

**Submission
No 398**

INQUIRY INTO DINGOES IN NATIONAL PARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into the treatment and cultural and ecological significance of dingoes in National Parks

Barry and Annette Turner, sheep producer.

Key points

- Wild dog control protects livestock, farm businesses, and the economic future of regional communities near National Parks.
- Coordinated control between National Parks, Local Land Services and neighbouring landholders has already cut livestock losses and improved animal welfare — this system works and should not be dismantled.
- Weakening land managers' ability to control wild dog's risks undoing decades of progress and would put pastoral businesses at serious risk.
- New DNA research shows most wild-living dogs in NSW carry a mix of dingo and domestic dog ancestry — there is no clean line between "dingo" and "wild dog." Current control programs are not making this worse or threatening dingoes' genetic future.
- There is no solid scientific evidence that dingoes reliably control foxes and feral cats, so pulling back on wild dog management is unlikely to deliver the biodiversity benefits some assume.
- Dingoes, are currently managed as a pest species under biosecurity law, not as threatened native wildlife — and the evidence does not support changing that.
- Independent reviews have found the problem is inconsistent management, not excessive management — the fix is better coordination and more resourcing, not less control.
- First Nations views on dingoes vary between communities and should be decided locally, not treated as one single position.
- Any new rules must not shift the cost of dingo conservation onto farmers and regional communities who live with these impacts daily.

What we are asking for

1. Keep National Parks' and other land managers' ability to actively manage wild dogs.
2. Keep the "nil-tenure" approach — everyone manages wild dogs on their land, regardless of who owns it, because wild dogs do not respect fences.
3. Base decisions on factual evidence and real local impacts, not assumptions.
4. Invest more in coordinated wild dog programs, as independent reviews have recommended.
5. Do not introduce changes that increase livestock losses, harm animal welfare, or dump the cost of conservation on farming families.

Why this matters to us

My family has farmed in this district for 115 years, twenty-six years right next to Paroo Darling National Park. For years, we have coordinated wild dog control between National

Parks, Local Land Services and neighbouring landholders which has cut our livestock losses and improved animal welfare. This is not a wildlife debate to us — it is about whether our farm businesses can keep running.

If this Inquiry weakens that system, it risks reversing years of hard-won progress, and the cost will land on livestock producers and regional communities, not on the government departments making the decision.

The genetics: there is no such thing as a clean "pure dingo vs domestic dog" split

New DNA research — using old dingo DNA from before European settlement — shows earlier studies underestimated how much domestic dog ancestry many populations already carry. In eastern Australia, including much of eastern NSW, wild-living dogs generally have more domestic dog ancestry than dingoes further inland, mostly because of the long history of farming and dog ownership in the east.

The science is clear: ancestry runs along a spectrum, not a strict "pure dingo" or "domestic dog" divide. Most wild-living dogs still carry a lot of dingo ancestry, just mixed with varying amounts of dog. And critically — there is no evidence that current wild dog control programs are making hybridisation worse, or damaging dingo populations long-term. Monitoring shows populations have stayed genetically stable despite ongoing management.

For a producer, none of these change the bottom line: what matters is not whether an animal is technically a "dingo," a hybrid, or a "wild dog" — it is whether it is killing stock.

The current rules make sense

Dingoes are not protected under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act and are instead managed as pests under biosecurity law. That is not an oversight — it reflects the genuine uncertainty over their status and the fact that many populations carry mixed ancestry. Dingoes are not listed as threatened under NSW or Commonwealth law, and they remain widespread. There is no scientific case for reclassifying them as protected native wildlife.

Do dingoes even control foxes and cats?

Some people assume fewer dingo controls mean fewer foxes and cats, and better outcomes for native wildlife. The science does not back this up. Some studies show dingoes suppressing foxes and cats in certain conditions; others find no effect at all. Reviews of the evidence have found no consistent proof that reducing wild dog control improves biodiversity, or that dingo numbers alone drive down fox and cat numbers. Integrated pest programs — targeting wild dogs, foxes, cats, and pigs together — are what deliver biodiversity results.

First Nations perspectives

Aboriginal communities hold a wide range of views on dingoes and their cultural significance — there is no single Indigenous position. Local planning processes already give traditional owners and Aboriginal land councils the chance to raise cultural values and significant sites, and this should keep happening at the local level, alongside biosecurity and biodiversity objectives.

What's actually working, and what needs fixing

Independent reviews by the NSW Natural Resources Commission have looked closely at pest management on public land. Their finding was not that there is too much wild dog control — it is the opposite. They found:

- Management often is not done at a large enough scale
- Effort varies too much between regions
- Coordination between agencies could improve
- Neighbouring landholders still cop serious impacts from animals coming off public land

In other words: the fix is better coordination and more investment, not stepping back.

Bottom line

Wild dog management and dingo conservation are not opposites — the National Wild Dog Action Plan proves both can work together. Weakening current controls would put livestock, animal welfare, and the viability of farming businesses at serious risk, without any solid evidence it would deliver a conservation benefit.

The real question for this Inquiry is not *whether* dingoes should be conserved — it is how that is balanced against the practical need to protect livestock, communities, and livelihoods. The current coordinated approach strikes that balance. It should be strengthened, not weakened.

Yours Sincerely Annette and Barry Turner.

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