

WIRES Submission
Dingoes in national parks in New South Wales

2026

About WIRES

WIRES is Australia's largest wildlife rescue organisation, and operates a dedicated Wildlife Rescue Office assisting wildlife and the community across Australia 24-hours a day, 365 days a year, providing rescue advice and assistance for over 230,000 animals in 2025, an 18% increase. We have around 4,000 dedicated volunteers as well as a fleet of Wildlife Ambulances operated by full-time, professional Emergency Responders.

In addition, WIRES trains hundreds of rescuers and carers annually, are dedicated to the ongoing recruitment of new volunteers and the continued training of existing volunteers. This growing network is critical for the rescue and rehabilitation of our unique native wildlife.

WIRES provides support for other organisations and individual carers Australia-wide, across major projects, food support, disaster relief funding, training, rescue communications systems, and the National Grants Program (NGP). Commencing in 2021, WIRES NGP provides up to $1 million per year for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation projects across Australia.

Across NSW, the contribution of volunteers is estimated to save the government approximately $27 million per annum. This figure continues to grow.

Cover image

Contents

Executive Summary 2
Terms of Reference 3
Introduction 4
Dingoes in Australia 6
Dingoes and Genetics 7
Legislative, Regulatory and Policy Frameworks 13
The Ecological Role of Dingoes in National Parks 17
The cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities 18
The impact of current government policies and programs for the management of dingoes in national parks 20
Dingo management including opportunities for incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and leadership in dingo conservation in national parks 21
Any other related matters 24
Conclusion 24
Recommendations 25

Executive Summary

The *Inquiry into dingoes in national parks in New South Wales* provides an opportunity for the Committee to lay foundations for necessary change in NSW. Changes to the way dingoes are framed in legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks which enable a shift in approaches to living and co-existing with them.

Changes which endorse and support First Nations caring for dingoes on Country, and enable the volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector to be able to care for and safely release healthy dingoes back onto their range. Changes which reflect public expectations to protect dingoes aligned with other mammals.

With all these changes facilitated through developing programs and support for landholders to co-exist with dingoes.

Terms of Reference

The terms of refence for the NSW Legislative Council's Animal Welfare Committee *Inquiry into dingoes in national parks in New South Wales* were published on 19 Mary 2026.

These set out

> That the Animal Welfare Committee inquire into and report on the treatment and the cultural and ecological significance of dingoes in national parks in New South Wales, and in particular
>
> a) the genetic status of dingoes, the distinction between dingoes and dogs and recent research into the genetic profile of NSW dingoes
> b) the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks governing the management of dingoes in New South Wales in national parks
> c) the ecological role of dingoes in national parks
> d) the cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities
> e) the impact of current government policies and programs for the management of dingoes in national parks
> f) dingo management including opportunities for incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and leadership in dingo conservation in national parks, and
> g) any other related matters.

Introduction

NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service (WIRES) welcomes the opportunity to provide a brief submission to the NSW Parliamentary inquiry into *Dingoes in national parks in New South Wales* industrial estate.

Dingoes are a charismatic species, and there is an increasing public awareness — despite misrepresentations across government legislation, regulation and policy documents — of their social, cultural and ecological importance. They are viewed positively, and the broader public expect increased protections.

> *As with other mammals, there is an increasing public expectation that the volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector care for and release dingoes back into their range — currently not permissible in NSW.*

The timing of the Inquiry is well-placed to inform the successor to the *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027* (the Strategy), with necessary changes to the included definition of 'wild dogs.' In parallel, changes to enable the protection of dingoes and a pathway to their rehabilitation and safe release in NSW — reflecting public expectations of government — and broader conservation activities with National Parks and surrounding areas. Genetic research is clear

> Our findings imply that the vast majority of modern dingoes only carry a small fraction of European dog ancestry, suggesting the usage of the term "wild dog" is unlikely to be appropriate for most free-living canine populations in Australia.[1]

In moving to and prioritising an approach based on coexistence with, and protection for, dingoes, it is critical the First Nations communities are involved in policy and regulatory change to support caring for Country. As noted by Jirrbal woman Sonya Takau, the dingo has been demonised in settler-colonial Australia.[2] Detailed and engaged research, including the work of renowned

[1] Ravishankar, S., Nguyen, N.C., Taufik, L., Michielsen, N.M., Bergström, A., Tobler, R., Fordham, D., Brüniche-Olsen, A., Rahbek, C., Llamas, B. & Souilmi, Y. (2026). Paleogenomics-Informed Inferences of European Dog Admixture Enables Scalable Dingo Conservation, *Conservation Letters* 19, no. 3: e70052. https://doi.org/10.1111/con4.70052

[2] Naunton, J., & Ruddick, B. (2025). Dingo management should be 'non-lethal', traditional owners say, *ABC News*, 28 December. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-12-28/non-lethal-dingo-management-push-by-traditional-owners/105807306

ethnographer Deborah Bird Rose,[3] have further documented the cultural ecological importance of dingoes.

The ACT government is showing leadership and reflecting public expectations with a commitment 'to recognising Waragul [Ngunnawal for Dingo] as a unique animal with important cultural and ecological value.'[4]

Separately, the Inquiry affords Commitee, and the NSW government, an opportunity to provide leadership and inform the successor to the *National Wild Dog Action Plan (2020-2030)*,[5] which

> is a nationally agreed framework that promotes and supports a strategic and risk-based approach to wild dog management; emphasising humane, safe and effective management techniques and appropriate scales for mitigating the impacts of wild dogs.

The Strategy is explicit on the importance of research informing policy, regulation and actions, with a 'need for continual improvement requir[ing] a comprehensive research capacity and… collaboration.'[6] There is also an opportunity for NSW to draw on the commitments made by the ACT government.

There is a pressing need for a shift in the terminology used to refer to dingoes across legislation, regulation, and management practices. The committee has a clear opportunity to emphasise a shift in focus towards coexistence and protection, challenging current government positioning of dingoes as a 'problem.'[7]

---

[3] Rose, D.B. (2024). Dreaming Ecology: Nomadics and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, Victoria River, Northern Australia, Darrell Lewis, Margaret Jolly (Eds), ANU Press. http://doi.org/10.22459/DE.202; Rose, D. B. (2010). Flying Fox: Kin, Keystone, Kontaminant. Manoa: a Pacific journal of international writing, 22(2), 175-190. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41479490; Rose, D.B. (2013). Dingo kinship. *Wildlife Australia*, 50(2), 33-35; Rose, D.B. (1992); *Dingo Makes us Human: Life and land in Aboriginal Australian culture*, Cambridge University Press.

[4] ACT Government (2026). Waragul (Dingoes) / wild dogs, 27 May. https://www.act.gov.au/environment/animals-and-plants/animals/wildlife-management/waragul-dingoes-wild-dogs

[5] Copyright for the National Wild Dog Action Plan (2020-2030) sits with Australian Wool Innovation Ltd, an 'industry-owned rural research and development corporation.' See Australian National Audit Office (2023). *Australian Wool Innovation*, Auditor-General Report No. 32 2022–23 Performance Audit, Commonwealth of Australia. https://www.anao.gov.au/work/performance-audit/australian-wool-innovation

[6] See NSW Government (2022) *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027*, p. 10.

[7] See NSW Government (2022) *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027*, p. 10.

Of particular note, the Strategy reproduces a distribution map from Stephens *et al* (2015)[8] to infer there are no 'pure' dingoes in eastern NSW. Recent research, which builds on the data included in the analysis undertaken by Stephens *et al* has found that 'the presence of dog ancestry in wild dingoes is much less common than previously hypothesised by microsatellite DNA testing' (including the data analysed by Stephens et al).[9] To restate another way, 'contemporary dingo populations have maintained their evolutionary distinctiveness from domestic dogs' with limited gene flow in contemporary populations.[10]

National Parks continue to provide important protected habitat haven for dingoes. Continuing fragmentation and destruction of habitat increases pressures on dingoes at the interface with land used for agriculture. Dingos must have somewhere to live. There must be a shift to 'culturally sensitive non-lethal' approaches centred on co-existence: 'there are better options.'[11]

Dingoes in Australia

When dingoes arrived on the Australian mainland continues to be a subject of major debate, with published estimates varying widely. Current evidence of dingoes in known fossil records appear in the mid to late Holocene, indicating that dingoes likely arrived with humans.[12] A commonly quoted date for the arrival of the dingo in Australia is around 4000–5000 years ago (supported by known archaeological estimates), with dingo remains from Wombah and Capertee (NSW) have

[8] Stephens, D. *et al* (2015). Death by sex in an Australian icon: a continent-wide survey reveals extensive hybridization between dingoes and domestic dogs, *Molecular Ecology* 24, 5643-5656. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.13416

[9] Cairns, K. M., Crowther, M. S., Parker, H. G., Ostrander, E. A., & Letnic, M. (2023). Genome-wide variant analyses reveal new patterns of admixture and population structure in Australian dingoes. *Molecular Ecology*, 32, 4133–4150. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.16998

[10] Cairns, K.M., Letnic, M., Ritchie, E.G., Adams, J.W., Crowther, M.S., Dickman, C.R., Fillios, M., Pascoe, J., Smith, B.P., & Newsome, T. M. (2025) Taxonomic tangles posed by human association – the urgent need for an evidence-based review of dingo and domestic dog taxonomy and nomenclature. *Australian Mammalogy* 47, AM24052. https://doi.org/10.1071/AM24052

[11] Naunton, J., & Ruddick, B. (2025). Dingo management should be 'non-lethal', traditional owners say, *ABC News*, 28 December. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-12-28/non-lethal-dingo-management-push-by-traditional-owners/105807306

[12] The Holocene is the current geological epoch beginning approximately 11,7000 years ago.

been dated at 2781-3645 years Before Present (BP).[13] Research on mtDNA provides a time of arrival as far back as 18,000 years BP.[14]

Dingoes and Genetics

The currently adopted government definition of dingoes, and framing of what constitutes (the misnomer of) a 'pure' dingo is politically enmeshed, which act to (re)position dingoes as 'wild dogs.' The objective of which is to render them killable, influence public opinion through constructing dingoes as a 'pest'. Such language and framing continue to facilitate inconsistent interpretations across NSW government webpages and policy documents. For example 'Managing wild dogs in our national parks' on a NSW government Environment and Heritage webpage titled 'wild dogs' includes:

> The NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027 promotes a balance between managing wild dogs in areas where they have negative impacts and conserving dingoes elsewhere.[15]

This statement infers that dingoes are dingoes in some locations, and 'wild dogs' in others. The definition of 'wild dogs' provided on the webpage linked to (from the excerpt above) as the *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022-2027* is more direct:

> In NSW the term 'wild dog' refers to all wild-living dogs (*Canis familiaris*) and includes dingoes, feral domestic dogs and the hybrid descendants of these. [16]

By contrast, the *Foreword* and *About this Strategy* (Section 1) in the *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027* itself does not include any mention of dingoes. The definition, reproduced

---

[13] Balme, J., O'Connor, S. & Fallon, S. (2018) New dates on dingo bones from Madura Cave provide oldest firm evidence for arrival of the species in Australia, *Scientific Reports* 8, 9933 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-018-28324-x

[14] Oskarsson, M.C.R., Klütsch, C.F.C., Boonyaprakob, U., Wilton, A., Tanabe, Y., & Savolainen, P. (2011). Mitochondrial DNA data indicate an introduction through Mainland Southeast Asia for Australian dingoes and Polynesian domestic dogs. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B Biological Sciences* 279 (1730): 967–974. https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2011.1395

[15] Environment and Heritage (2026). *Wild Dogs*, NSW Government. last updated 20 May 2025. https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/pest-animals-and-weeds/pest-animals/wild-dogs

[16] DPIRD (2026). *Wild Dogs*, NSW Government. https://www.dpird.nsw.gov.au/dpi/biosecurity/invasive-plants-and-animals/pest-animals/established-pest-animals/species-information/wild-dogs

above from the government website, is included in *Situational overview* (Section 2) and provides the first mention of dingoes in the Strategy document.

This 'wild dog' definition is accompanied by a reproduced[17] distribution map (Figure 1) which implies that all dingoes in eastern NSW are of low genetic purity, with the remainder being moderate (i.e. all 'hybrids') aside from the far worth-west of the state. Descriptions of dingoes in the *Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017-2027* — setting aside the positioning of dingoes as an invasive species, has a similar implication: 'Modern dogs have readily interbred with dingoes creating hybrid wild dogs, which predominate in south-eastern Australia'.[18]

Inconsistences in definitions and framings of dingos are clear in differences between the NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022-2027 and Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017-2027.

Whereas the *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022-2027* classifies all dingoes as 'wild dogs', the *Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017-2027* only classifies dingo 'hybrids' as 'wild dogs.'

A similar recognised inconsistency is evident in ACT government policies, including the *Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration 2021* which declares Waragul as 'pest' animals and the *ACT Pest Animal Management Strategy* which currently guides practice. Of note, management plans extend across the border, in cooperation with NSW Departments. These policies — in the ACT at least — sit alongside a stated commitment to recognise 'Waragul as a unique animal with important cultural and ecological value.'[19]

In addition to recognising the cultural and ecological importance of dingoes, the ACT government commitment to a shift in the management of Waragul specifically refers to the genetic testing in Namadgi National Park. Of the 50 dogs sampled, government material states:

- 47 were 'pure' Waragul
- 2 had greater than 93% Waragul ancestry

---

[17] Stephens, D. *et al* (2015). Death by sex in an Australian icon: a continent-wide survey reveals extensive hybridization between dingoes and domestic dogs, *Molecular Ecology* 24, 5643-5656. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.13416

[18] Invasive Plants and Animals Committee (2017). *Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017-2027*, Commonwealth of Australia, p. 31.

[19] ACT Government (2026). Waragul (Dingoes) / wild dogs, 27 May. https://www.act.gov.au/environment/animals-and-plants/animals/wildlife-management/waragul-dingoes-wild-dogs

- one sample was a 'feral dog', with a small amount (14%) of non-local Waragul genes. This means this animal likely came from outside the ACT.

In addition, 'analysis of 20 animals from nearby NSW also showed no hybridisation with domestic dogs.' [20] These finding reflect the latest research, including a peer reviewed paper published in May 2026:

> European dog admixture in free-roaming dingo populations is limited, largely historical, and associated with proximity to large population centers and past lethal control.[21]

Of note, the focus of Stephens *et al* (2015) — where Figure 1 in the *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027* is reproduced from — is the potential for domestic dog admixture (genetic dilution) leading to dingo extinction, which is also reflected in several other studies.[22] Concern for genetic dilution of dingoes — as a conservation concern — reflect that 'dingoes represent an evolutionary lineage that is independent and discrete from extant domestic dogs and has been so for thousands of years.'[23]

There are two issues of specific importance here (1) the reproduced map is used in the *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027* to support lethal management (i.e. killing) programs for dingoes in NSW, through positioning them as dangerous 'hybrids,' and (2) recent research

---

[20] ACT Government (2026). Waragul (Dingoes) / wild dogs, 27 May. https://www.act.gov.au/environment/animals-and-plants/animals/wildlife-management/waragul-dingoes-wild-dogs

[21] Ravishankar, S., Nguyen, N.C., Taufik, L., Michielsen, N.M., Bergström, A., Tobler, R., Fordham, D., Brüniche-Olsen, A., Rahbek, C., Llamas, B. & Souilmi, Y. (2026). Paleogenomics-Informed Inferences of European Dog Admixture Enables Scalable Dingo Conservation, *Conservation Letters* 19, no. 3: e70052. https://doi.org/10.1111/con4.70052

[22] See, for example, Cairns, K. M., Crowther, M. S., Nesbitt, B., & Letnic, M. (2022). The myth of wild dogs in Australia: Are there any out there? *Australian Mammalogy* 44, 67–75. https://doi.org/10.1071/AM20055; Claridge, A. W., Spencer, R.J., Wilton, A. N., Jenkins, D. J., Dall, D., & Lapidge, S. J. (2014). When is a dingo not a dingo? Hybridisation with domestic dogs. In Glen, A.S., & Dickman, C.R., (Eds) Carnivores of Australia: Past, present and future, CSIRO Publishing, pp. 151-172. https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/6708; Major, R. (2009). *Predation and hybridisation by feral dogs (Canis lupus familiaris) — Key threatening process listing*. New South Wales Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Water. https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/nsw-threatened-species-scientific-committee/determinations/final-determinations/2008-2010/predation-and-hybridisation-by-feral-dogs-canis-lupus-familiaris-key-threatening-process-listing

[23] Cairns, K.M., Letnic, M., Ritchie, E.G., Adams, J.W., Crowther, M.S., Dickman, C.R., Fillios, M., Pascoe, J., Smith, B.P., & Newsome, T. M. (2025) Taxonomic tangles posed by human association – the urgent need for an evidence-based review of dingo and domestic dog taxonomy and nomenclature. *Australian Mammalogy* 47, AM24052. https://doi.org/10.1071/AM24052

directly challenges such representations of dingo 'purity' as both not representative of dingo populations, and of little consequence for dingo populations.

In addition, for (1) whilst dingoes face significant threats from lethal management programs (including creating 'trajector[ies] towards extinction'[24]), dingoes are not 'virtually extinct' in the wild. Nor are free living ('feral' or 'wild') dogs common.[25]

'Purity' is a misdirection

An increasing number of genetic studies challenge framings and misrepresentations of dingo 'purity,' including the "the most comprehensive study of dingo population genetic structure" published in 2026.[26] Findings of this research is somewhat reflected in a number of government descriptions, including on the NSW Environment and Heritage webpage for 'wild dogs,' under the section *Dingoes in NSW*:

> Recent research has shown that more wild dogs than previously thought are dingoes or carry dingo genes.[27]

Whereas such government acknowledgment has taken place, policy and regulatory change is yet to follow. It is also important to note that the very generic language used (i.e. 'more'), does not accurately reflect that where admixture is present, dingo genes are dominant. Such language actively downplays the significance of these research findings, enabling both the ongoing killing of dingos, and further delays necessary regulatory, policy and practice changes.

A recent ABC piece is illustrative of these intersecting themes. The original title 'DNA study finds many dingoes may have some domestic dog genetics', was amended to 'New Adelaide University

---

[24] Dahlstrom, M. (2025). Warning controversial act could be 'diabolical' for survival of Aussie animal, *Yahoo News*, 14 September. https://au.news.yahoo.com/warning-controversial-act-could-be-diabolical-for-survival-of-aussie-animal-231824664.html

[25] Cairns, K.M., Crowther, M.S., Nesbitt, B. & Letnic, M. (2022). The myth of wild dogs in Australia: are there any out there? *Australian Mammalogy* 44, 67–75. https://doi.org/10.1071/AM20055

[26] Ravishankar, S., Nguyen, N.C., Taufik, L., Michielsen, N.M., Bergström, A., Tobler, R., Fordham, D., Brüniche-Olsen, A., Rahbek, C., Llamas, B. & Souilmi, Y. (2026). Paleogenomics-Informed Inferences of European Dog Admixture Enables Scalable Dingo Conservation, *Conservation Letters* 19, no. 3: e70052. https://doi.org/10.1111/con4.70052. See also, Cairns, K. M., Crowther, M. S., Parker, H. G., Ostrander, E. A., & Letnic, M. (2023). Genome-wide variant analyses reveal new patterns of admixture and population structure in Australian dingoes. *Molecular Ecology*, 32, 4133–4150. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.16998

[27] Environment and Heritage (2026). *Wild Dogs*, NSW Government. last updated 20 May 2025. https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/pest-animals-and-weeds/pest-animals/wild-dogs

study finds many purebred dingoes contain some domestic dog genetics."[28] The piece summarised findings from recently published research out of the University of Adelaide.[29] The article author initially defended the first published title, following public criticism from Euan Ritchie, Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at Deakin University, who suggested an alternative title of "Nearly 90% of dingos in Australia are pure, and it doesn't matter for ecosystems anyway'[30]

Whereas the latter half of Professor Ritchie's suggested title goes some way to challenge the politically loaded misnomer of 'wild dogs,' inclusion of 'pure' reifies ongoing debates on place and belonging and leaves aside the dominance of dingo genes.[31]

The ABC piece places importance on purity, evidenced in the first sentence of the 'in short' snippet:

> A new study using ancient DNA has found modern dingoes previously thought to be purebred, contain almost 12 per cent domestic dog genes. [32]

This summary directly contrasts with the amended title ('New Adelaide University study finds many purebred dingoes contain some domestic dog genetics') and the opening sentence of the full article:

> A new study into dingo DNA has found Australian dingoes do typically carry at least a small amount of domestic dog genetics.

---

[28] Angus Verly (2026). New Adelaide University study finds many purebred dingoes contain some domestic dog genetics., ABC News, 22 May. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-05-22/dingo-dna-new-study-dingoes-have-some-domestic-dog-genetics/106700460

[29] Ravishankar, S., Nguyen, N.C., Taufik, L., Michielsen, N.M., Bergström, A., Tobler, R., Fordham, D., Brüniche-Olsen, A., Rahbek, C., Llamas, B. & Souilmi, Y. (2026). Paleogenomics-Informed Inferences of European Dog Admixture Enables Scalable Dingo Conservation, *Conservation Letters* 19, no. 3: e70052. https://doi.org/10.1111/con4.70052

[30] The discussion followed a post on LinkedIn by Professor Ritchie, which included a link to the article and challenged the accuracy of the title.

[31] See, for example, Cairns, K.M., Crowther, M.S., Nesbitt, B., Letnic, M., (2022) The myth of wild dogs in Australia: are there any out there? *Australian Mammalogy* 44, 67–75. https://doi.org/10.1071/AM20055; Crowther, M,S,, Cairns, K.M., van Eeden, L.M., Letnic, M. (2021) Introgression does not influence the positive ecological and functional role of dingo populations. *Australian Zoologist* 41, 338–346. https://doi.org/10.7882/AZ.2020.016

[32] Angus Verly (2026). New Adelaide University study finds many purebred dingoes contain some domestic dog genetics., ABC News, 22 May. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-05-22/dingo-dna-new-study-dingoes-have-some-domestic-dog-genetics/106700460

Research has found limited contemporary interbreeding between dingoes and domesticated dogs, noting 'effective reproductive isolation,' little introgression where the dingoes and domesticated dogs lived in close proximity, with 'domestic dogs… highly differentiated from the three dingo populations,' no evidence of 'recent hybridisation,' and representing a 'unique lineage.' [33]

Of significant ongoing concern, widespread use of the term 'wild dog' and 'hybrids' by the NSW government and in management discourse creates, maintains, and exacerbates public misunderstanding. In referring to dingoes as wild dogs and hybrids, government sanctioned killing of dingoes is obfuscated:

> *Less than 20% of participants to a structured survey were aware that the lethal management of 'wild dogs' includes dingoes. In addition, lethal methods were viewed negatively, with positive support for management approaches seeking to facilitate co-existence.*[34]

The direct role obfuscation of lethal management in impacting public awareness is further contextualised with a very high majority of respondents to this survey (84.6%) considering dingoes to be native, reflecting First Nations dreaming, accounts of belonging, and kinship with dingoes.

With distinct dingo populations/sub populations identified across Australia, there is a clear need for government documents to stop referring to dingoes as wild dogs or hybrids.[35]

---

[33] Cairns, K. M., Crowther, M. S., Parker, H. G., Ostrander, E. A., & Letnic, M. (2023). Genome-wide variant analyses reveal new patterns of admixture and population structure in Australian dingoes. *Molecular Ecology*, 32, 4133–4150. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.16998; Weeks, A.R., Kriesner, P., Bartonicek, N. van Rooyen, A. Cairns, K.M. & Ahrens, C.W. (2025). Genetic structure and common ancestry expose the dingo-dog hybrid myth, *Evolution Letters*, 9(1), pp. 1–12, https://doi.org/10.1093/evlett/qrae057; Kreplins, T.L., Stephens, D., Laing, N., & Oskam, C. (2024) An assessment of dingo ancestry in camp dogs in Western Australia. *Australian Journal of Zoology* 72, ZO24008. https://doi.org/10.1071/ZO24008

[34] van Eeden, L.M., Crowther M.S., Dickman, C.R. & Newsome, T.M. (2021). Wicked "wild dogs": Australian public awareness of and attitudes towards dingoes and dingo management. *Australian Zoologist* 41, 467–479. https://doi.org/10.7882/AZ.2020.019

[35] Cairns et al (2023) determined there are at least five distinct dingo populations.

Legislative, Regulatory and Policy Frameworks

There is an overwhelming inconsistency in legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks regarding dingoes. For example, they are recognised as a native species yet specifically excluded from key protections under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

Dingoes are also identified as a 'pest' species, which establishes a 'General Biosecurity Duty' on the Biosecurity Act 2015 to manage them — including within National Parks. How this general duty is met is outlined in a NPWS wild dog policy:

> NPWS develops wild dog management plans for all parks where a high risk of negative impacts from wild dogs is identified. These plans are developed in accordance with the NSW Guidelines for the Preparation and Implementation of Wild Dog Management Plans.[36]

The 'how' of management outlined by NPWS is vague, avoiding any mention of lethal-based approaches, including poisoning, being the primary methods adopted. In obscuring the methods adopted, NPWS is misinforming the public. The outcomes of this obfuscation are clear in the public surveys, with more than 80% of participants unaware than dingos are being lethally managed.[37]

More broadly, the management of dingoes in NSW is outlined in the *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027*. Whereas the Strategy does refer to some research (i.e. Figure 1 is reproduced from Stephens *et al* 2015[38]), it outlines a selection of reasons to support lethal management (i.e. killing) of dingoes without providing supporting evidence. Such framings sit in direct contrast to principles in the *Australian Pest Animal Strategy 2017–2027*, including 'management should be based on actual rather than perceived impacts.'[39]

The Strategy identifies the focus 'should be reducing impacts, rather than removing pest animals per se' which does not reflect the very broad-brush application of lethal management, linked to the inconsistences with and interpretation of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (NSW). The Act specifies

---

[36] Department of Environment and Heritage (2024). *Wild dog policy*, NSW Government. https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-policies/wild-dogs

[37] van Eeden, L.M., Crowther M.S., Dickman, C.R. & Newsome, T.M. (2021). Wicked "wild dogs": Australian public awareness of and attitudes towards dingoes and dingo management. *Australian Zoologist* 41, 467–479. https://doi.org/10.7882/AZ.2020.019

[38] Stephens, D. *et al* (2015). Death by sex in an Australian icon: a continent-wide survey reveals extensive hybridization between dingoes and domestic dogs, *Molecular Ecology* 24, 5643-5656. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.13416

[39] NSW Government (2022) *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027*, p. 9.

that 'a *general biosecurity duty* to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks."[40] In practice, there is a substantive emphasis on lethal methods — with very limited oversight, rather than a focus on working to facilitate co-existence, and the protection of dingoes — including in National Parks.

Current legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks are in stark contrast to public expectations of government. Despite (selectively and inconsistently) including dingoes in descriptions and categorisations of 'wild dogs,' the vast majority of the community recognise dingoes as a native species, and do support lethal management. Approaches prioritising coexistence are expected.

In addition to public expectations of government, and a clear disconnect between the expectations and current government approaches, the use of lethal methods has significant potential for ongoing ecological impacts:

> large-scale lethal control programs may have major biological and evolutionary ramifications in future dingo-dog relationships; it is possible, even likely, that continued lethal control may break down behavioral barriers leading to future introgression, as seen in wolf-dog dynamics in Europe. [41]

The ACT government is providing clear leadership, with a pathway to move from current regulatory inconsistencies (i.e. Waragul declared as 'pest' animals in the *Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration 2021*) to:

- deliver a future where we protect Waragul as a native animal under the Nature Conservation Act
- continue to ensure we minimise negative impacts on landholders and stock as far as possible.

To enable these changes, the ACT government has committed to drafting a Controlled Native Species Management Plan (CNSMP) for the Waragul under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* and removing the listing of dingoes as a pest under the *Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration 2021*:[42]

---

[40] See NSW Government (2022) *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027*, p. 8.

[41] Weeks, A.R., Kriesner, P., Bartonicek, N. van Rooyen, A. Cairns, K.M. & Ahrens, C.W. (2025). Genetic structure and common ancestry expose the dingo-dog hybrid myth, *Evolution Letters*, 9(1), pp. 1–12, https://doi.org/10.1093/evlett/qrae057

[42] ACT Government (2026). Waragul (Dingoes) / wild dogs, 27 May. https://www.act.gov.au/environment/animals-and-plants/animals/wildlife-management/waragul-dingoes-wild-dogs

> *the Conservator of Flora and Fauna will work with EPSDD Legal Policy team to review options and provide further advice about the removal of "Dingo" from the Biosecurity (Pests) Declaration 2025 whilst implementing a CNSMP.*[43]

There is a clear need for legislative change in NSW. The current process underway in the ACT provides an example of a shift towards prioritising co-existence and supporting landholders with non-lethal management strategies.[44] The stated intent of supporting an 'informed, transparent and inclusive development of the Controlled Native Species Plan for the Waragul' reflect public expectations for change.[45] The 'Consultative Committee is proposed to have representation from the Ngunnawal community, rural leaseholders, NSW Government, conservation groups, Waragul experts, the ACT Scientific Committee, and EPSDD staff to ensure stakeholder input into the Management Plan.[46]

---

[43] Recommendation 3: Ministerial Brief from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water. Subject 'Controlled Native Species Management Plan for the Waragul (Dingo),' dated 5 May 2025, with tracking No.: 25/0153543.
https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2932852/25_034-Documents.pdf

[44] It is important to note that whereas the commitment to changes by the ACT government provide a step in the right direction, require further regulatory and policy changes are required. For example, the killing of dingoes is still permitted: "for the first time that *outside of the management program*, the Waragul is recognised and protected as a native animal" [emphasis added]. Benefit/Sensitivities 25: Ministerial Brief from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water. Subject 'Controlled Native Species Management Plan for the Waragul (Dingo),' dated 5 May 2025, with tracking No.: 25/0153543.
https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2932852/25_034-Documents.pdf
For example, the killing of Waragul was approved by the ACT government as recently as May 2026, with the Conservation Council ACT Region noting that "Including Waragul in the aerial culling program undermines the Government's commitment to delist dingoes as a pest animal and to protect the species as a native species under the Nature Conservation Act." Conservation Council ACT Region (2026). Waragul (Dingo) to be culled as part of ACT Government's aerial shooting program, Media Release, 14 May.
https://conservationcouncil.org.au/blog/2026/05/14/waragul-dingo-to-be-culled-as-part-of-act-governments-aerial-shooting-program/
See also, Newstime Media (2026). Dingoes may be shot in ACT aerial pest control program, *Canberra Daily*, 14 May.
https://canberradaily.com.au/dingoes-may-be-shot-in-act-aerial-pest-control-program/

[45] ACT Government (2026). Waragul (Dingoes) / wild dogs, 27 May. https://www.act.gov.au/environment/animals-and-plants/animals/wildlife-management/waragul-dingoes-wild-dogs

[46] Next Step 17: Ministerial Brief from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water. Subject 'Controlled Native Species Management Plan for the Waragul (Dingo),' dated 5 May 2025, with tracking No.: 25/0153543.
https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2932852/25_034-Documents.pdf

> *Ongoing lethal control in southeastern Australia may continue to erode ancestral dingo diversity, likely eliminating important local adaptations that emerged over thousands of generations.* [47]

Other impacts of lethal methods

Briefly looking broader than the welfare implications of 1080 on dingoes, the impacts of this poison on 'non-target' species[48] (including secondary poisoning) are illustrative that current approaches do not reflect stipulations in the Strategy, including the 'expediate[d] adoption' of non-lethal methods and co-existence strategies. [49]

The use of 1080 directly impacts the volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector, the social and emotional wellbeing of volunteers and the broader community.

[47] Ravishankar, S., Nguyen, N.C., Taufik, L., Michielsen, N.M., Bergström, A., Tobler, R., Fordham, D., Brüniche-Olsen, A., Rahbek, C., Llamas, B. & Souilmi, Y. (2026). Paleogenomics-Informed Inferences of European Dog Admixture Enables Scalable Dingo Conservation, *Conservation Letters* 19, no. 3: e70052. https://doi.org/10.1111/con4.70052

[48] A 'viewpoint' piece from a fervent supporter of the use of lethal methods to manage wildlife, whilst seeking to downplay the impacts of 1080, describes the implications for 'nontarget' species including 'larger dasyurids, such as quolls' as they 'can sometimes die after consuming a sufficient dose of 1080'. In seeking to justify the use of 1080, they similarly seek to understate visceral impacts on dingoes: 'causes a variety of *unpleasant symptoms* for dingoes (which are also very distressing to observers), and *which can last for several hours before death occurs* [emphasis added].'
Allen, B. L. (2026). Myths, Furphies and Red Herrings Associated With Dingo Ecology and Management. *Ecological Management & Restoration* 27, no. 3: e70055. https://doi.org/10.1111/emr.70055.

[49] See NSW Government (2022) *NSW Wild Dog Management Strategy 2022–2027*, p. 9.

The Ecological Role of Dingoes in National Parks

As Australia largest terrestrial predator, dingoes play an important[50] and unique[51] role, including strong ecological effects.[52] They positively influence plant communities, with the lethal management of dingoes impacting ecosystem health, linked to negative impacts on small and medium sized mammals.[53] Dingo conservation — in contrast to lethal management, including the return of dingoes to areas in which they have been removed or populations supressed — have positive benefits for biodiversity conservation if in sufficient numbers.[54]

The important role which dingoes play across NSW (and Australia) necessitates a move away from lethal approaches to their management — especially in National Parks and adjacent areas:

> it is important to adopt and promote coexistence pathways that protect productive rangeland systems and the dingoes' evolutionary future as mainland Australia's largest apex predator, which comes with numerous ecological benefits.[55]

National Parks both exist in isolation (i.e. fragmentation from other protected and contiguous habitat) and are directly impacted by surrounding land uses. Both have implications for dingoes,

---

[50] Letnic, M., Baker, L. & Nesbitt, B. (2013). Ecologically functional landscapes and the role of dingoes as trophic regulators in south-eastern Australia and other habitats, *Ecological Management & Restoration* 14(2), 101–105. https://doi.org/10.1111/emr.12035;

[51] Ravishankar, S., Nguyen, N.C., Taufik, L., Michielsen, N.M., Bergström, A., Tobler, R., Fordham, D., Brüniche-Olsen, A., Rahbek, C., Llamas, B. & Souilmi, Y. (2026). Paleogenomics-Informed Inferences of European Dog Admixture Enables Scalable Dingo Conservation, *Conservation Letters* 19, no. 3: e70052. https://doi.org/10.1111/con4.70052

[52] Philip, J. (2022). The Dingo Barrier Fence: Presenting the case to decommission the world's longest environmental barrier in the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030. *Biologia Futura* 73, pp. 9–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42977-021-00106-z

[53] Letnic, M., Ritchie, E.G. & Dickman, C.R. (2012), Top predators as biodiversity regulators: the dingo Canis lupus dingo as a case study, *Biological Reviews*, 87: 390-413. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-185X.2011.00203.x

[54] Letnic, M. & Koch, F. (2010). Are dingoes a trophic regulator in arid Australia? A comparison of mammal communities on either side of the dingo fence. *Austral Ecology* 35(2), 167–175. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-9993.2009.02022.x; Morrant, D.S., Johnson, C.N., Butler, J.R.A. & Congdon, B.C. (2017), Biodiversity friend or foe: land use by a top predator, the dingo in contested landscapes of the Australian Wet Tropics. *Austral Ecology* 42: 252-264. https://doi.org/10.1111/aec.12427

[55] Weeks, A.R., Kriesner, P., Bartonicek, N. van Rooyen, A. Cairns, K.M. & Ahrens, C.W. (2025). Genetic structure and common ancestry expose the dingo-dog hybrid myth, *Evolution Letters*, 9(1), pp. 1–12, https://doi.org/10.1093/evlett/qrae057

with anthropogenic landscape modifications linked to 'reinforced isolation and reduced genetic diversity in southeastern dingo populations.'[56]

The current shift in approach underway in the ACT, with dingoes to be removed from the *Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Animals) Declaration 2021*, includes recognition of the ecological significance of dingoes in National Parks. Further, regulatory changes create potential for expanded dingo protections, and means to redress the impacts of isolation (landscape modification/land use and lethal management caused) on genetic diversity of dingo populations. In doing so, safeguarding the recognition of the important ecological role of dingoes in national parks and the broader landscape.

The cultural significance of dingoes for First Nations communities

Dingoes hold great significance to First Nations Australians, and are known by many names including: Binure, Buyubarra, Dwert Mooyel, Ganibarra, Jinabara/Madla Yalpa, Mirragang, Ngalmbu, Ngawa, Ngugum, Ngwangwal, Ootalkarra, Waragul/Warrigal, Wartaji, Wabubarra, Wilkerr, Wetya, and Wongari.

The National First Nations Dingo Declaration is clear: dingoes are 'part of our individual and collective identity, important for men and women, and our totems, Dreaming, lore/law and customs. part of our individual and collective identity, important for men and women, and our totems, Dreaming, lore/law and customs':

> To honour and revitalise our ancient relationships with Dingoes, we, the undersigned, collectively welcome Dingoes back to our care as our Creator Beings, companions, and kin. By doing so, we seek to uphold custodial responsibilities to restore balance across the lands and waters. We exist in a symbiosis. When you remove Dingoes, Country gets sick, we get sick. A healthy Country is essential for spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing.

[56] Ravishankar, S., Nguyen, N.C., Taufik, L., Michielsen, N.M., Bergström, A., Tobler, R., Fordham, D., Brüniche-Olsen, A., Rahbek, C., Llamas, B. & Souilmi, Y. (2026). Paleogenomics-Informed Inferences of European Dog Admixture Enables Scalable Dingo Conservation, *Conservation Letters* 19, no. 3: e70052. https://doi.org/10.1111/con4.70052

Deborah Bird Rose's recounting of experiences living with community on Country, including in their Stanner Prize winning *Dingo Makes as Human*[57] documents First Nations accounts. For example, dingo loreman Old Tim Yilnagayarrum identifies dingoes as kin and belong in the landscape. To Country. They are not 'pests,' and we have a responsibility to focus on coexisting with them:

> *"You've gotta leave him. No more killing."*[58]

Legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks — and the practices which follow, must adopt a new approach. One informed by First Nations and centred on *caring for Dingoes on Country* and greater involvement of Cultural Custodians in decision-making.

The significance of dingoes is demonstrated in the widespread practice of their burials as kin. One example is the recent archaeological excavation of a Garli (Barkindji for dingo)[59] burial in Kinchega National Park on Barkindji Country, in the Menindee Lakes region of western New South Wales. The excavation was undertaken at the request of the Menindee Aboriginal Elders Council, by a group of researchers from the Australian Museum, they University of Sydney and the Australian National University, following a smoking ceremony.[60] The Garli was buried close to 1000 years ago within a riverside midden — a practice common for ancestors, with the midden site added to for another 500 years (approximately):

---

[57] Rodes, D.B. (1992) *Dingo Makes Us Human: Life and Land in an Australian Aboriginal Culture*, Cambridge University Press.

[58] Rose, D.B. (2011). *Wild Dog Dreaming: Love and Extinction*, University of Virginia Press, p. 1.
See also: Rose, D.B. (2013). Dingo kinship. *Wildlife Australia*, 50(2), 33-35; Rose, D.B. (1992). *Dingo Makes us Human: Life and land in Aboriginal Australian culture*, Cambridge University Press.
It is important to note that the title 'Wild Dog Dreaming' does not infer that dingoes are wild dogs — with First Nations accounts included contrasting with currently legal-political framings of dingoes as such.

[59] *Garli* is the spelling provided in Koungoulos *et al* (2026) — see note **Error! Bookmark not defined.**. The spelling provided in Way *et al* (2023) — see Footnote 60 — is *kali*.

[60] Way, A.M., B. Quayle & Doyle, D. (2023). Barkindji Custodians Near Broken Hill Continue to Care for Ancestral Dingo Remains with Help from Archaeologists. *The Conversation*, 19 October. https://theconversation.com/barkindji-custodian s-near-broken-hill-continue-to-care-for-ancestral-di ngo-remains-with-help-from-archaeologists-215457.

Barkindji Elders propose that ongoing additions to the Kinchega midden may have formed a 'feeding' ritual for the ancestral Garli, which was maintained over multiple generations. [61]

Examination of the burial found clear evidence of a close relationship with dingoes, providing 'an additional example of long-term maintenance of social connections between dingoes and Aboriginal people' and 'broader social dynamics' including human care beyond feeding (i.e. healed broken bones).

The impact of current government policies and programs for the management of dingoes in national parks

An array of implications of current government polices and programs on dingoes are outlined earlier in this submission. For the rescue and rehabilitation sector, the overarching implications are that dingoes cannot be rescued, rehabilitated and released in NSW.

Even if legislative and regulatory changes are made to enable the volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector to care for and release dingoes, there is high uncertainty for their post-release safety.

Changes must be made to the BC Act to remove the specific exemption of dingoes from protection, and being listed as a pest species and the associated general duty (under the Biosecurity Act) driving lethal management approaches.

The protection of dingoes in NSW National Parks must include changes to dingo management not only within National Parks. Areas adjacent to National Parks, including land used for farmed animal operations, must similarly be a focus for changes in approach. Dingo ranges do no stop at National Park boundaries, and dingos who have protections in National Parks must also have them outside of National Parks.

---

[61] Koungoulos *et al* (2026). Garli: A millennium-old dingo burial on the Baaka (Darling River), Kinchega National Park, Menindee Lakes, Western New South Wales, Australian Archaeology, https://doi.org/10.1080/03122417.2026.2650909

These necessary changes reflect the core purpose of National Parks, being the 'establishment, preservation and management of national parks, historic sites and certain other areas' (*National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 No 80*). Current approaches to the management of dingoes, including within national park boundaries do not reflect the intent of the Act, rather emphasise and prioritise farmed animal operations over dingo protection.

Changes to approaches in National Parks (and adjacent areas) must include support for landholders to shift to effective co-existence-based approaches.

Dingo management including opportunities for incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and leadership in dingo conservation in national parks

First Nations communities are providing leadership, supported by the broader community, in calling for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and leadership in dingo conservation. The First Nations Dingo Delcaration provides a clear statement of intent and a starting point for contemporary change. The Declaration outlines the cultural significance of the Dingo to First Nations people, specfically incuding a call First Nations 'deep 'involvement in decision-making around the management of dingoes on Country.

> The Dingo is deeply sacred to Australia's First Nations peoples. They are family.
>
> Dingoes are a part of our individual and collective identity, important for men and women, and our totems, Dreaming, lore/law and customs. They are embedded in our spirit through Storytelling, a part of our creation, rituals, ceremonies, art, dances, and songs. We are one being, spiritually connected from the Dreamtime to eternity.
>
> The Dingo is a cultural icon representing a vital connection to Country whose significance cannot be put into words. As Creator and Dreamtime Beings they formed the lands, the waterways, and constellations. They mapped our ancestral Songlines across this continent. The Dingo is essential to keep our storylines, custom and culture alive.
>
> Dingoes remain deeply embedded in the daily lives of First Nations peoples as companions, hunting partners, protectors, and family members. They share our same experience of atrocities and journey of survival.

Dingoes are the Boss of Country. They belong in the landscape. Their presence in the ecosystem ensures natural systems remain in balance. This role is greatly under-appreciated. The direct and indirect effects of the Dingo on native and pest species are clear and apparent.

Dingoes are genetically, physically, and behaviourally different to domestic dogs, and must not be treated as such. If it looks and behaves like a Dingo, it is Australia's Dingo.

We do not support the use of the term 'wild dog'. This term diminishes the Dingo. It is a deliberate misrepresentation to justify killing. It disrespects and disregards culture.

Colonisation has and still impacts our relationship with the Dingo. Since European colonisation and introducing livestock, assumptions around Dingoes have led to them being cruelly targeted by trapping, shooting, poisoning, exclusion fencing, desexing, and bounty programs across Australia. These practices seek to eradicate the Dingo from Country, and are inhumane, ineffective, unnecessary, and have devastating consequences.

We do not, and have never, approved the killing of Dingoes. Killing Dingoes is killing family. We demand an immediate stop to this 'management' across Australia. Lethal control should never be an option.

We advocate for a different model: caring for Dingoes on Country. This model sees Dingo recognised in legislation as—a culturally significant and protected native species. This model must use traditional knowledge, and evidence-based practice, focusing on peaceful co-existence between Dingoes and all stakeholders. This brings together cultural and western knowledges.

We demand our rights to have our voice, and capacity to apply culture in all matters relating to the Dingo. We have the right as Traditional Custodians to be directly involved in decision-making in all legislation and management actions that impact Dingoes, across all levels of government.

In 2009, Australia endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), but has yet to honour its commitment. In defence of our inherent sovereign rights and the preservation of the Dingo, we the undersigned, invoke UNDRIP articles 25 and 26.

> To honour and revitalise our ancient relationships with Dingoes, we, the undersigned, collectively welcome Dingoes back to our care as our Creator Beings, companions, and kin. By doing so, we seek to uphold custodial responsibilities to restore balance across the lands and waters. We exist in a symbiosis. When you remove Dingoes, Country gets sick, we get sick. A healthy Country is essential for spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing.
>
> We assert the truth of this statement as the basis to restore our cultural obligations and rights in alignment with our lore/law and custom. These are intrinsically connected to the Dingo as kin.
>
> As the undersigned individuals from our respective Nations, together with our allies across society, we are determined in walking together to make real the demands of this Declaration. We commit to empowering people to effectively uphold cultural and environmental obligations, and aspirations, of protecting the Dingo.

Current appraoches to dingo management directly contrast with the Declaration, and contune to negatively impact First Nations communties. Specfcially:

> *When you remove Dingoes, Country gets sick, we get sick. A healthy Country is essential for spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing.*

There is a clear need — and an ongoing opportunity — for First Nations leadership across dingo conservation. Expanding on Indigenous-led programs, including the activation of Indigenous Rangers — must include sustainable government funding.

Any other related matters.

To ensure that dingoes can be rescued, rehabiltated and safely released in NSW, a dedicated program to support landholders with the implementation of non-lethal strategies to co-exist is essential. The post-release safety of dingoes is critical.

Whereas government-supported research into non-lethal management streches back at least to at least two decades,[62] a dedicated and resourced approach is yet to be effectively realised at any scale.

Conclusion

The Inquiry presents both an opportunity and a risk to government. An opportunity to explore the implications of existing legislation on dingoes, the volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector, the First Nations caring for Country, and the broader community

In short there are significant opportunities for the NSW government to do more, and this Inquiry is well-placed to provide detailed recommendations. Recommendations informed by the First Nations Dingo Declaration, which reflect public expectations of government to ensure dingoes are protected,[63] and to support landholders to adopt practices founded on co-existence.

Recommendations to the NSW government to enable volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector to, rehabilitated and safely release dingoes back into their ranges in NSW.

To not do so risks the status quo, an approach broadly unsupported by the public, and the ongoing cultural and ecological impacts on Country of a current approached based on kiloing rather than co-existance.

The final sentence from a recently published research paper provides broader context,

> it is important to adopt and promote coexistence pathways that protect productive rangeland systems and the dingoes' evolutionary future as

---

[62] See, for example, Jenkins, D. (2003). Guard animals for livestock protection : Existing and Potential Use in Australia, NSW Agriculture.
Of note, the entire book continues to be available for download from the NSW DPIRD website — https://www.dpird.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/sheep/management/general-information/guard-animals

[63] See, for example, van Eeden, L.M., Crowther M.S., Dickman, C.R. & Newsome, T.M. (2021). Wicked "wild dogs": Australian public awareness of and attitudes towards dingoes and dingo management. *Australian Zoologist* 41, 467–479. https://doi.org/10.7882/AZ.2020.019

> mainland Australia's largest apex predator, which comes with numerous ecological benefits. [64]

The First Nations Dingo Declaration is clear: caring for Dingoes on Country, using traditional knowledge, and evidence-based practice, brings together cultural and western knowledges. Healthy dingoes, healthy Country, healthy people.

> *A healthy Country is essential for spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing.*

Recommendations

1. Legislative and regulatory changes are necessary to facilitate the rehabilitation and release of dingoes, enabling the volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector to participate in their active conservation.
2. The committee support an independent and evidence-based review of the taxonomic status of dingoes, reflecting evolutionarily distinctions from domesticated dog species, to enable effective conservation and management programs — including across NSW National Parks.
3. NSW legislation, regulation and policy frameworks shift to management based on co-existence, supporting landholders with non-lethal approaches, to protect dingo populations across NSW National Parks and surrounding areas within their range.
4. Embed First Nations leadership, knowledge and culture to support the conservation of dingoes in NSW National Parks and surrounding areas within their range.
5. Explicit recognition of the cultural significance of dingoes is embedded in legislation, regulation and policy documents.

[64] Weeks, A.R., Kriesner, P., Bartonicek, N. van Rooyen, A. Cairns, K.M. & Ahrens, C.W. (2025). Genetic structure and common ancestry expose the dingo-dog hybrid myth, *Evolution Letters*, 9(1), pp. 1–12, https://doi.org/10.1093/evlett/qrae057



WILDLIFE
INFORMATION
RESCUE AND
EDUCATION
SERVICE