

**Submission
No 343**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Petra Jones

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry into dingoes in national parks in New South Wales (NSW).

I would also like to acknowledge the Minyurnai Rangers who in August 2024 attended the NSW Parliament to present the National First Nations Dingo Declaration and called for an inquiry into dingo management.

I respectfully request the committee to investigate the cultural significance of dingoes across New South Wales.

Dingoes have been part of the Australian landscape for 1000's of years. Dingo bones excavated in 1969 from the Madura Cave (Nullarbor Plain) were dated to 3.75 but according to the National Museum Australia website, DNA testing and sequencing revealed that dingoes reached our shores between 5,000 to 10,000 years ago.

Our First Nations peoples have an enduring and significant relationship with dingoes. The Australian Museum Research Institute published an article in their July 2026 Newsletter entitled *Millennium old dingo buried along the Baaka*. The article demonstrates the strong bond between dingoes and our First Nation peoples dating back to over 900 years ago. I have copied the article below for easy reference.

New evidence reveals a millennium old dingo was ritually buried along the Darling (Baaka) River

Sydney 20 May 2026: A millennium-old dingo deliberately buried by Barkindji ancestors along the Baaka, or Darling River, is offering rare insight into the depth of relationships between First Nations people and dingoes in western New South Wales.

The dingo appears to have been buried with great care in a purpose-built midden, which continued to be tended and “fed” with river mussel shells for centuries, suggesting an ongoing relationship between the buried dingo and local people. This is the first time this “feeding” practice has been observed archaeologically anywhere in the world.

Project lead [Dr Amy Way](#) said: “While Barkindji people have always known about this cultural practice, this discovery is really powerful because it provides new details on the depth of that relationship between Barkindji people and dingoes.”

Dr Way, who holds a joint position as archaeologist at the Australian Museum and lecturer in [Archaeology](#) at the University of Sydney, has been working closely with Barkindji custodians over the past five years, dating and recording Barkindji cultural heritage in Kinchega National Park.

The dingo, known as garli in Barkindji language, was discovered in a road cutting, its skeleton emerging due to erosion at a site in Kinchega National Park. The site is near the Menindee Lakes along the Darling River, about 100 kilometres south-east of Broken Hill. The male dingo was deliberately buried between 963-916 years ago within a riverside midden, as determined by radiocarbon dating.

“If garli were buried with the same care and respect we see for human ancestors, including mothers and elders, it tells us these animals were profoundly valued and loved,” Dr Way said.

Lead author and dingo specialist Dr Loukas Kounoulos from University of Western Australia said: “We know dingoes were tamed and lived alongside people as part of the community. This analysis details the depth of this relationship.”

Indigenous rangers are leading monitoring and management programs for Dingoes on Country throughout NSW and indeed Australia. This is providing important on-ground insights into Dingo populations and behaviour. This is crucial given the significant gaps in comprehensive, statewide data on wild dingo populations.

I strongly support and advocate for the increased participation of Indigenous governance and decision-making in respect of dingo conservation and management. A co-management strategy would provide a practical framework to integrate the wealth of Indigenous knowledge systems that hold detailed, place-based understanding of dingo behaviour, ecology, and their role in broader ecosystem function alongside western science in National Parks management, would lead to improvements in governance and on-ground effectiveness.

I respectfully request the committee examine recent developments in dingo genetics research.

I direct you to a study conducted by the University of NSW

[New DNA testing technology](#)

Some key points are detailed below:

Genetic analysis shows dingo populations have significantly less dog ancestry than previously thought.

Wild dingo populations have less dog lineage, with a significantly greater proportion of pure dingoes than previously thought, according to new research, challenging the view that pure dingoes are on the decline due to crossbreeding.

The findings, published in Molecular Ecology, suggest previous studies significantly overestimated the prevalence of dingo-dog mixes in the wild and that lethal methods to control 'wild dogs' target pure dingoes.

Dingoes are genetically distinct from domestic dogs but can interbreed. Cross-species breeding, or hybridisation, can threaten pure species, which may become vulnerable to extinction by genetic dilution.

"For decades, there was fear that dingoes were breeding themselves into extinction. But our findings suggest this isn't the case, and dingoes are largely maintaining their identity, which has implications for their management and conservation," says Dr Kylie Cairns, a conservation biologist from UNSW Science and lead author of the study.

More pure dingoes than hybrids

For the study, the research team led by UNSW Sydney investigated the extent of dingo hybridisation in different regions across Australia. They used a new genome-wide test to analyse the DNA of 391 wild and captive dingoes and conducted detailed ancestry modelling and biogeographic analysis to find wild dingoes had far less dog ancestry than suggested by prior genetic studies.

"The old method, which relied on a relatively small number of genetic markers and limited reference population, overestimates the amount of dog ancestry in dingo samples – sometimes by over 30 per cent," Dr Cairns says. "This meant it often identified an animal as crossbred when it was a pure dingo or historical backcross.

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In Victoria, where previous reports suggested the pure dingo population was as small as 4 per cent, the study found 87.1 per cent of animals tested were pure dingoes and 6.5 per cent were historical dingo backcrosses with more than 93 per cent dingo ancestry.

Similarly, in New South Wales and Queensland, where dingo-dog hybridisation is assumed to be pervasive, most animals were found to be pure dingoes, and only two wild canids had less than 70 per cent dingo ancestry.

Little evidence of hybridisation in the dingo population was also found in the Northern Territory, South Australia, and Western Australia.

"Reliance on outdated DNA testing methods has led to the belief that dingo-dog hybridisation is much more common in Australia than it really is," Dr Cairns says. "Most dingoes in the wild are pure dingoes, and the remaining animals are more dingo than anything else.

Informing evidence-based dingo management

In Australia, the term “wild dog” is widely used in policy under the assumption there is widespread dingo–dog hybridisation and very few remaining pure dingoes.

Under the name “wild dog”, dingoes, dingo-hybrids, and feral domestic dogs are all considered invasive species under biosecurity legislation and subject to eradication measures like aerial baiting or trapping across parts of the Australian mainland, including National Parks where native animals are protected.

“It’s convenient to paint all dingoes as wild dogs. But the term obscures the reality that many pure dingoes and dingo-dominant backcrosses are being killed,” Dr Cairns says. “In fact, no other native species is treated in quite the same way as the dingo, which is subject to lethal control measures across all landscapes, including ones where they should be protected.”

The researchers suggest that the definition of “dingoes” in conservation policy should be revised to include historical dingo backcrosses with 93 per cent or more dingo ancestry and distinguish them from “feral domestic dogs.”

“Doing so will more accurately reflect the identity of wild canids in Australia and acknowledge the value of dingoes as a native and culturally significant species,” Dr Cairns says.

Other issues

Dingoes are the only native mammal in NSW not protected under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act*. This omission results in dingoes and their hybrids to be classified as "wild dogs" and priority pests under the *Biosecurity Act*. The outcome is that their numbers are “managed” by inhumane means including 1080 poison baiting, trapping, and shooting. This results in prolonged suffering, with non-target native species also harmed and killed.

Dingoes are confident, intelligent and sentient beings that feel pain and emotions. They are being persecuted under laws that absolutely have no place in a modern, compassionate society.

I urge the committee to recommend that dingoes be given full legislative protection in NSW, that lethal control methods be replaced with humane, non-lethal alternatives and funding be redirected from 1080 baiting, trapping and shooting in National Parks to provide further funding for Indigenous rangers and research and development into non-lethal coexistence strategies.

Thank you for considering my submission.

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