal control of dingoes within NSW National Parks and a shift toward management grounded in conservation science and animal welfare rather than pest eradication.

Genetics and the dingo dog distinction

Much of the current policy framework rests on genetic assessments that are now outdated. Older studies relied on a small handful of genetic markers, while contemporary research using far larger marker sets has found that the great majority of wild living canids across NSW and the wider continent carry overwhelmingly dingo ancestry, with recent hybridisation relatively rare in stable, undisturbed populations. Australia does not have an established, continent wide population of free-living feral domestic dogs. I ask the Committee to recommend that management frameworks be updated to reflect this current science, rather than the far more limited genetic picture that has shaped policy for decades.

Choose coexistence over eradication

Protecting dingoes in National Parks does not have to come at the expense of neighbouring landholders. There is a genuine, fundable alternative to broad scale lethal control.

- Livestock guardian dogs have a strong evidence base for reducing predation on livestock, with the added benefit of deterring macropods, foxes and birds of prey from grazing land.
- There is growing anecdotal and on ground evidence from NSW landholders that guardian donkeys are also effective at deterring canid predators, and this deserves properly resourced trials.

- Currently, there is no meaningful extension service to help landholders adopt these non lethal approaches. Redirecting a portion of the funding now spent on baiting, trapping and shooting toward coexistence extension services would better serve both landholders and biodiversity.

Cultural significance and Indigenous leadership

I want to acknowledge, without speaking on behalf of Cultural Custodians, that dingoes hold deep and continuing cultural significance for many First Nations communities, woven into lore, kinship, Songlines and Caring for Country practices. The National First Nations Dingo Declaration, developed by Traditional Owners, sets out a clear cultural framework for dingo management, and I support recommendations that give Cultural Custodians a genuine, resourced role in decision making and place based management of dingoes

My recommendations to the Committee

- End the killing of dingoes within NSW National Parks, including through 1080 poison baiting, trapping and shooting, in order to protect their ecological function and support biodiversity conservation.
- Give Cultural Custodians a genuine and resourced role in decision-making and place-based management of dingoes in National Parks, reflecting their cultural significance in legislation and policy.
- Fund financial support and extension services for landholders neighbouring National Parks to adopt non-lethal coexistence strategies, protecting their livelihoods while allowing dingoes to remain part of the landscape.

In closing

I recognise this submission comes from values that of a community member who spends real time in wild places, who has worked hands on with native wildlife, and who cannot stay silent while our only native apex land predator is being poisoned, trapped and shot inhumanely inside the parks that are designated and supposed to protect it. We have already lost critical habitats and irreplaceable species to this pattern of thinking. I would like to use this Inquiry to move NSW toward a future where dingoes are recognised, protected and allowed to do the significant ecological work only they can carry out in their wild, natural behaviour. We cannot replace the dingo once it is extinguished forever

Thank you for considering my submission

Yours sincerely,

Brielle Revello

16 July 2026