

**Submission
No 381**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry: Protecting Australia's Dingoes

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1. Introduction

Dingoes (*Canis dingo*) are apex predators, cultural icons, and keystone regulators of Australian ecosystems (Letnic et al. 2012). Their protection is essential for biodiversity, landscape stability, and ethical wildlife governance. This submission outlines the scientific, cultural, and economic case for strengthening dingo protections across Australia.

2. Summary of Key Recommendations

- Recognise dingoes as native wildlife across all jurisdictions.
 - End lethal control programs, including 1080 baiting and trapping in conservation reserves.
 - Implement science-based coexistence strategies for livestock producers.
 - Establish a national dingo conservation and monitoring framework.
 - Prohibit misclassification of dingoes as “wild dogs.”
 - Fund independent research into dingo genetics and ecological function.
 - Create a national Predation Compensation Fund for farmers, modelled on the U.S. Yellowstone wolf program.
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3. Dingoes as Native Wildlife

Genetic and archaeological evidence confirms dingoes have been present in Australia for 3,000–8,000 years (Cairns & Wilton 2016). Their ecological integration meets scientific criteria for nativeness. Dingoes regulate mesopredators such as foxes and feral cats (Johnson et al. 2007) and reduce herbivore pressure (Letnic & Crowther 2013).

4. Ecological Importance

Dingoes are Australia's apex land predator. Their removal triggers trophic cascades that degrade ecosystems (Ripple et al. 2014).

Key ecological functions:

- Regulation of herbivore populations (Letnic & Crowther 2013).
 - Suppression of invasive predators (Johnson et al. 2007).
 - Maintenance of vegetation health (Letnic et al. 2009).
 - Stabilisation of food webs (Wallach et al. 2017).
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5. Harmful Impacts of Current Management Practices

1080 Poison

1080 baiting is indiscriminate, inhumane, and ecologically destabilising (Allen 2015). It increases mesopredator activity and causes prolonged suffering.

Misclassification as “Wild Dogs”

Combining dingo data with domestic dog and hybrid data masks true population trends (Cairns et al. 2023).

Persecution in Conservation Reserves

Dingoes are still trapped and baited inside national parks—contrary to conservation principles (Wallach et al. 2017).

6. Coexistence Strategies

Non-lethal strategies such as guardian animals, fencing, carcass management, and GPS monitoring reduce predation more effectively than lethal control (van Bommel & Johnson 2012). Producers using coexistence methods report lower long-term costs and improved animal welfare.

7. Predation Compensation Fund for Farmers

A national Predation Compensation Fund would support coexistence and reduce conflict.

The Yellowstone Model

During wolf reintroduction, the U.S. established a compensation fund reimbursing ranchers for verified losses (Bangs et al. 1998). This reduced conflict and increased producer support (Nie 2003).

Application to Australia

A similar fund would:

- Provide financial security for farmers.
- Reduce pressure for lethal control.
- Encourage adoption of coexistence strategies.
- Improve trust between agricultural and conservation sectors.

Key Components

- Independent assessment teams.
 - Clear eligibility criteria.
 - Tiered compensation.
 - Integration with coexistence programs.
 - Annual public reporting.
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8. Cultural Significance

Dingoes hold deep cultural importance for First Nations communities, featuring in Dreaming stories and traditional ecological knowledge (Smith & Litchfield 2009).

9. National Conservation Framework

Recommendations:

- National monitoring using genetic testing and non-invasive sampling.
 - Standardised definitions and protections.
 - Independent oversight.
 - Public education campaigns.
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10. Conclusion

Dingoes are essential to Australia's ecological integrity and cultural heritage. A national Predation Compensation Fund would support farmers while enabling dingoes to fulfil their ecological role. Protecting dingoes is a national responsibility.

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