

**Submission
No 384**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Management of Dingoes in National Parks

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry and strongly support reforms that provide greater protection for dingoes across New South Wales National Parks.

As someone working in conservation and ecosystem restoration, I have seen firsthand how interconnected healthy ecosystems are. Every native species has a role to play, and apex predators are among the most important. Dingoes are not simply another wild animal—they are a keystone species whose presence influences the health, resilience and biodiversity of entire landscapes.

I urge the Committee to recommend an end to the routine lethal control of dingoes within New South Wales National Parks.

Current management practices that allow dingoes to be trapped, poisoned and shot within protected conservation areas are increasingly inconsistent with contemporary ecological science. National Parks exist to conserve biodiversity and natural ecological processes. Continuing to remove an apex predator from these landscapes undermines those objectives.

Recent advances in genetic research also demonstrate that current management policies are based on outdated science. Earlier assessments relied on only a small number of genetic markers, whereas modern genomic studies using vastly more comprehensive methods have shown that the overwhelming majority of Australia's wild-living canids are dingoes. In New South Wales, research indicates that more than three-quarters of sampled wild canids possess over 93% contemporary dingo ancestry. These findings warrant a reassessment of current policy.

Equally important is recognising that the ecological value of dingoes extends beyond questions of genetics. Dingoes fulfil the ecological role of Australia's apex terrestrial predator. Healthy dingo populations help regulate prey species and suppress populations of invasive predators, contributing to healthier and more balanced ecosystems. Removing apex predators can trigger cascading ecological effects that ultimately reduce biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Evidence also suggests that lethal control can unintentionally increase the very issues it aims to address. Poisoning, trapping and shooting disrupt established family groups and pack structures, creating social instability that can increase breeding opportunities with domestic dogs and potentially increase conflict with livestock. Stable dingo packs are more likely to maintain territories, regulate their own populations and perform their ecological functions effectively.

As someone who works closely with landscapes undergoing restoration, I believe conservation decisions should reflect the best available science while protecting the natural processes that have evolved over thousands of years. Apex predators are fundamental to functioning

ecosystems, and their conservation should be viewed as an essential component of biodiversity protection.

I also strongly support greater involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Custodians in decisions relating to dingo management within National Parks. Dingoes hold deep cultural significance for many First Nations peoples, and management should be informed by both Traditional Ecological Knowledge and contemporary scientific research. Genuine partnerships with Cultural Custodians can lead to more holistic, place-based conservation outcomes.

For neighbouring landholders experiencing impacts from dingoes, I support increased government investment in practical, non-lethal coexistence strategies. These may include exclusion fencing, guardian animals, improved livestock husbandry, education and extension services. Supporting coexistence provides a balanced approach that protects both livelihoods and biodiversity without relying on widespread lethal control.

Recommendations

I respectfully ask the Committee to recommend:

- An end to the routine killing of dingoes within New South Wales National Parks.
- Recognition of dingoes as a protected native species within conservation areas.
- Management policies based on contemporary genetic and ecological science.
- Greater involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Custodians in dingo management and decision-making.
- Increased government funding for non-lethal coexistence measures for neighbouring landholders.
- Ongoing research and long-term monitoring of dingo populations and their ecological role to inform adaptive management.

Protecting dingoes is not simply about protecting a single species. It is about protecting the ecological integrity of Australia's landscapes, respecting one of our most significant native predators, and ensuring that conservation policy reflects the best available evidence. National Parks should be places where native ecosystems are allowed to function as naturally as possible, and that includes allowing dingoes to fulfil the vital ecological role they have played for thousands of years.