

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Management of Dingoes in National Parks

I am a resident in Sydney, an animal advocate and someone who deeply loves Australia's unique wildlife, in particular the much-maligned dingo. I am making this submission because I believe the current management of dingoes in our National Parks is scientifically outdated, ethically indefensible and inconsistent with the community's idea of what is the purpose of National Parks and the Biodiversity Conservation Act.

I appreciate that this inquiry is being conducted because I was under the very false idea that dingoes are protected in NSW and that if a native animal is protected anywhere, it would be in our National Parks. So, it was a great shock when I discovered that this is not the case. That in fact, dingoes are the only native animal not protected under the Biodiversity Conservation Act and that National Parks across NSW lay thousands of baits each year to 'manage' dingo numbers. To make it worse, the National Parks do not keep a complete record of the number of dingoes killed by these baits each year or by landowners that border the park, so in effect, these dingoes are being poisoned, trapped and shot with no accurate data to ensure that dingoes are not being eradicated into extinction. Furthermore, I was unaware that dingoes were lumped in as 'wild dogs' despite scientists having proven conclusively that the majority of dingoes are predominately genetically 'dingo' and distinct from dogs, and certainly not domesticated dogs that have gone feral. Those that are hybrids are the result of dingo communities that have been exposed to the encroachment of humans and their dogs into their territory and the decimation of their family groups through trapping, shooting and poisoning. After conducting extensive research into the treatment of dingoes in this country, it seems to me that Australia's native apex predator has been labelled 'wild dog' by the NSW government and various lobby groups to protect the interests of sheep, other livestock farmers and hunters and to justify their legal persecution. The National Parks Service, by actively poisoning and shooting dingoes, is working to protect the interests of the landowners, rather than protecting this iconic Australian animal. I can't begin to tell you just how disappointing this is, and not at all in alignment with community expectations at all of their National Parks.

I understand that many argue that - technically - dingoes are considered an introduced species because Asian seafarers had brought these dogs to Australia some 3,240 – 4,000+ years ago. However, they are also wilfully ignoring the fact that Australian dingoes satisfy the term 'native' because they have evolved to play an integral role as an apex predator in this country's delicate, complex ecosystem. By regulating populations of herbivores and introduced predators, they help protect biodiversity and contribute to healthier, more resilient landscapes.

The NSW Government's insistence on classifying dingoes under a generic 'wild dog' framework results in the unnecessary destruction of a native species that deserves protection, not persecution. It should not be the role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service to destroy what precious native animals we have left in this country to benefit the financial interests and misconceptions of landowners and other vested interests, to

the detriment of all Australians to whom Australia's unique, quirky and varied natural patrimony belongs.

National Parks exist to conserve native species and natural ecological processes. The routine poisoning, trapping and shooting of dingoes within these protected areas fundamentally contradicts that purpose and serves to weaken a vital component of nature's self-regulation. Contemporary ecological research increasingly recognises the importance of maintaining stable dingo populations and family groups to support biodiversity and ecosystem function. So, it makes no sense at all and would suggest a large amount of egoism that the National Parks and Wildlife Service (and NSW govt) would routinely poison dingoes to 'manage' the health of the environment, when dingoes are performing that role already!

As someone who cares deeply about animal welfare, I believe the current reliance on lethal control methods is unacceptable. The use of 1080 poison, trapping and shooting causes immense suffering and destroys established family groups. These methods are inconsistent with contemporary community expectations regarding the humane treatment and protection of wildlife and the expectations we have of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Evidence also suggests that disrupting dingo social structures may increase hybridisation and reduce the ecological stability that intact packs provide. By indiscriminately killing dingoes, the NP is making the problem worse.

I recognise that neighbouring landholders face genuine challenges in protecting livestock. However, Australia's abysmal record for the largest number of mammal extinctions has been caused in large part by outdated farming practices and an egoistic attitude that we have the right to profit at all costs from the land, both of which have destroyed an untold amount of habitat for our native animals, pushing them into extinction or to the very threshold of extinction. Like the Thylacine which was hunted to extinction because farmers and bounty hunters were given carte blanche to kill them because of an assumption that they were killing livestock, dingoes are also being mercilessly killed without limit. We are repeating our past mistakes over and over again, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service is helping in this free-for-all against dingoes.

In saying the above, I am aware that some dingoes are a threat to livestock and I do not believe that farmers should be left to bear these costs alone. Rather than continuing to rely primarily on lethal control, I urge that NSW Government invest in practical coexistence measures, including financial assistance for predator-proof fencing, guardian animals, improved husbandry practices and extension services that support non-lethal management. Protecting dingoes and supporting farming communities should not be viewed as competing objectives. With appropriate investment, education and collaboration, both can be achieved.

Donald Horne in his groundbreaking book 'The Lucky Country' asserted that Australian leadership lacked the will to innovate, had a lack of curiosity and a profound reliance on old habits. Even though the book was written in 1960, I still see that this is true in the way our country interacts with its native animals, in particular its reliance on culling as a

‘management’ method and slowness in adopting agricultural methods that work with Australia’s environment, rather than against it. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has an opportunity to become a national leader in dingo conservation by embracing contemporary science, recognising the ecological significance of Australia's apex predator and moving beyond outdated pest management approaches.

I respectfully ask the Committee to recommend that the NSW Government:

- Fully protect dingoes under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* by removing the exemption that currently allows their lethal control in National Parks.
- Recognise dingoes as a distinct native species rather than managing them under the umbrella term ‘wild dogs’.
- Increase education and community awareness about the ecological importance of dingoes and their role in maintaining healthy ecosystems.
- Provide financial incentives and practical support for landholders neighbouring National Parks to implement effective non-lethal livestock protection measures.
- Ensure future dingo management incorporates the best available ecological science alongside the knowledge and leadership of First Nations peoples in caring for Country.

Australia's native wildlife faces unprecedented pressures. Dingoes should be recognised as part of the solution—not treated as a pest. Future generations deserve National Parks where native predators are protected for the essential ecological role they perform. I urge the Committee to recommend reforms that reflect modern science, compassion, protect dingoes and implement a genuine commitment to conserving Australia's remarkable natural heritage.