

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Dingo Culture

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SUBMISSION

Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

A First Nations cultural significance and Caring for Dingoes on Country perspective



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PRIMARY TERMS ADDRESSED

(d), (e), (f) and (g)

Central position Dingoes must be recognised and managed as culturally significant native beings on Aboriginal Country—not collapsed into the colonial category “wild dog”. Traditional Custodians must hold genuine decision-making authority in dingo governance, research and on-ground management.

This submission supports the cultural authority of NSW Traditional Custodians. It does not claim to speak for every Nation or replace Nation-specific evidence, cultural protocols or consent.

Executive summary

For many Aboriginal peoples, Dingo is not merely wildlife, a pest, a management unit or a genetic category. Dingo is kin, ancestor, companion, teacher, protector and an integral part of Country. Dingo is held within lore, language, ceremony, stories, Songlines, totemic and kinship relationships, hunting practice and responsibilities to care for Country. These relationships are diverse and Nation-specific, but their depth and continuity are clear in living cultural testimony, ethnography, historical records and archaeology.

New South Wales holds especially strong material evidence. At Curracurrang Rockshelter on the southern coast, deliberately buried dingoes received treatment comparable with human burial. On Barkindji Country in Kinchega National Park, the recently published burial of Garli—a mature, tamed dingo with healed injuries—shows close care in life and deliberate burial nearly 1,000 years ago. The midden continued to receive additions for about 500 years. Barkindji knowledge was indispensable to interpreting this as an intergenerational practice of remembering, respecting and symbolically feeding Garli. These findings demonstrate both the antiquity of the relationship and why research without Traditional Custodian leadership is incomplete.

Colonisation fractured this relationship. Dingoes were recast through pastoral and administrative language as “wild dogs”, pests and threats. Their killing—including poisoning, trapping and shooting—was normalised, often without the free, prior and informed participation of the peoples whose Country and cultural relations were affected. Where Dingoes have been locally removed, the loss is cultural as well as ecological.

The 2023 National First Nations Dingo Forum brought together more than 100 participants from over 20 First Nations. The resulting National First Nations’ Dingo Declaration calls for a new model: Caring for Dingoes on Country. The Declaration should be a foundational policy document for this Inquiry, alongside direct evidence from NSW Nations.

This submission also applies the Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework developed in 1998 by my father, Jirrbal Elder Uncle Dr Ernie Grant. His framework offers the Committee six connected windows—Land, Language, Culture, Time, Place and Relationships—through which to understand Dingo from a local Aboriginal perspective. It prevents cultural significance being reduced to one story, object or consultation question and instead shows Dingo within a living, interconnected system of Country, knowledge, law and responsibility.

Outcome sought A statewide, adequately funded, First Nations-led framework that protects Dingoes in national parks; ends routine and indiscriminate lethal control; establishes Nation-by-Nation co-governance; strengthens Indigenous Ranger programs; and supports neighbouring landholders to trial and adopt effective non-lethal coexistence measures.

Recommendations

1. Recognise Dingo in NSW law and policy as a culturally significant native animal distinct from domestic and feral dogs, and remove the blanket use of “wild dog” where it obscures the identity and killing of Dingoes.
2. Adopt Caring for Dingoes on Country, informed by the National First Nations’ Dingo Declaration, as the guiding framework for dingo policy in NSW national parks.

3. Use Uncle Dr Ernie Grant’s Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework—Land, Language, Culture, Time, Place and Relationships—as a required cultural planning lens, applied locally with the authority and participation of the Traditional Custodians for each Country.
4. Require formal, Nation-specific co-governance agreements with the relevant Traditional Custodians for every national park or connected park landscape where Dingoes occur or are managed.
5. Place an immediate moratorium on routine, broadscale and indiscriminate lethal dingo control within national parks while culturally informed management plans are developed. Any exceptional response to an immediate, demonstrated risk must be transparent, targeted, independently reviewed and agreed through the relevant governance arrangements.
6. Establish a NSW First Nations Dingo Advisory and Cultural Governance Council, with a majority of members nominated by NSW Traditional Custodian organisations and supported—not controlled—by government and external experts.
7. Fund Indigenous Ranger groups and Traditional Owner organisations through long-term agreements to lead monitoring, cultural mapping, camera trapping, track and scat surveys, genetics, public education, conflict response and evaluation. Cultural knowledge must remain owned and controlled by the knowledge holders.
8. Create Indigenous-led dingo management plans for national parks and adjoining Country, including cultural heritage protection, culturally safe research protocols, monitoring indicators chosen by Custodians and clear restrictions on lethal control.
9. Create a well-resourced non-lethal coexistence transition program for neighbouring farmers, including grants, technical support, guardian animals, improved husbandry, fencing where appropriate, range riding, carcass management and locally designed trials.
10. Provide a transparent hardship and verified-loss assistance mechanism during approved non-lethal trials, including fair compensation where losses are independently verified, while avoiding incentives that reward poor husbandry or unverified attribution.
11. Require all government-funded dingo research and conservation projects to demonstrate free, prior and informed consent, Indigenous leadership from project design to interpretation, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protections, paid participation, data governance and return of results to Country.
12. Replace narrow “animal removed” performance measures with cultural, ecological, animal-welfare and livelihood outcomes, independently evaluated and publicly reported.
13. Fund restoration and “calling Dingo back to Country” feasibility work where Traditional Custodians seek it and where ecological and social assessment supports it, including landscapes from which Dingoes have been regionally removed.

1. Standing, purpose and cultural authority

I am Sonya Grant (Takau), a Jirrbal Rainforest Aboriginal woman from Far North Queensland. Dingo—Ganibarra in Jirrbal language—is culturally significant to my family and me. I make this submission as founder of Dingo Culture and in my role as National First Nations Dingo Coordinator, hosted by Giringun Aboriginal Corporation. These roles support Traditional Custodians nationally to advance their own aspirations for Dingo on Country and to be present at decision-making tables that have too often excluded them.

This submission draws together published evidence and the collective direction expressed through the National First Nations’ Dingo Declaration. It does not homogenise Aboriginal cultures or presume authority over NSW Country. The Committee should give greatest weight to direct evidence from the relevant Elders, cultural knowledge holders, Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Traditional

Owner organisations and Indigenous Ranger groups. Where evidence is absent, that absence must not be treated as proof that cultural significance is absent; colonial disruption, secrecy, loss of access to Country and historically extractive research practices have all affected what appears in archives.

The Inquiry is an opportunity to reset the relationship between government and Traditional Custodians. “Consultation” after a management approach has already been chosen is insufficient. Cultural authority requires shared agenda-setting, consent, decision-making power, resources, access to information, and the ability to say no.

2. Dingo is kin, culture and Country

Aboriginal relationships with Dingo cannot be reduced to one function. Across Australia, Dingoes have been companions and hunting partners; raised within camps and families; woven into kinship and totemic systems; present in creation narratives, ceremony, song, dance, art and language; and understood as knowledgeable beings with their own agency and role in keeping Country healthy. In some traditions they guide people, protect places, locate or signal water, teach proper behaviour, and connect generations to Ancestors and Country.

A relational worldview does not divide “culture” from “nature” in the way government programs often do. Cultural and ecological significance are therefore not separate silos. To care for Dingo is to care for Country, and damage to Dingo relationships may be damage to cultural practice, identity, obligation and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Blake and Jones’ Indigenous archaeological account describes Darrwal, from a Wadawurrung perspective, as kin, companion and spirit, representing Country, spirit, song and life—not merely a species or apex predator (Blake & Jones 2024).

Brumm and Kounoulos’ review of historical, archaeological and oral evidence found that Aboriginal communities routinely reared wild-caught dingo pups and used deliberate, intensive socialisation to form enduring bonds. Oral traditions also taught respect and awareness of risk. This evidence shows sophisticated, culturally transmitted knowledge about living with a wild canid, not a simplistic relationship of ownership or control (Brumm & Kounoulos 2022).

Key principle Cultural knowledge is not an optional “input” to a Western management plan. It is a living system of law, relationship, responsibility and observation held by the peoples of that Country.

3. Seeing Dingo through Uncle Ernie Grant’s six windows

My father, Jirrbal Elder Uncle Dr Ernie Grant, developed the Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework in 1998 through his work in education. Sometimes associated with his resource My Land, My Tracks, the framework was created to help explain Aboriginal worldviews and the historical perspectives and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It has since been recognised in Queensland curriculum and education literature as a way of supporting cross-cultural understanding and keeping learning grounded in a local Aboriginal area (Grant 1998; Department of Education and Training 2011; QCAA 2016).

The framework does not break knowledge into six separate compartments. Land, Language and Culture are interwoven and are given context through Time, Place and Relationships. Each window changes how the others are understood. When the framework is applied properly, a decision-maker cannot take a

cultural story away from its Country, separate an animal from its relationships, or treat knowledge recorded at one time and place as universal for every Aboriginal Nation.

How the Committee should use it For every national park and every proposed dingo policy, ask the six sets of questions below with the Traditional Custodians of that Country. The answers must come from local cultural authority. The framework guides the inquiry; it does not authorise government, researchers or this submission to answer on behalf of NSW Nations.

Window	Seeing Dingo through a local Aboriginal perspective
Land	Dingo is part of the whole living environment—waterways, mountains, forests, grasslands, plants, animals, weather and seasonal change. Ask: What role does Dingo hold in keeping this Country healthy? What happens culturally and ecologically when Dingo is poisoned, displaced or removed? What does Country show about Dingo presence, movement and behaviour?
Language	Language carries the proper local name, identity, meaning and knowledge of Dingo. The word “dingo” itself comes from a Dharug word, while Nations across NSW hold their own names and meanings. Ask: What is Dingo called here? What knowledge is carried in that name, in place names, songs, spoken histories and ways of describing tracks, behaviour and Country? What is erased when government uses the generic label “wild dog”?
Culture	Culture is how people know, do and are: lore, kinship, totems, ceremony, stories, song, dance, art, hunting, teaching, caring practices and obligations. Ask: How is Dingo related to people and Ancestors? What responsibilities exist? Which knowledge can be shared publicly, which is restricted, and who has authority to speak for it? How does current management support or prevent cultural practice?
Time	Aboriginal time connects ancestral, historical, present and future dimensions, as well as seasons, cycles and change. Dingo relationships extend across thousands of years, through colonisation and into responsibilities to future generations. Ask: What was the relationship before dispossession and lethal control? How has it changed? What seasonal knowledge guides management? What must be restored or protected so young people can carry the relationship forward?
Place	Knowledge belongs to particular Country and significant places. A national park is not an empty administrative unit; it contains cultural landscapes, pathways, burial places, story places and sites where Dingo relationships are held. Ask: Whose Country is this? Where are the culturally important places and connected landscapes? How do park boundaries cut across Dingo movement and cultural responsibility? What information must remain confidential?
Relationships	Dingo exists through dynamic physical, living and spiritual relationships: with people, Ancestors, other Dingoes, prey, other animals, water, vegetation,

neighbouring landholders, Rangers and the wider ecosystem. Ask: Who and what is affected by a management decision? Are kinship and pack relationships being disrupted? Are government, Custodians, Rangers, scientists and farmers working through respectful and properly resourced relationships?

The six windows applied to Dingo

Used together, the six windows reveal why Dingo cannot be adequately managed through population numbers, genetics or livestock impacts alone. A culturally informed assessment must consider the integrity of the entire relationship. Killing a Dingo may affect Land, silence Language, interrupt Culture, sever intergenerational Time, damage a significant Place and fracture Relationships—all through one management action.

Keeping the framework local

Uncle Ernie's framework is especially valuable for this Inquiry because it turns the decision-maker back toward the local Aboriginal perspective. The Committee should not create one generic NSW "Indigenous view of Dingo". Instead, it should require a six-window cultural assessment for each park or connected landscape, led and approved by the relevant Traditional Custodians. Different Nations may hold different names, stories, laws, protocols and aspirations. That diversity is a strength and must be reflected in policy.

A completed six-window assessment should form a mandatory part of every dingo management plan, environmental assessment, research approval and proposal for lethal intervention in a NSW national park. Sensitive knowledge need not be placed on the public record. Government should fund the cultural work, respect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, and accept that some information can only be held or considered through confidential cultural governance processes.

4. NSW evidence: a deep and continuing relationship

4.1 Garli on Barkindji Country, Baaka (Darling River)

The 2026 peer-reviewed study of a dingo burial in Kinchega National Park provides direct and exceptionally important NSW evidence. The burial was first identified by Barkindji Elders and excavated at the request of the Menindee Aboriginal Elders Council. The male Garli was about four to seven years old, displayed advanced tooth wear and had healed injuries to the ribs and lower leg. The researchers considered these features consistent with a tamed dingo that had survived significant injury with human care. Garli was deliberately interred in a riverside shell midden nearly 1,000 years ago. That midden continued to receive additions for roughly another 500 years (Koungoulos et al. 2026).

The methodological lesson is as important as the find. Barkindji participation transformed interpretation: the later shell additions could be understood not simply as refuse but as a continuing cultural practice of remembering, respecting and symbolically feeding an ancestor. Published archaeology itself acknowledges that many older excavations excluded Traditional Owner perspectives, resulting in the loss of crucial cultural understanding. This is precisely why First Nations leadership must be embedded in all future dingo research and management.

The present-day cultural consequence is also stark. Barkindji Custodians have explained that Garli remains a totem and kinship relation even though Dingoes were hunted to regional extinction on parts of Country. Cultural significance does not disappear when the animal has been removed; removal can deepen cultural loss and create an obligation to restore relationships.

4.2 Curracurrang Rockshelter, southern coastal NSW

At Curracurrang Rockshelter, archaeological analysis documented deliberate dingo burials within a place also used for human burial. The dingoes were interred in ways consistent with ancestral or ceremonial treatment, supporting the conclusion that they were incorporated into Aboriginal social and cultural life and were mourned and treated as companions in death (Koungoulos, Balme & O'Connor 2023). The evidence forms part of a broader south-eastern Australian pattern in which dingoes were buried individually, sometimes alongside people and in human burial areas.

These burials are not merely evidence that people kept useful hunting animals. Deliberate interment, location, bodily treatment and association with human mortuary places indicate relationship, grief, respect and social belonging. Government policy that categorises the same being only as a pest fails to account for this cultural reality.

4.3 Language, antiquity and archival limits

The English word “dingo” derives from a Dharug word recorded in the Sydney region in the earliest colonial period. Archaeological sites in NSW—including Capertee in the Blue Mountains and Wombah on the north coast—also contribute to evidence that Dingoes have lived in south-eastern landscapes for thousands of years. More recent ancient-DNA research indicates long-standing population structure and little modern domestic-dog ancestry in many dingo populations (Souilmi et al. 2024; Cairns et al. 2021, 2023).

Written colonial accounts must be used carefully. They were produced through unequal encounters and often filtered Aboriginal relations through European ideas of pet, property, utility and pest. Cultural knowledge may also be restricted, gendered, place-specific or not appropriate for public disclosure. The Committee should not demand public revelation of sacred or sensitive knowledge as the price of recognition. Confidential hearings and Indigenous-controlled evidence protocols should be offered.

5. Evidence from across Australia

Evidence from other regions does not substitute for NSW authority; it establishes the national consistency and depth of the cultural relationship and demonstrates that NSW policy sits within a continental responsibility.

- Indigenous oral histories and ethnographic records describe pups raised from an early age as family companions, hunting partners and camp animals, with detailed social practices governing their care and behaviour (Brumm & Koungoulos 2022).
- Historical and ethnographic evidence from south-eastern Australia records Dingoes as culturally and symbolically important, including ceremonial burial and integration into social relations (Cahir & Clark 2013).
- Ngarrindjeri evidence from the Lower Murray records Dingo within mythology, songs, ceremonies, cultural practices and ngatji relationships—a term conveying mate or friend (Wilson et al. 2022, discussed in Blake & Jones 2024).

- Indigenous archaeological scholarship emphasises relationality: Dingo can be simultaneously animal, kin, spirit, Country and law. Western categories that separate biodiversity from culture cannot adequately describe these responsibilities (Blake & Jones 2024).
- The widespread pattern of deliberate burials, sometimes in human burial places, demonstrates social incorporation and ceremonial care across the continent (Koungoulos, Balme & O'Connor 2023).

Together, these sources establish that the cultural significance of Dingo is not recent advocacy added onto wildlife management. It is an ancient, living relationship that predates the NSW state, national parks, pastoralism and pest legislation.

6. Colonisation, terminology and cultural harm

The category “wild dog” is not culturally neutral. It collapses a native, culturally significant being into a broad pest-management label that may also include roaming or feral domestic dogs. This makes Dingo invisible at the very moment decisions are made to poison, trap or shoot. Genetic research has further weakened claims that Australian free-living canids are predominantly hybrids: large datasets show that many are pure Dingoes or strongly dingo-ancestry animals, with geographically structured populations (Cairns et al. 2021, 2023).

Lethal control can cause cultural harm even where no cultural heritage object is physically disturbed. The killing of a totemic or kin species on Country, without consent and by methods that may cause suffering, can offend lore, responsibilities and identity. It may prevent younger generations from seeing, tracking, learning about and caring for Dingo. It can also erase ecological relationships that carry cultural knowledge.

National parks are Aboriginal lands and waters that were declared, governed and managed through colonial law, frequently after dispossession. Government agencies cannot treat park boundaries as extinguishing cultural authority. Nor should a national park be a place where culturally significant native animals are routinely killed to protect interests outside the park without transparent evidence, proportionality and agreement with Custodians.

7. From consultation to First Nations governance

The Inquiry’s term (f) rightly identifies opportunities for Indigenous knowledge and leadership. Leadership must mean more than inviting an Elder to a meeting, employing Rangers to deliver a pre-set control program, or adding cultural language to an agency plan. A credible framework requires structural power.

- Nation-specific authority: identify the correct rights holders for each park and connected landscape; do not rely on a single statewide representative to speak for all Countries.
- Free, prior and informed consent: provide full information early, allow culturally appropriate time, fund participation and respect decisions—including refusal.
- Shared decision-making: Traditional Custodians must co-design objectives, acceptable methods, thresholds, monitoring, research questions and public communication.
- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property: knowledge remains with its holders; publication, mapping, samples and data require agreed access, storage and use conditions.
- Paid authority and capability: cultural governance, Ranger time and knowledge are professional contributions and must be properly resourced.
- Accountability: management decisions, lethal incidents, baiting locations, animal-welfare outcomes, livestock-loss evidence and evaluation results should be accessible to the relevant governance bodies.

The NSW model should include a statewide First Nations Dingo Advisory and Cultural Governance Council while preserving local authority. Its purpose would be to guide minimum standards, advise ministers and agencies, support cross-border landscapes, commission independent evaluation and ensure that local plans are not undermined by inconsistent statewide pest policy.

8. Indigenous Rangers as leaders of Caring for Dingoes on Country

Indigenous Ranger groups are uniquely placed to connect cultural authority, long observation of Country, community relationships and contemporary tools. They should be funded to lead rather than used only as contractors for agency priorities.

- Cultural mapping and community-led documentation, including language names, stories, responsibilities and culturally sensitive areas, with appropriate confidentiality.
- Track, scat, camera-trap, acoustic and genetic monitoring designed with scientists but governed by Custodians.
- Pack and movement monitoring across park boundaries, including early identification of conflict risk.
- Culturally informed visitor education, school programs and interpretation.
- Rapid response and investigation of reported livestock impacts, including accurate attribution rather than assumption.
- Non-lethal trial delivery and advice to neighbouring landholders.
- Animal welfare monitoring and culturally appropriate protocols for injured, orphaned or habituated Dingoes.
- Employment pathways for younger people, knowledge transfer from Elders and accredited training in ecology, genetics, conflict management and data governance.

Funding should be multi-year and direct wherever possible. Short grants undermine continuity, relationships and the ability to measure long-term outcomes. Ranger programs also require vehicles, field equipment, laboratories and specialist partners, training, wages for cultural advisers, and administration support—not only project activity funding.

9. Non-lethal coexistence and support for farmers

The cultural case for ending routine lethal control must be accompanied by practical support for people whose livelihoods may be affected. Farmers should not be expected to carry the cost of a public transition alone. Equally, cultural and ecological values should not continue to carry the full cost of an outdated default to killing.

Peer-reviewed Australian research supports livestock guardian dogs as a credible non-lethal tool. Long-term follow-up work has found that well-selected, properly bonded and supported guardian dogs can remain effective over time, although performance depends on husbandry, training, landscape and enterprise context (van Bommel & Johnson 2023). Reviews also warn that guardian animals can interact with wildlife, reinforcing the need for careful placement, training and monitoring rather than one-size-fits-all promotion (Smith et al. 2020).

Other tools include human presence or range riding, night or maternity paddocks, improved fencing in targeted locations, guardian donkeys or alpacas where suitable, carcass and attractant management, coordinated husbandry, seasonal adjustments, deterrents and rapid response. No single method will suit every property. Trials must be locally designed, independently evaluated and adaptive.

A fair transition package

- Up-front grants covering assessment, equipment, guardian animals, fencing and labour—not reimbursement available only to well-capitalised operators.
- Independent technical advisers who are not paid according to product sales or numbers of animals killed.
- Partnerships between participating landholders, relevant Traditional Custodians, Indigenous Rangers, animal-welfare experts and researchers.
- Baseline data and agreed measures: verified predation, stock survival, animal welfare, labour and capital costs, dingo presence and pack stability, biodiversity and business performance.
- A time-limited hardship and verified-loss scheme during approved trials. Claims should use rapid independent investigation and clear evidence standards, with review rights.
- Contingency protocols for acute incidents, prioritising targeted non-lethal response. Any exceptional lethal action should be a last resort, individualised, authorised and reviewed—not a return to landscape-scale baiting.
- Publication of de-identified results, including unsuccessful trials, so that learning is shared honestly.

Compensation is not a substitute for prevention, and poorly designed compensation can create perverse incentives. The better model combines prevention funding, verified-loss assistance, shared learning and continuous improvement. It recognises farmers as transition partners while keeping cultural authority and public biodiversity obligations visible.

10. Research and evidence: two knowledge systems, ethical partnership

Western science can contribute genetics, population modelling, animal-welfare assessment and evaluation. It cannot determine cultural meaning or authority. A “two-way” approach must avoid extracting Indigenous knowledge to improve a government program while leaving decision-making power unchanged.

The Garli research demonstrates better practice: a site identified by Barkindji Elders, excavation requested by the Elders Council, work undertaken with Custodians, and interpretation enriched by Barkindji knowledge. The paper also candidly notes that earlier research often excluded Traditional Owners. NSW should turn this lesson into binding research standards.

- No project about Dingoes on a Nation’s Country without early engagement with the correct Traditional Custodians and documented consent.
- Co-developed research questions and budgets, paid Indigenous leadership and named recognition where appropriate.
- Agreements covering biological samples, images, recordings, maps, data access, publication, commercialisation and repatriation or return to Country.
- Cultural risk assessment alongside animal ethics and scientific ethics.
- Plain-language return of findings to communities before or alongside public release.
- Capacity transfer so that Ranger groups can increasingly own equipment, analyse data and lead publications.

11. Implementation pathway

14. First 3 months: establish an interim First Nations steering group; pause routine lethal control in national parks; disclose current policies, baiting and control activities; and fund targeted engagement with NSW Nations.

15. Within 6 months: agree statewide minimum cultural governance, animal-welfare, research and transparency standards; fund local Traditional Custodians to complete six-window cultural assessments; and select several diverse park–farm interface landscapes for co-designed non-lethal pilots.
16. Within 12 months: execute Nation-specific governance agreements; resource Ranger monitoring teams; commence baseline monitoring and farmer transition packages.
17. At 24 months: independently evaluate cultural, ecological, welfare and farm outcomes; publish results with ICIP protections; adjust methods and expand successful approaches.
18. At 3–5 years: review legislation and policy against the Declaration and evaluation results; consider Traditional Custodian-led restoration proposals in areas of regional loss.

Evaluation should ask not only “Were fewer livestock lost?” but also: Are Dingoes present and socially stable? Are cultural responsibilities being practised? Do Custodians hold real power? Has animal suffering reduced? Are Rangers funded and employed securely? Are landholders financially and practically supported? Has public trust improved?

Conclusion

This Inquiry can choose whether NSW continues a colonial pattern in which Dingo is renamed, removed and managed without the peoples to whom Dingo is kin—or whether it begins a respectful, evidence-based relationship grounded in Caring for Dingoes on Country.

The cultural evidence is not peripheral. It is direct evidence about what Dingo is, whose Country is affected, what obligations exist and who has authority to decide. NSW archaeology—from Curracurrang to Garli on the Baaka—shows a relationship carried through care, companionship, ceremony, burial and generations of remembrance. Living Traditional Custodians carry the authority that gives this evidence meaning today.

Dingo management will be stronger when government, science, conservation organisations, farmers and First Nations peoples work together—but collaboration must begin with recognition of cultural authority and must be backed by power, consent and long-term resources. The Committee should recommend a decisive shift away from routine lethal control and toward First Nations-led, non-lethal, locally tested coexistence.

Final request Hear directly from NSW Traditional Custodians in culturally safe public and confidential settings; treat the National First Nations’ Dingo Declaration as a foundational policy document; require local cultural assessment through Uncle Dr Ernie Grant’s six interconnected windows; and recommend a funded Caring for Dingoes on Country framework across NSW national parks.

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Appendix A — Principles for a Caring for Dingoes on Country framework

Principle	Meaning in practice
Cultural authority	Management starts with the relevant Traditional Custodians and respects distinct Nation-specific law, knowledge and aspirations.
Six-window lens	Land, Language and Culture are understood through Time, Place and Relationships, using a locally led assessment rather than a generic statewide account.
Recognition	Dingo is named and recognised as a native, culturally significant being—not obscured by the generic term “wild dog”.
Country	Cultural, ecological and community wellbeing are connected; management follows living landscapes rather than agency boundaries.
Non-lethal first	Prevention, coexistence and targeted response replace routine broadscale killing.
Ranger leadership	Indigenous Rangers are resourced to design, deliver, monitor and evaluate—not merely consulted or contracted.
Ethical knowledge partnership	Indigenous knowledge and Western science work together under consent, ICIP and Indigenous data governance.
Shared responsibility	Government funds the public benefit and supports landholders through transition, verified loss and practical assistance.
Transparency	Decisions, methods, evidence, welfare impacts and outcomes are reported and independently reviewed.
Intergenerational future	Policy enables Elders to pass knowledge and responsibilities to young people with Dingo alive on Country.