

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into the Management of Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

Dear Committee Members,

Please accept this submission in response to the Inquiry into the management of dingoes in New South Wales National Parks.

I am writing as a concerned citizen, wildlife carer and supporter of native wildlife protection, who strongly advocates for a transition away from broad-scale lethal control toward a proactive, science-based, and coexistence-focused approach to dingo management.

Currently, our public conservation lands—intended to preserve biodiversity—are being used to decimate a vital native apex predator. I urge the Committee to recommend a modernised management framework that aligns with contemporary science, respects First Nations cultural custody, and actively supports landholders with non-lethal coexistence strategies.

For decades, dingo management in NSW has relied on outdated genetic research utilising only 23 genetic markers. This obsolete methodology has been used to label dingoes as "wild dogs" or "hybrids" to justify widespread lethal control.

Modern genomic studies using up to 195,000 markers have completely revolutionised our understanding. Recent peer-reviewed research (including a landmark 2023 genetic analysis of wild canids) demonstrates that:

- Overwhelmingly, wild-living canids in Australia are dingoes.
- In NSW, more than three-quarters of sampled wild canids showed over 93% contemporary dingo ancestry.
- There is no established, self-sustaining population of feral domestic dogs occupying these ecosystems.

Furthermore, conservation science shows that dingoes with low to moderate levels of dog ancestry still completely retain their ecological traits and function as apex predators. Ironically, current lethal control programmes (such as aerial baiting) disrupt stable dingo pack structures, which actually increases social instability and makes interbreeding with domestic dogs more likely. I ask that the Committee base its final recommendations on this modern genomic science rather than outdated "genetic purity" debates.

Currently, dingoes are the only native Australian mammal specifically excluded from protection under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Instead, they are managed under the biosecurity "wild dog" umbrella—a classification that groups native dingoes with domestic pets and stray dogs.

This regulatory framework has resulted in devastating environmental impacts. Between 2020 and 2025, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) deployed more than 1.5 million 1080 poison baits targeting dingoes. It is highly contradictory that public funds are spent poisoning a native keystone species inside lands specifically set aside for national conservation.

Dingoes are vital for maintaining healthy, biodiverse ecosystems within our National Parks. They achieve this by:

- Suppressing introduced predators like red foxes and feral cats through territorial competition and predation, thereby protecting vulnerable small-to-medium native mammals.
- Regulating populations of large herbivores (like kangaroos and wallabies) and introduced species (like feral goats and pigs), preventing overgrazing and protecting sensitive native vegetation.

When dingoes are lethally removed, it triggers a "trophic cascade"—the collapse of ecosystem structures, resulting in degraded habitats and an increase in feral pest numbers.

I write in strong support of First Nations Cultural Custodians and their deep, ancestral relationship with the dingo. Dingoes hold profound cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance, acting as protectors, companion animals, and key figures in Songlines and kinship systems.

Despite this, many Cultural Custodians report feeling excluded from decisions regarding dingo management on their Country. I urge the Committee to endorse the principles outlined in the National First Nations Dingo Declaration and support:

- Transitioning to a co-management framework in National Parks that integrates Indigenous knowledge systems with Western science.
- Placing Indigenous ranger groups at the forefront of dingo monitoring and management programmes.

A transition to protecting dingoes in National Parks does not have to come at the expense of our agricultural neighbours. In fact, decades of broad-scale 1080 baiting have failed to eliminate the risk of livestock predation, and some studies suggest that destabilising packs actually increases the risk of calf predation.

Rather than funding expensive, cruel, and ecologically destructive lethal baiting programmes, the NSW Government should redirect these resources to support neighbouring landholders with non-lethal, proactive coexistence tools:

- Livestock Guardian Animals: Funding and training for the use of Livestock Guardian Dogs (Maremmas) and guardian donkeys, which have proven highly

effective at preventing canid predation while also deterring foxes, birds of prey, and kangaroos.

- **Extension Services:** Establishing government-funded extension services to advise, transition, and financially assist landholders in implementing non-lethal predator deterrent strategies.

Key Recommendations for the Committee's Final Report:

1. **End the lethal control of dingoes** within NSW National Parks to protect their ecological function and restore native biodiversity.
2. **Amend the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016** to remove the exemption for dingoes, recognising them as protected native wildlife.
3. **Elevate First Nations leadership** in National Park governance, aligning management policies with the National First Nations Dingo Declaration.
4. **Establish a Coexistence Fund** to provide financial support and extension services for landholders neighbouring National Parks to transition to non-lethal predator control methods.

Thank you for your time, your consideration of this evidence, and your commitment to shaping a more humane, ecologically sound, and scientifically rigorous future for NSW's native wildlife.