

**Submission
No 393**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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I welcome the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry.

As an Australian who deeply values our unique wildlife and natural environment, I strongly oppose the continued killing of dingoes in New South Wales National Parks. National Parks exist to conserve native wildlife and ecosystems. It is contradictory that Australia's apex predator can still be legally poisoned, trapped and shot within areas established to protect biodiversity.

Dingoes are essential to healthy ecosystems

Dingoes are a keystone species that help maintain the balance of nature. By naturally regulating populations of kangaroos, wallabies, feral goats, foxes and feral cats, dingoes help reduce overgrazing, improve vegetation recovery and increase the survival of many smaller native mammals, reptiles and birds.

When dingoes are removed, ecosystems often become unbalanced. Increased numbers of herbivores can damage vegetation, while greater numbers of foxes and feral cats place additional pressure on threatened native wildlife. Protecting dingoes is therefore about protecting entire ecosystems, not just one species.

Lethal control is often ineffective

Scientific research has shown that killing dingoes frequently disrupts stable family packs. When established packs are destroyed, younger and inexperienced animals disperse into new areas and breeding rates can increase. This disruption may actually worsen livestock conflicts instead of reducing them.

Continuing broad-scale lethal control is therefore not only inhumane but often fails to achieve its intended outcomes.

Humane alternatives exist

Modern wildlife management should focus on coexistence rather than eradication.

Practical non-lethal methods include:

- exclusion fencing around vulnerable livestock
- guardian dogs and guardian animals
- improved husbandry practices
- removing carcasses that attract predators
- targeted deterrents where required
- financial assistance for landholders adopting non-lethal management.

These methods protect both livestock and native wildlife while avoiding unnecessary suffering.

Animal welfare matters

The use of 1080 poison, trapping and shooting raises significant animal welfare concerns. Poisoning can result in prolonged suffering before death, while trapping and aerial or ground shooting also carry risks of unnecessary suffering and impacts on non-target animals.

Australia has a responsibility to manage wildlife using the most humane methods available.

First Nations knowledge must be respected

For thousands of years, dingoes have held deep cultural, spiritual and ecological significance for Aboriginal peoples. Traditional ecological knowledge recognises the dingo as an important part of Country and healthy landscapes.

Future management should involve Traditional Owners as genuine partners in decision-making, recognising their knowledge and long history of living alongside dingoes.

Language influences perception

I am also concerned by the continued use of the term "wild dog" when referring to dingoes. This terminology creates confusion and often masks the fact that Australia's native apex predator is being targeted.

Management should clearly distinguish between feral domestic dogs and dingoes, recognising the growing scientific understanding that many wild canids in eastern Australia are predominantly dingoes rather than feral dogs.

My recommendations

I respectfully ask the Committee to recommend:

1. Ending routine lethal control of dingoes within NSW National Parks.
2. Recognising dingoes as an essential native apex predator deserving legislative protection.
3. Investing in science-based, non-lethal coexistence strategies for neighbouring landholders.
4. Increasing research into the ecological benefits of healthy dingo populations.
5. Ensuring First Nations peoples play a central role in future dingo conservation and management.
6. Replacing the generic term "wild dog" with accurate terminology that distinguishes dingoes from feral domestic dogs.

Conclusion

Australia has already lost far too many native species. We should not continue policies that remove one of the country's most important native predators from landscapes set aside for conservation.

Healthy dingo populations contribute to healthier ecosystems, greater biodiversity and more resilient landscapes. Rather than continuing outdated control programs, New South Wales has

an opportunity to lead Australia in adopting evidence-based, humane and ecologically responsible management.

The measure of a society is often reflected in how it treats its wildlife. I urge the Committee to recommend policies that allow dingoes to fulfil the ecological role they have performed for thousands of years and ensure they remain an enduring part of Australia's natural heritage.