

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: FOUR PAWS Australia

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Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

Dear Animal Welfare Committee Members,

FOUR PAWS Australia welcomes the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales, and supports the important work being undertaken by Defend the Wild and other organisations advocating for improved protections for dingoes. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments within our area of expertise: animal welfare and the prevention of animal suffering.

FOUR PAWS is the global animal welfare organisation for animals under direct human influence, revealing suffering, rescuing animals in need and protecting them. Our work is grounded in the recognition that animals are sentient beings capable of experiencing pain, fear, distress and suffering alongside positive emotional states. We advocate for legislation and policies grounded in science, that acknowledge animal sentience, promote positive welfare outcomes and prevent cruelty.

While the inquiry's terms of reference encompass a broad range of matters relating to dingoes in New South Wales, including legislative frameworks and government management programs, FOUR PAWS limits its comments to the welfare implications of current management practices and the treatment of individual animals.

FOUR PAWS is very concerned that current lethal management methods applied to dingoes, including shooting, trapping and poisoning, are resulting in significant animal welfare harms. These methods cause pain, injury, prolonged suffering, fear, stress and death. Where lethal control is used, there is also the risk of non-fatal injuries, where animals may suffer for extended periods before dying. Such risks raise serious animal welfare concerns and warrant scrutiny by the Committee.

We are also concerned about the impact that lethal control can have on dependent young and family groups. The removal or killing of adult animals can result in the suffering of dependent offspring and disruption to established social structures. These impacts are often overlooked in management decisions despite being foreseeable consequences of lethal interventions.

FOUR PAWS asserts that any policy affecting dingoes should be assessed not only on its intended objectives but also on its animal welfare outcomes. Government decision-making should consider whether proposed actions are likely to cause suffering, whether that suffering is necessary, and whether less harmful alternatives are available.



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FOUR PAWS do not support lethal control as a routine wildlife management tool. Where intervention is considered necessary, lethal methods should only ever be used as a genuine last resort after all reasonable non-lethal alternatives have been thoroughly explored, implemented and demonstrated to be ineffective. Decisions that result in the suffering or death of sentient animals must be subject to a high threshold of justification, robust oversight and clear evidence that less harmful approaches are not available.

FOUR PAWS supports approaches that minimise suffering and place animal welfare considerations at the centre of wildlife policy. We encourage the Committee to ensure that any future management of dingoes in National Parks is informed by contemporary independent animal welfare science and guided by the principle that avoidable suffering should be prevented wherever possible.

FOUR PAWS recommends that the Committee:

- Recognise animal welfare and animal sentience as key considerations in all dingo management decisions.
- Assess current management practices through the lens of their welfare impacts on individual animals.
- Require greater transparency regarding the welfare outcomes of any management actions affecting dingoes.
- Ensure that animal welfare science is incorporated into future policy and management frameworks.
- Prioritise approaches that minimise suffering and avoid unnecessary cruelty.

Dingoes, like all animals, are sentient beings capable of experiencing pain and distress. Policies affecting dingoes should be held to the highest possible animal welfare standards. This inquiry presents an important opportunity to ensure that the treatment of dingoes in New South Wales reflects contemporary understanding of animal sentience, animal welfare science and community expectations regarding the prevention of cruelty to animals.

Sincerely

Rebecca Linigen
Director