

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into dingo management across National Parks

I have volunteered at Bargo Dingo Sanctuary for 10 years. During this time I have read many scientific journals about dingoes. I conduct tours of the Sanctuary for the public and ensure my knowledge of scientific research about dingoes is current. I am passionate about caring for dingoes and understand their importance in the ecosystem.

Under the Terms of Reference, the Animal Welfare Committee will 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:

The genetic status of dingoes, the distinction between dingoes and dogs and recent research into the genetic profile of NSW dingoes

As scientific methods and techniques have improved, scientists are now able to use 195,000 genetic markers rather than 23, to analyse hybridisation. Recent studies concluded that in NSW, more than 75% of dingoes sampled showed over 93% contemporary dingo ancestry. Traces of domestic dog ancestry in wild dingoes was often due to historic rather than recent interbreeding. Dingoes with low to moderate levels of dog ancestry retain ecological traits and provide the important role of an apex predator for the ecosystem. Dingoes usually pair for life and form strong family bonds. They are sentient and intelligent animals that experience pain and distress, particularly when losing their partner or family/pack member.

<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2421749122>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mec.16998>

Dingoes are different to domestic dogs in many ways, but one way is that they are seasonal breeders and only breed once a year. Only the alpha male and female pair in a stable family unit/pack will breed. Poisoning, shooting or trapping can disrupt a stable dingo pack structure, increasing instability. If the alphas are killed, you lose the structure and rules set in place by the alphas.

Scientific research has determined that we have a higher percentage of pure dingoes in the wild than previously thought, and these animals are performing an important ecological function as apex predators. Most domestic dogs wouldn't survive and thrive in the wild as dingoes do. Discussion around genetic purity is still based on outdated research and science. We now have data to show the importance of dingoes in our environment.

The legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks governing the management of dingoes in New South Wales in national parks

By using the term 'wild dog', dingoes are classified as pest animals and are controlled under the Biosecurity Act 2015. The NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy was developed before the recent genetic studies and research papers were completed, using the latest scientific methods and improved DNA analysis. The current laws do not acknowledge the dingoes' ecological role or recognise them as an ecologically important native species.

The ecological role of dingoes in national parks

Dingoes are Australia's apex predator on the land (except Tasmania) and therefore play an important role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. Dingoes can suppress introduced species (eg foxes, rabbits) and regulate grazing animals such as wallabies or kangaroos from

overgrazing. Without dingoes keeping these grazing animals in check, they can overgraze grasslands and negatively affect the environment and ecosystems available for smaller mammals, birds, insects and reptiles. Habitat can be degraded placing pressure on threatened species (plant and animal).

<https://connectsci.au/am/article/44/3/387/36194/Dingoes-have-greater-suppressive-effect-on-fox>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10980-021-01206-w>

The cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities

Dingoes are culturally significant to many First Nations peoples, who have lived alongside them for thousands of years. The [National First Nations' Dingo Declaration](#) was written by Traditional Owners to outline their perspective.

As a community, we need to consider ways for dingoes, livestock and people to live alongside one another, without lethal control of dingoes. We need to support farmers to trial and implement the use of guardian animals (donkeys, guardian dogs, llamas), improved fencing and improved support for neighbouring landholders. Rather than funding 1080 baiting of dingoes, funds could support landholders to fund and implement non-lethal control methods, including education packages and support post implementation.

I hope we can work towards a solution where dingoes are acknowledged and respected for their ecological value. We need to support ways for dingoes, people and livestock to co-exist.