

Submission
No 383

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into Dingoes in National Parks in New South Wales

Introduction

I am a Conservation Officer and science communicator based in Queensland. Although I work in Queensland, I have spent considerable time in New South Wales and have developed a strong appreciation for the state's unique natural environments and wildlife. I am making this submission because I believe dingoes are an ecologically and culturally significant species that deserve evidence-based and culturally informed management.

My respect for dingoes began at a young age. I still remember seeing my first dingo pup at a wildlife sanctuary in new south wales. That experience sparked a lifelong fascination with the species. As I grew older and pursued a career in conservation, I gained a deeper understanding of the ecological importance of dingoes and the many threats they continue to face. This has strengthened my commitment to ensuring they are managed with the respect and protection they deserve. I believe based on previous environment work NSW has done, NSW can continue to lead the way for better protection of our wildlife including our dingoes.

Response to the Terms of Reference

(c) The ecological role of dingoes in National Parks

Dingoes are Australia's only native canid and are recognised as an important apex predator and keystone species. As the continent's top terrestrial predator, they play a vital role in maintaining healthy and resilient ecosystems within National Parks.

By regulating populations of herbivores such as kangaroos and wallabies, dingoes help reduce excessive grazing pressure on native vegetation. This contributes to healthier landscapes, supports vegetation regeneration, and benefits the many plant and animal species that rely on intact habitats.

The removal of apex predators can destabilise ecosystems. Reduced dingo populations may contribute to increases in herbivore numbers, vegetation decline, habitat degradation, and increased pressure on threatened species. Healthy dingo populations are therefore an important component of ecosystem function and biodiversity conservation.

As a Conservation Officer, I recognise the importance of protecting natural ecological processes. Conserving dingoes within National Parks supports broader conservation objectives by helping maintain ecological balance and resilience. Their management should therefore prioritise their ecological function as a native apex predator and be informed by the best available scientific evidence.

Campbell G, Emmott A, Pollock D, Traill BJ. (2022) Can dingoes increase graziers' profits and help maintain Australia's rangelands?. *The Rangeland Journal* 44, 129–135.

(d) The cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities

I wish to address the cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities.

I recognise and support the role of Cultural Custodians and their enduring connection to dingoes. Across New South Wales and the wider continent, dingoes hold profound cultural significance. They are woven into stories, dance, art, lore, kinship systems, and cultural responsibilities to Country. For many First Nation communities, dingoes are not simply a native species but an integral part of cultural identity, knowledge, and the living landscape.

Management of dingoes within National Parks should meaningfully reflect this cultural importance. Decisions about dingo management should not be made without the voices and leadership of the Traditional Owners and Cultural Custodians whose knowledge and relationship with dingoes extends back thousands of years.

I support greater involvement of Cultural Custodians in decision-making and place-based management regarding dingoes in New South Wales National Parks. Their ecological knowledge, cultural practices, and ongoing stewardship can contribute to more balanced, effective, and respectful management outcomes.

Ensuring that the cultural significance of dingoes is recognised within legislation, policy, and management frameworks is an important step towards both protecting this iconic species and acknowledging the enduring connection between First Nations peoples and Country.

Recommendations

I recommend that the New South Wales Government:

- Recognise dingoes as a native apex predator and keystone species whose ecological role is fundamental to the health of National Park ecosystems.
- Ensure dingo management within National Parks is guided by the best available ecological science and prioritises the conservation of natural ecosystem processes, further recognising dingoes important role as a keystone species.
- Increase the involvement and leadership of Cultural Custodians in decisions relating to dingo management within National Parks.
- Embed First Nations cultural knowledge and values into dingo management plans.
- Ensure legislation and policy explicitly recognise the cultural significance of dingoes and support place-based management led in partnership with Traditional Owners.
- Financial support and extension services for landholders surrounding National Parks to implement non-lethal coexistence strategies, ensuring their interests are protected and dingoes can be maintained in the environment.

Conclusion

As someone who has dedicated my career to conservation, I believe dingoes should be managed in a way that reflects both the best available ecological science and their profound cultural significance. Their role as Australia's only native canid and apex predator makes them essential to the health of our ecosystems, while their enduring importance to

First Nations peoples must be recognised and respected through genuine partnership in management.

By protecting dingoes and embracing both scientific and cultural knowledge, New South Wales has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in conserving one of Australia's most iconic native species for future generations.