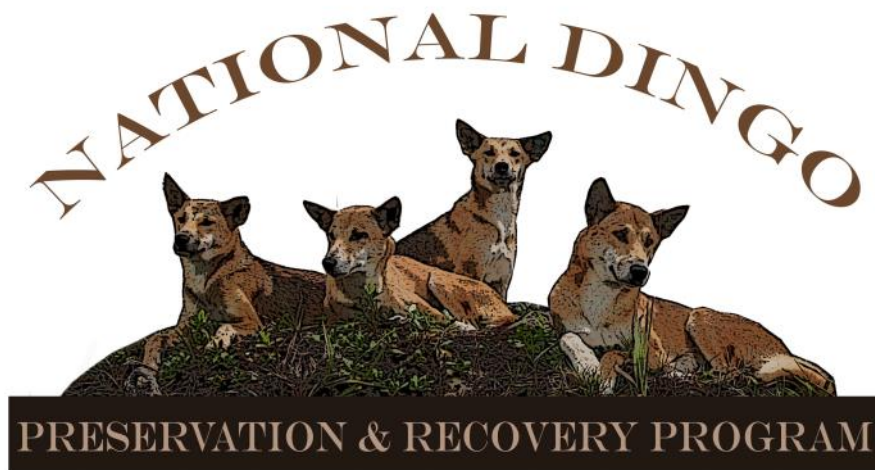


National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program

NDPRP MAGAZINE

Winter, 2016 Volume 4 Number 1

NDPRP brings together a small number of well-informed and experienced people who strive to intervene strategically, advocating for the dingo using environmental and ecological research



Contact Secretary Ernest Healy: Ernest.healy@monash.edu

President Ian Gunn: Ian.gunn@monash.edu

Vice President Jennifer Parkhurst: fidingo@bigpond.net.au

Incorporation No. A0051763G

**‘Great spirits have always
encountered violent opposition from
mediocre minds’**

Albert Einstein

Inside this Issue:

President Report	3
Vic Priorities for 2016-17	4
NDPRP Activities/actions 2015-16	5
Joint letter to Minister—dingo reform	7
Victorian Ministerial meeting	9
Letter to Minister—Apex predator reform	10
Conference—Dingo meat to Asia	14
Feature Article—Blinded by Science	16
Pelorus Island—dingoes/goats	22
Marc Bekoff—Death Row Dingoes	24
Pelorus Island—UPDATE	26
The Inaugural NDPRP Excellence Award	28
Getting to know Simon	29
Bits and Pieces	30
Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary	32
The Mt Buffalo dingo debate	34
Humane Society International	36
Fraser Island Report	40
AWPC—Kangaroos and Their Kin	48
Restoration of degraded woodland, SA	49
Membership form	50



Compiled by Ernest Healy and
Jennifer Parkhurst

Affiliate Organisations:

- Australian Dingo Conservation Association (NSW)
- Humane Society International (Aust)
- Save Fraser Island Dingoes (Qld)
- Gumbaya Park (Vic)
- Australian Wildlife Protection Council (Vic)
- Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary Qld)

President's Report

I wish to convey my thanks and appreciation to the support and commitment of all our members, to the Committee and especially so to the Vice President Jennifer Parkhurst and the Secretary Ernest Healy for achieving a successful year.

Yes, a lot of frustration, government stone walling and a general lack of government support both in Victoria and in Queensland - very disappointing considering the efforts of Jennifer and Ernest.

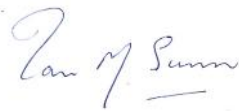
The focus of the NDPRP has been directed towards preservation and management of the dingo on Fraser Island and in Victoria. The sad state of dingoes on Fraser Island continues and recently worsened with the targeted poisoning of 6 dingoes with what is suspected to be 1080 baits. Investigations are continuing, but nothing will compensate the loss of these dingoes.

The 2015 newsletter produced and edited by Jennifer was not only a work of art, but also extremely valuable as a great means of communication to all members. Once again, our congratulations to Jennifer.

The recent introduction and release of the new bait and baiting system specifically targeted for wild dogs presents an extreme threat to dingoes in all areas where it will be introduced. There is no selection criteria for wild dogs so all canines will be threatened even though this bait does have an antidote (only if administered within half an hour of ingestion). I am afraid any antidote won't offer any protection to dingoes.

The support of the Humane Society International (Australia) through Michael Kennedy (Director) and Evan Quartermain, along with Dr Euan Richie from Deakin University, have been extremely valuable in presentations to the Victorian Government and must be acknowledged.

The newly elected Committee looks forward to a positive and successful year ahead in the fight to preserve the dingo.



Dr Ian Gunn

*Secretary Dr Ernest Healy,
Vice President Jennifer Parkhurst,
President, Dr Ian Gunn*



VICTORIAN PRIORITIES FOR 2016 –17

Prioritised dingo conservation reforms, proposed by National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program, January 2016

	Reform	Priority	Associated Actions
1	Broaden definition of dingo under FFG Act listing to include dingoes that test 75% pure and higher on the Wilton purity test	Very High	Rewording of the FFG Act Dingo Action Statement; Delisting of hybrids within this range as 'Established Pest animals' under the CaLP Act; These dingoes will become Wildlife under the Wildlife Act.
2	Cessation of control beyond 3 kilometers; Strict application of the 3 kilometer buffer.	Very High	Public land in Eastern Victoria not to be included in 'wild dog' management zone planning in consultation with land holders.
3	Cessation of all control in the North Western Victoria - Little Desert and Big Desert	Very High	Alteration of the Governor in Council Order.
4	Alteration of FFG Act Dingo Action Statement to remove exclusive focus on genetic purity.	Very High	Recommend outsourcing this to university environmental science expertise in dingo ecology
5	Updating of FFG Act Dingo Action Statement literature review to reflect more recent research into the importance of dingoes within ecosystems, including research conducted in Victoria; greater recognition of research which highlights ecological importance of hybridised populations.	Very High	Recommend outsourcing this to environmental science expertise in dingo ecology
6	Establishment of Dingo conservation consultation group with relevant stakeholder representation, as advocated in the current Dingo Action Statement; limit stakeholder involvement to conservation organisation representatives and suitable environmental scientists	High	Ministerial directive /Departmental decision
7	Governance of dingo hybrids less than 75% pure as wildlife	High	Delisting of hybrids as 'Established Pest animals' under the CaLP Act; Declared as wildlife under the Wildlife Act.
8	Transition to reliance upon non-lethal means of 'wild dog' control where practicable.	Medium	Government incentives to land holders to undertake such a transition; possibly a trial period of financial compensation for verified sheep loss.
9	Compulsory neutering of domestic dogs in Local government Areas and Shires immediately adjacent to dingo public land habitat; exceptions may include important breeding stock.	Medium	Changes to Domestic Animals Act
10	Explore viability of reintroduction of Dingoes to the Murray Sunset National Park	Low	University researchers engaged to undertake research into the ecological viability of reintroduction; dingo FFG Act Action Statement altered to facilitate this.
11	Trial of cessation of 'wild dog' control in selected areas in Eastern Victoria to ascertain if predation of farm stock improves over time with the stabilisation of dingo pack structure.	Low	Ministerial/ Departmental policy decision

Note: the prioritisation of proposed measures is not meant to be absolute, but to indicate what is important as of January 2016.

NDPRP Activities/Actions 2015—2016

The NDPRP Secretary Dr Ernest Healy organised and attended three substantial meetings with the Victorian Government's Environment Minister's threatened species advisor advocating reforms to dingo conservation in Victoria and for the establishment of a dingo conservation consultation group to work through a series of reforms.

At one meeting, Dr Euan Ritchie from Deakin University attended and gave strong support to the proposed reforms.

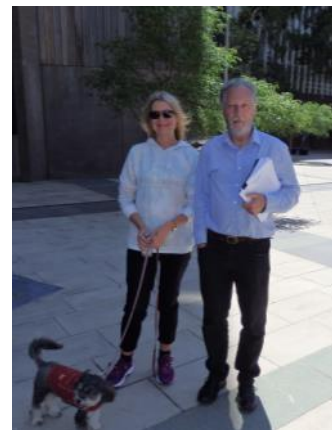
At another of the meetings, Evan Quartermain, Senior Program Manager from the Humane Society International attended the meeting, as did NDPRP Vice President Jennifer Parkhurst.

By the end of the process the NDPRP lodged a summary of the reforms advocated along with strong supporting documentation from the HSI, The Wilderness Society, from geneticist Kylie Cairns and a strong joint letter of support from a number of significant environmental scientists (summary and letter at end of this report):

Professor Chris Johnson
Professor Chris Dickman
Dr Euan Ritchie
Dr Mike Letnic
Dr Arian Wallach
Dr Kylie Cairns
Dr Bradley Smith



*Dr Ernest Healy, Jennifer Parkhurst,
Evan Quartermain*



*Jennifer, Ernest & Kari
At Monash University*

After some apparent initial stone-walling by the bureaucracy, the Minister's office arranged a meeting to discuss our proposed reforms. Details of this meeting at end of this report.

The reforms relate to the very narrow definition of the dingo for the purposes of the dingo threatened species listing currently in place, where dingoes can be controlled (killed), and the possibility of ceasing control altogether in the north west of the state. The legality of broadening the definition of the dingo has also been a topic of discussion. The NDPRP has legal advice to argue that a broadened definition is legal under the current legislation.

NDPRP Assisted HSI with a Cultural Heritage Listing submission for the dingo in the Simpson Desert region under the EPBC Act. The Dr Healy flew to Sydney to discuss the prospects of greater cooperation between the NDPRP and the HSI with dingo listing submissions under Federal EPBC Act provisions.

NDPRP Activities/Actions 2015—2016

On 27 November 2015 Dr Healy travelled to Queensland to participate in a meeting with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) to discuss the management of Fraser Island dingoes. The QPWS personnel gave a presentation, followed by three hours of questions by us, and in the end seemed to decide that no matter what we said, they were right and we were wrong.

The NDPRP, through the Secretary, co-authored a critique of the current Fraser Island dingo management strategy for publication in the *Journal of Pacific Conservation Biology*. It has been submitted and is currently subject to peer review.

The NDPRP, through the Vice President and Secretary, have co-authored a book chapter, providing a history and critique of Fraser Island dingo management for publication in a forthcoming CSIRO publication dealing with conservation challenges for wildlife in island habitats.



Dr Healy and J Parkhurst with SFID committee at meeting with QPWS

In April this year, the NDPRP put out a media release calling for an Independent inquiry into dingo mismanagement on Fraser Island.

Efforts are continuing to have an Apex predator policy section included into the Victorian ALP environment policy.

We have made Initial contact with the Victorian National Parks Association which is developing a dingo conservation policy. This will likely become a significant focus over the coming period.

In July Dr Healy held a meeting with Evan Quartermain from HSI in Melbourne XXXXXXXX

Ongoing projects include a very successful petition to demand a session be removed from the program of a conference being held by the University of Queensland about the export of dingo meat to Asia. More of this later in the newsletter.

We are also working with other groups to stop the use of dingoes on Pelorus Island in the Hinchinbrook Shire to eradicate feral goats.

**Joint letter to
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
The Hon. Lisa Neville**

Re: Dingo reform in Victoria

Dear Minister,

The undersigned urge the Victorian Government to undertake a number of key reforms in dingo (*Canis dingo*) management in Victoria, which we consider to be central to responsible biodiversity conservation within Victorian ecosystems.

Internationally, there has been growing interest in the restoration and preservation of apex predators for the successful management of natural environments and the preservation of the biodiversity that they support. Where they have been retained or restored, apex predators can provide a buffer against environmental threats, such as climate change and invasive species, and reduce their impact. Except for the dingo, mainland Australia has lost all of its large-bodied (>5kg) terrestrial predators, and it has one of the most depleted predator populations in the world. Partly as a consequence of this, Australian ecosystems lack resilience, as reflected in the large number of extinctions of native animals during the past 200 years.

A new approach to dingo protection is now pressing. While acknowledging that the Victorian Government has already taken a significant step in this direction, it is now nevertheless important that existing protections for the dingo are refined and augmented to ensure the best outcomes for dingo conservation specifically and more broadly for biodiversity conservation in Victoria.

The dingo and dingo-hybrids, by fulfilling the role of an apex predator, suppress the abundance of the introduced red fox and feral cats, and affect the distribution and abundance of native and introduced wild herbivores. The former aids in the persistence of native species that have vanished from dingo-free areas, and the latter helps to regenerate vegetation and habitat. It is therefore imperative that the ecological function of dingoes within Australian ecosystems be afforded protection, including in Victoria.

Although 'pure-bred' dingoes are considered rare in parts of Australia (including Victoria where they are now listed as a threatened wildlife taxon), we believe a more critical consideration is the functional role of dingoes and their hybrids in providing resilience within ecosystems. Stable dingo-hybrid populations have been shown to maintain apex predator functions and maintain dingo-like appearance and behaviours, including in South East Australian forested areas.

In considering the positive ecological role of dingoes in Australian environments, it is necessary to appreciate that the social structure of dingo groups can strongly influence the health and survival of the populations of other native species with which they interact. Studies show how lethal control can fracture dingo social structure with unpredictable effects on ecosystems, including the increased prevalence of invasive species. We consider that the integrity of dingo packs may be the key to maintaining functional and diverse ecosystems. Cont...

Joint letter continued

Although counterintuitive, evidence suggests that the fracturing of dingo packs may worsen predation on farm livestock. This is because the disruption of packs can lead to increased breeding rates and an increase in loosely-attached juveniles that are more likely to prey upon farm stock. The traditional approach to dingo control, therefore, does not represent best practice in farm livestock protection. Rather than alleviate stock predation, traditional control regimes may actually escalate the problem.

In Victoria, 'pure' dingoes are listed as a threatened wildlife under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. For that reason, under the Governor in Council Order enacted under that legislation, there is currently a legal constraint on wild-dog control beyond 3 kilometres of the interface between private and public land. While we urge the Victorian government to explore effective non-lethal control methods for farm stock protection, we urge that, while current methods are deployed, that they be strictly limited to the existing 3 kilometre control area.

We urge the Victorian Government to undertake the following reforms:

That wildlife status be extended to dingo hybrids and not be limited to 'pure' dingoes as is currently the case. (Eventually, all dingoes will probably carry some domestic dog genes.)

That the Victorian Government establish a dingo conservation advisory committee comprised of suitable environmental experts, peak conservation organisations and government representatives, to work through policy issues with regard to implementing effective apex predator conservation.

That lethal control immediately cease in those parts of Victoria where the net benefit to farm productivity is minimal. (For example in the North West of Victoria, where sheep farming is a marginal farming activity)

That non-lethal control alternatives be explored so as to ensure the greatest dingo pack stability. This would enhance the biodiversity benefits that healthy apex predator populations provide, and would likely reduce farm stock predation levels.

That, where established lethal dingo control methods are used, this be strictly limited to a 3 kilometre buffer area at the interface between public and private land.

We believe that Victoria is well situated to take the lead in this important conservation area and would welcome the opportunity to assist the Victorian Government in advancing these reforms.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor Chris Johnson, Professor Chris Dickman, Dr Euan Ritchie, Dr Mike Letnic,
Dr Arian Wallach, Dr Kylie Cairns, Dr Bradley Smith

Victorian Initiatives: Ministerial Meeting

Shortly after the election of the Andrews Labor government in Victoria in late 2014, the NDPRP, through its Secretary, was able to arrange a meeting with one of the Victorian Environment Minister's biodiversity advisors. This meeting, which occurred early in 2015, was the first of three substantial meetings with the minister's staff over the period to May 2016, to outline shortcomings with the existing Victorian dingo protection arrangements and to propose potential improvements.

These meetings provided an opportunity to impress upon the Minister the breadth of support for dingo conservation reforms and the strong scientific case for them. The NDPRP was accompanied at the second meeting by Dr Euan Ritchie from Deakin University, and by Senior Program Manager of the Humane Society International, Evan Quartermain, who flew down from Sydney to attend the third meeting. This meeting was also attended by NDPRP Vice President, Jen Parkhurst.

After this third meeting, strong letters of support to the Government for the proposed reforms were received from the Humane Society International, the Wilderness Society (Vic. Branch), the International Fund for Animal Welfare and jointly from a number of prominent Australian environmental scientists.

As a result of these meetings, an instruction has been lodged by the Minister's office to the Department for Environment, Climate Change and Water, to arrange a meeting with the NDPRP to discuss the proposed reforms and their implications. Departmental staff have been instructed to subsequently provide the Minister with advice about the options available to address the issues raised.

These developments occurred at a time of a ministerial reshuffle, which included a change of Environment Minister. To ensure that momentum on consideration of the reforms proceeded smoothly in this context, a further meeting was recently arranged with advisors to the new minister, Hon Lily D'Ambrosio.

The meeting with Departmental staff is yet to be arranged and, while nothing can be taken for granted, at this point we still have the ear of government. A key measure is to convince the Victorian Government to establish an ongoing Dingo Conservation Reference Group to work through reform measures. The establishment of a group of this kind was a recommendation of the Dingo threatened species listing, but is yet to be enacted.

The NDPRP would like to thank the abovementioned organisations and individuals for their invaluable support and commitment during this process.

The letter submitted by the NDPRP to the Minister after the final meeting in 2015, summarising our concerns, follows.

Victorian Initiatives: Letter to Minister

3 May 2016

The Hon. Lisa Neville, The Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water,

Re: Apex predator reform

Dear Minister,

Over the course of the past year or more, the National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program Inc. (NDPRP Inc.) has had several meetings with your threatened species advisor, Ms Sue Spence, during which a detailed case was put for reforms to the current arrangements for the Dingo (*Canis lupus Dingo*) conservation in Victoria. Although the Victorian Brumby Labor Government had made significant reforms in dingo conservation in 2010, through the listing of the dingo as a threatened native taxon under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, some aspects of this reform were undermined by the Baillieou/Napthine Coalition Government, and further refinements to Labor's initial reforms are now crucial to ensure meaningful conservation practice.

Amongst the briefing information accompanying this letter are strong endorsements of the proposed reform agenda by the Humane Society International, the Wilderness Society, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Indeed, for the meeting held with Ms Spence in early 2016, the Humane Society International flew its senior program manager, Mr Evan Quartermain, to Melbourne to impress upon the Victorian Government the importance the Society places upon the need for dingo conservation reform. A letter of support by an elite group of ecological experts is also enclosed. These scientists are internationally recognised and are leaders in their fields, including apex predator ecological function and conservation genetics.

First, the NDPRP would like to thank Ms Spence for her time and patience over the past year. This is a challenging conservation area, but one which needs to be satisfactorily resolved, not only in the interests of dingo conservation per se, but because of the dingo's status of Australia's terrestrial apex predator, for improved biodiversity outcomes more broadly. Cont...



Jennifer Parkhurst

Victorian Initiatives: Letter to Minister

Although a number of interrelated reforms are advocated, the most essential reform relates to the definition of the dingo used for conservation purposes in Victoria. After accepting a recommendation from the Victorian Scientific Advisory Committee in 2007 to list the dingo as a threatened native taxon, the then Victorian Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Gavin Jennings, established an advisory stakeholder group (the Dingo Working Group), to advise the Department on the dingo definition issue and as to where within Victoria the dingo would be afforded protection, given the Minister's commitment to also protect farm livestock.

The working Group initially proceeded on the premise that some hybrids would be included in the definition of the dingo for the threatened species listing and the framing of an Action Statement.



Jennifer Parkhurst

However, stakeholders were subsequently informed by the Department that internal legal advice deemed that it was not legally possible for dingo hybrids to be included under the FFG Act threatened species listing. However, subsequent, independent legal advice from the Environmental Defenders Office showed that, under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, the Minister had and still does have discretionary power to include dingo hybrids within the definition of dingo for the purposes of the threatened species listing. A copy

of this legal opinion has been provided to Ms Spence for your consideration. Nevertheless, as a consequence of departmental legal inflexibility at that time, and against the advice of the Dingo Working Group, only 'pure' dingoes were included under the threatened species listing, which has meant that dingoes with any domestic dog ancestry whatsoever continue to be governed as pest animals under the Catchment and Land Protection Act.

There are therefore two aspects to be considered in relation to dingo conservation reform. The first is that, despite there being a dingo threatened species listing there is virtually no legal protection for the dingo in Victoria. As it is currently framed, the threatened species listing for the dingo protects a mythical creature called the 'pure' dingo, not actually existing, modern dingoes as they have continued to evolve since European arrival. As highlighted in our discussions with Ms Spence, in time all dingoes will carry at least some domestic dog genes. This is inevitable. However, because of the extremely narrow genetic definition adopted by the Department, in time no dingoes will be legally protected and all will therefore fall under the Catchment and Land Protection Act as 'established pest' animals to be targeted as vermin, along with feral goats, cats, foxes and rabbits. At best only very isolated pockets of 'pure' dingoes will be protected, and then only for a limited time. Therefore, it is the view of the NDPRP and the peak conservation organisations noted above that the current policy settings are doomed to fail in practice. Cont...

Victorian Initiatives: Letter to Minister

The second aspect of the argument for a broadened definition of the dingo relates to the ecological benefits of dingoes and dingo hybrids as apex predators within Australian (and Victorian) ecosystems. This is an extremely important consideration in biodiversity conservation strategy, which has been insufficiently recognised by Australian governments to date. The importance of apex predators for ecosystem health was stressed at the first meeting with Ms Spence in early 2015 by Dr Euan Ritchie from Deakin University, a researcher and internationally recognised expert on the role of apex predators within ecosystems, and on the role of the dingo in Australian ecosystems specifically. Dr Ritchie's advised that support for the legal protection of dingo hybrids as apex predators is now widely supported in the scientific community. There is a growing body of academic research literature, including that relating to dingoes in South Eastern Australian forested areas, which highlights the importance of the dingo as an apex predator for ecosystem resilience and for the improved survival prospects of many other native animals – especially small marsupials under 5 kilograms. Much of this research points to the demise and disruption of apex predator populations as a significant factor in the appalling record of native species loss in Australia over the past 200 years. To its credit, the Victorian Labor Party included within its 2014 election policy platform a commitment to recognising protection for apex predators as part of its broader commitment to improving biodiversity conservation. Therefore, it is an opportune time for improved dingo conservation measures to be incorporated into the Victorian Labor Government's current initiatives to improve biodiversity policy and outcomes.

A further consideration relates to the reliability of current dingo genetic purity testing techniques. Expert testimony is provided for the Minister's consideration, which shows that current genetic testing techniques are unable to provide the level of certainty necessary for the application of a narrow genetic definition of the dingo for conservation purposes. To insist upon the notion of genetic purity as the basis of policy in such circumstances, when there is no legal or ecological compulsion to do so, is not justified.



The NDPRP considers that the issue of the definition of the dingo is not dependent upon the impending Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act review process. The reforms advocated do not need to wait for the legislative review for their adoption, but can be enacted under the current legislation. There is no compelling reason why a revised definition of the dingo should not be adopted in the short term and a ministerial consultative/advisory committee established to advise the Victorian government on related matters over the longer term. Cont...

Victorian Initiatives: Letter to Minister

The NDPRP urges the Victorian Government to grasp the significance of the reforms advocated over the past year, including the establishment of a dingo conservation consultation committee to constructively work through further reforms in this important area with the government. The previous Victorian Labor Government commenced a very important reform process in relation to conservation of the dingo as the apex predator in Victoria and the NDPRP encourages the present Labor Government to continue that process.

It should also be stressed that the principal reforms advocated by the NDPRP and other conservation organisations, in discussion with Ms Spence, would not detract from the Victorian Government's commitment to protect farm livestock, where such protection is genuinely needed and where the threat to property is, on balance, significant.

We look forward to further constructive communication with you on these matters.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Ernest Healy
Secretary,
NDPRP Inc.



Conservation through Sustainable Use of Wildlife Conference -Dingo meat to Asia

From 30th August to 1st September 2016, the University of Queensland will be hosting a 'Conservation through Sustainable Use of Wildlife Conference', with 10 keynote speakers plus others. While the conference seems to be focused on conservation, many speakers will be discussing wildlife 'management', including wildlife 'harvesting'.

The opening keynote address: 'A sorry tale of sheep, kangaroos and goats' sets the stage for the tone of the conference. The Abstract for this session discusses boosting the economic value of kangaroo meat through effective marketing... 'Kangaroos would be converted from pest to resource'. This assumes that kangaroos are generally a pest, and does not recognise their intrinsic value in the environment.

Another presentation, titled: 'Achieving pest control through sustainable wildlife use' also explores the concept that certain species can be seen as both a pest and a resource.

Our primary concern about this conference is the discussion section on Wildlife Trade and Commercial Use, particularly the session being presented by Ben Allen on 'Creating dingo meat products for Southeast Asia: potential market opportunities and cultural dilemmas'.

It would come as no surprise to readers that the principal sponsor of the conference is the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, along with the Queensland Government.

The NDPRP has had a two-fold response to this. Firstly, we started a petition, 'Stop the promotion of a new export market -- Australian dingoes for Asian diners.' The petition went live Monday 1st August, and generated 1,000 signatures every 24 hours for the first five days. We are currently sitting at over 6,000 signatures. A fabulous response and a clear indication that the Australian public, and even people overseas, find the subject of the session abhorrent.

Secondly, the NDPRP plans to write to the Chancellor of the University, presenting the results of the petition, and calling for the session to be pulled. We will inform members of the results of this action via e-mail.

Dr Healy was guest speaker on ABC Sunshine Coast radio in Queensland, and was able to generate a great deal of interest on the subject on ABC's Facebook page, receiving over 300 comments! Subsequently, the ABC uploaded the interview and you can listen to it here:

<https://soundcloud.com/abc-sunshine-coast/could-dingo-meat-be-harvested-for-export-to-asia>

(You may have to copy and paste the link into your browser.)

Petition next page...

Conservation through Sustainable Use of Wildlife Conference -Dingo meat to Asia—PETITION

Most Australians find the eating of canines to be disgusting, and indeed the eating of dogs is not legal in Australia. A growing body of environmental research shows that the dingo is crucial to ecosystem health, and that our past removal of the dingo from the environment has contributed to serious environmental damage.

The proposal to kill and market dingoes to Southeast Asia for commercial gain is something the vast majority of Australians would find repugnant.

Australians believe that our native wildlife should be protected as our natural heritage, and that wildlife has an intrinsic value. This fundamental value is under attack by those who seek to exploit wildlife for profit. These interests seek to overthrow established conservation philosophies with a distorted perspective based on the commercialised harvesting of Australian wildlife – called the development of ‘sustainable’ wildlife harvesting industries. From this perverse perspective, the right of wildlife to exist is reduced to its potential to produce a commercial profit, and wildlife profiteers are promoted as ‘conservationists’.

Sadly, the commercialised destruction of wildlife is already established in some areas, as with the large-scale harvesting of kangaroos, and crocodiles, which were nearly hunted to extinction in northern Australia. Major public institutions are now involved in the promotion of the commercial harvesting of wildlife.

Please sign our petition to express your objection to the University of Queensland for hosting a conference of this kind, to the Queensland Government for sponsoring it, and to demand that the ‘dingo meat market’ session be cancelled.

STOP THE PROMOTION OF A NEW EXPORT MARKET -- AUSTRALIAN DINGOES FOR ASIAN DINERS.



Campaign created by
Sally Chapman



6,485

of 7,000 signatures

FACEBOOK



TWITTER



EMAIL



**TO: UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, QUEENSLAND
GOVERNMENT**

From Aug. 30-Sept 1, the University of Queensland will host the "Ten Decades On...Conservation Through Sustainable Use of Wildlife Conference". The principal sponsors of the conference are the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and the Queensland Government.

One presentation is entitled "Creating dingo meat products for South East Asia -- potential market opportunities and cultural dilemmas".

Please sign our petition to express your objection to the University of Queensland hosting a conference of this kind; to the Queensland Government for sponsoring it, and to demand that the 'dingo meat market' conference session be cancelled.



Feature article by Arthur Gorrie - BLINDED BY SCIENCE

About 1000 years ago a monk was imprisoned by the academic and intellectual establishment of his day for questioning the established belief that spontaneous explosions and sulphurous emissions from the dungeons were “Hellfire and brimstone.”

Francis Bacon, regarded as one of the western world’s first scientists, claimed they were really methane explosions. He was jailed for 25 years for questioning the established knowledge of his day.

Galileo and Copernicus were jailed for suggesting the earth revolved around the sun.

When the platypus was first discovered, scientists dismissed it as a hoax, because they could not accept the existence of something they did not know already.

Real science - the evidence and observation based, logical and open minded pursuit of truth – will often conflict with the politics of funding and status and the tendency of the academic world to exclude and dismiss those it sees as outsiders, some with real first hand observational evidence to contribute.

The media’s elevation of science to a kind of priesthood, the members of which can say just about anything, no matter how illogical or fanciful (while direct observational evidence from others is dismissed as “hearsay” or “public opinion”), is a strangely unscientific way to view science. But many scientists seem to go along with it.

In the dingo debate, we see many examples of politically compromised science. Astoundingly illogical conclusions are seized upon as science if expressed by a scientist. For example, the science that tells us dingoes and wild dogs are the greatest threat to the koala is based on evidence that “we know dingoes will eat koalas,” combined with observations that the two species sometimes occupy the same territories. What this really proves logically is that, despite any predation which may occur, the two species have been occupying the same territories for thousands of years without any threat of extinction. When we realise that the scientist involved later became a national ‘wild dog’ (including dingoes) adviser and a koala lobby identity was involved in the research, it is easy to see how they may have been seduced by this prejudiced line of thinking. The recruitment of koala conservation into the national dingo extermination agenda was a political master stroke, but it remains pseudo science.

BLINDED BY SCIENCE

Similarly, the claim that human contact with dingoes causes “habituation” and this causes an essentially savage animal to lose its fear and become dangerous, is the foundation of dingo management strategies on Fraser Island. It is based on a scientist conducting a desktop study of his own desktop study of North American research involving coyotes, an entirely different species performing a different ecological role in a different environment. And it does not show the link between habituation and aggression that is claimed. Even the original research does not seem to show any statistically convincing link. If all (or a valid random sample) of coyotes had been studied we might be able to draw some conclusions, but finding a coincidence involving an unconvincingly small proportion of tiny number of coyotes, selected because of allegedly dangerous behaviour, does not prove any causal link. We do not say the crowing of the rooster causes the sun to rise, but we draw conclusions no more logical from canid research.

Also on Fraser Island, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife dingo expert de jour, Dr Ben Allen, who seems to have inherited this status from his father, Dr Lee Allen, draws confident conclusions from finding dingo scats that contains wild food, in one case (according to media reports) the remains of a bandicoot and in another case a grasshopper. His



conclusion from this seems to be that the Island contains so much wild food and in such variety that it is like a smorgasbord of culinary delights to dingoes. This is how it was presented in the media, in any case. But you do not need a Nobel Prize to work out that two lumps of poo, proving that a dingo

ate something, does not prove it had plenty to eat or that there is a viable breeding population of well-fed dingoes. But this is the conclusion we are encouraged to draw.

The Allens’ preconceived attitude is that dingoes are a pest and most of their work for Biosecurity Queensland approaches the species from that perspective. And it seems to show in the recent scandal involving the introduction of “kamikaze dingoes” (injected with the cruel poison 1080 in time release form) onto Pelorus Island to eliminate the feral goat “problem.” The experiment, apparently approved by Biosecurity Queensland, does not seem to show the level of empathy we might expect from people involved in conservation of dingoes on Fraser Island. Environment Minister Steve Miles was forced to intervene to stop the experiment and order the dingoes removed because of a danger to a ground nesting curlew. Despite their all-knowing scientific confidence, it seems the experts from Biosecurity Queensland who authorised the trial did not know that.

BLINDED BY SCIENCE

Also on Fraser Island, ranger Linda Behrendorff, who is studying under Dr Ben Allen's supervision, asserts that there are wild dingoes living free and independent lives in the inland forests of Fraser Island and seems to argue, in *Australian Geographic* (March-April 2012), that this is proven by what amounts to a lack of evidence. She is quoted as referring to "one particular female in an area to the north... She hasn't gone to the beach, she hasn't gone to a camp, she hasn't come into contact with humans – she doesn't need humans at all. By normal records she doesn't exist... Once you overlay all the information from (satellite) tracking collars on the island, you find gaps, so it makes us think there are other packs out there." So a lack of tracking collar data proves there are dingoes there, according to this science. On the information cited, this dingo does not need humans because she does not exist "by normal records," according to the ranger, who does not seem to specify what the abnormal records might be.

The tendency of scientists to make what seem to be over-confident assertions at the limits of their expertise has been remarked on in the case of Lindy Chamberlain, who was first blamed for the death of her daughter Azaria, only later being exonerated by a finding that it was a dingo. Both she and Michael Chamberlain have been concerned at the role of food restricting dingo management policies, introduced at puppy time at Uluru, when food is at a premium, only weeks before. Michael Chamberlain has said the death of a boy, Clinton Gage, on Fraser Island in 2001 gave him a feeling of déjà vu, because of similar food restricting policies prior to that tragedy. But no-one has ever scientifically or forensically examined the role of such policies in the two deaths. Given that all science on the Island is controlled by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, which introduced the policies without benefit of any science, it seems doubtful anyone ever will.



This is not science, it is politics.

Dr Ben Allen is also the author of the review of dingo management on the Island, which seemed to endorse, independently it was claimed, the policies his father helped develop. It is a review which adopted a high level of secrecy with regard to some of its important informational inputs, the public submissions which we were told would give all Queenslanders a chance to share their knowledge with scientists. But all those public submissions are secret and Ecosure says they will not be released except by court order.

BLINDED BY SCIENCE

In his book, *Bad Science*, Dr Ben Goldacre makes the point that this sort of thing is just not scientific and is not a sign of science trying to get at the truth of the matter. Much was made of the fact that the Ecosure review involved a built-in process of “peer review,” but as Goldacre says, “if you’ve got a point to prove... there are few opinions so absurd that you couldn’t find at least one person with a PhD somewhere in the world to endorse them for you.” Real science requires publication of all relevant information, so anyone in the world can read it. If the public submissions were taken into account they should be made public (with defamatory material deleted, or tabled in Parliament to prevent legal action). If they were not considered, as seems likely, then we were lied to when the public submission process was announced as part of the review process.

The QPWS seems to be assembling as much science as it can find to justify policies which it introduced without prior research a long time ago.

Real science seems to be a minor factor in the way Australia deals with the dingo.

The authority of science is regularly claimed as justification for dingo management practices which, when you look at them, seem to rest more on assumptions and after-the-fact rationalisations than any open minded search for truth. Often we are asked to accept claims that gain their authority largely from the status of the scientist, rather than evidence. Many of the “well known facts” we are encouraged to accept turn out on examination to be more “well known” than factual.

Relevant well known dingo facts include assertions that dingoes arrived in Australia 4000 years ago, that they arrived in one introduction from a boat, that they wiped out the mainland thylacine, are the most important threat to the koala, are an inherently savage species kept in check only by fear of humans, that human contact or habituation causes them to lose that fear and become aggressive to humans, that they do not feel pain the way we do, do not have human-like emotions and are so brutally savage they will routinely kill and even eat their own siblings in competition for food.

None of these assumptions are backed by any real science, even though some scientists often express them as though they are fact. Evidence of a dingo presence 4000 years ago may prove they were here then, but it tells us nothing about how long they had been here, or how they arrived or how often and at what places.



BLINDED BY SCIENCE

No-one knows what happened to the mainland thylacine although in Tasmania they were killed by humans destroying habitat or deliberately exterminating them. Putting dingoes in the frame for endangering koalas has been strongly supported by the agricultural and koala lobbies, even though the evidence shows otherwise. The agricultural lobby is notorious for grasping at any unfounded claim that dingoes are a threat to other native species. That the Koala lobby should be conned by such fatuous claims is even more worrying.

Lee Allen has even claimed that leanness (seen as emaciation by some) is a source of status among dingoes, as though failure at hunting is likely to confer status in a predator species. In the absence of supporting research, it does seem counter-intuitive. Similarly he has discounted observations of dingoes eating coconuts on Fraser Island, saying that in his experience dingoes are unlikely to eat coconuts naturally and that this is therefore likely to be human provided. But most of Dr Allen's experience has been west of the Great Dividing Range, where there are no beaches for coconuts to wash up on.



But it is right up there with the commonplace assertion that dingoes arrived here 4000 years ago, when what the science really shows is that dingoes have been here for at least 4000 years. As Shakespeare once said, "There are more things in heaven and earth Horatio than are dreamed of in your philosophy." We should not conclude that a thing does not exist, just because a scientist is not aware of it.

The claim that dingoes do not feel pain and do not have human emotions, just respond to stimuli, suits the agendas of scientists want to conduct experiments which would otherwise not be condoned. The same people will sometimes say emotions are part of our animal nature.

Interestingly, there is a school of thought that humans do not have human emotions either, just respond to stimuli. And Behaviourism works as an observational tool in many cases. They have emotions as much as we have and just as much pragmatic Darwinist survival need for them.

Ben Allen's more recent proposal to export dingo meat to Asia for human consumption has prompted outrage, attributed by Dr Ben Allen to "cultural differences", which he finds "fascinating."

A tendency to be biased by prior beliefs or wished-for results is something common to all of us and from which even the most revered scientists do not claim to be immune.

BLINDED BY SCIENCE

Charles Darwin, quoted by Goldacre, said "(I) followed a golden rule, whenever a new observation or thought came across me, which was opposed to my general results, to make a memorandum of it without fail and at once, for I had found by experience that such facts and thoughts were far more apt to escape from the memory than favourable ones."

Today, there is a clear divide between genuinely independent scientists who have contributed to a large body of research and evidence that shows the dingo to be of net benefit to the health and resilience of ecosystems. The clear implication of this work is that the systematic persecution of the dingo as an agricultural pest, which has largely removed it from vast parts of its former range, has been environmentally damaging. At the same time, there is a tight clique of scientists, closely associated with the pastoral industry, which refuse to acknowledge that persecution of the dingo has been environmentally destructive and that industry attitudes should change. It is industry-aligned scientists, who are most often the preferred choice of conservative government bureaucracies (particularly in Queensland), that we see producing research findings that challenge independent research and support the pest management status quo. Too often, the net result is that sound science goes largely unacknowledged by government, and struggles for funding, while politically compromised 'science' is rewarded and applauded by government.



Jennifer Parkhurst

Pelorus Island—Dingoes to be used to rid Island of feral goats

NDPRP Media Release

Self-culling dingo proposal morally and environmentally bankrupt

National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program (Inc. A0051763G)

Date: Thursday June 30, 2016

Secretary of the National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program Inc. (NDPRP Inc.), Dr Ernest Healy, today slammed the idea of releasing dingoes with pre-timed poison devices implanted inside them as morally and environmentally bankrupt.

This week, it has been reported that dingoes have been released on Pelorus Island in Queensland to rid the Island of its population of feral goats. The dingoes, which have been neutered, have also had capsules of deadly 1080 poison implanted under their skin, designed to dissolve in about two years time. The advocates clearly expect that this approach will be used more widely across Australia.

Dr Healy stated:

“First, the use of 1080 poison for the pre-timed killing of the dingoes is cruel. 1080 poison is widely considered to result in a prolonged and agonising death. How such a proposal got past any credible animal research ethics approval process, either within a university or government department, beggars belief.”

“Second, despite the claim that this use of dingoes would be environmentally beneficial, it is really designed to sidestep a genuinely satisfactory environmental outcome, which would include the permanent reintroduction of dingo populations to their former range where the habitat is suitable.”

Increasingly, major conservation organisations and prominent environmental scientists have advocated for the reintroduction of dingoes into their former range as a way to help restore ecosystem health. In the view of these scientists, the historical removal of dingoes as farming activity expanded has contributed to the fragility of Australian ecosystems and to Australia’s appalling extinction rate of native species, particularly small mammal species.

However, because of the long-term hostility of the sheep industry to dingoes, inherited from the colonial period, dingoes have continued to be purged from vast areas near to sheep farming and the well-being of the natural environment has remained a lower-order priority for governments.



Pelorus Island—

Rather than search for a workable historic compromise between the interests of the sheep farming industry and ecosystem health, which would involve the permanent reintroduction of dingoes and acknowledgement of their important environmental role, the proposal to program introduced dingoes for a pre-scheduled cruel death relies upon and perpetuates the worst misconceptions about the dingo, that it too is just a pest animal with no intrinsic environmental value - to be eradicated.

Dr Healy stated:

“The Orwellian concept of using ‘self-culling’ dingoes to kill introduced pests, and that they too then be exterminated as pests by a pre-programmed poison device after having done their good work, is not only cruel, but merely avoids the need for a mature and genuine historic resolution of the conflict between sheep farming and the natural environment in Australia. Many Australians would correctly find such a callous misuse of an iconic native animal to be repugnant.”



Picture: Ben Allen. Dingo being released on Pelorus Island. Note the bulky collar around the dingo's neck, the body language of fear: ears back, whites of eyes showing, tail between the legs. If this is the way the Allen's think dingoes should be treated we're entitled to ask if they have the right attitude for working with them because there doesn't seem to be a lot of empathy involved. This photo has accompanied all the articles to do with this situation, and seems to be something the Allen's are proud of.

Marc Bekoff Ph.D. Death Row Dingoes

"Death row dingoes set to be the environmental saviour of Great Barrier Reef's Pelorus Island," reads the headline of an Australian ABC news article by Dominique Schwartz (you can read more about this plan and some utterly sickening quotes by the killers here: <http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2016/s4506188.htm>)

Her essay begins:

A Queensland council is releasing dingoes onto a Great Barrier Reef island to kill feral goats that [sic] are destroying its endangered ecosystem.

The four wild dogs, two of which [sic] have already been released on Pelorus Island, will not have a chance to become pests themselves, as they have been implanted with a time-activated poison, Hinchinbrook Shire Council said.

So, it turns out that these self-destructing dingoes are being used in sort of a kamikaze-like mission. This reprehensible plan is being led by father-and-son dingo experts Lee and Ben Allen, who clearly take pride in their killing ways. In Ms. Schwartz's essay we also read some interesting words from Hinchinbrook Shire Council Mayor Ramon Jayo, namely, "This is nature. The dingo is a predator, the goat is the source of a dingo's affection, so we believe that, yeah, just put nature together and that'll sort out the problem."

Of course, Mr. Jayo fails to note that the dingoes are desexed and pre-loaded with a capsule of 1080 poison that will then kill them if they don't die of natural causes. So, this reprehensible slaughter is hardly putting nature together.

And, to quote the heartless Ben Allen (<http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2016/s4506188.htm>):

"The plan is: dingoes wipe out goats, we come back and humanely shoot those dingoes 'cause they'll have tracking collars, so we can find out where they go. If for whatever reason *we can't come back and shoot those dingoes, well then those little time bombs'll go off.*" (my emphasis)

Of course, Mr. Jayo fails to note that the dingoes are desexed and pre-loaded with a capsule of 1080 poison that will then kill them if they don't die of natural causes. So, this reprehensible slaughter is hardly putting nature together.

And, it gets worse. Hinchinbrook Council's Matthew Beckman notes, "Once this island is successful, it will set the platform for many other island managers to follow through and carry out similar projects." What a deplorable model for youngsters and future conservation biologists.

Marc Bekoff Ph.D. Death Row Dingoes

In addition, the attitudes of the people who advocate killing, using doomed death row dingoes among other inhumane and brutal methods, provide a gold mine for researchers in conservation psychology and anthrozoology, both of which interdisciplinary fields are concerned with human-animal relationships. And, the growing international field of compassionate conservation could also help get the discussion going in non-killing directions. Indeed, there is a Centre for Compassionate Conservation at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Mr. Orman also writes, "1080 is a cruel unethical poison - 1080 is a slow acting poison, non-selective, and taking 24 to 48 hours or more to kill an animal - Dogs go through agony in dying from 1080 poison. So do wild deer and farm stock such as horses, cattle and sheep." He also notes, "1080 by its nature is not just an animal poison - it is an ecosystem poison." So much for the "claim of 'clean and green' used to promote exports."

Along these lines, what I find utterly astounding and deeply disturbing is the incredibly detached and utterly cold attitude of the people behind the killing, with not a word of compassion, empathy, or sympathy being voiced. *I'm glad I'm not their dog.*

A few people asked me what they could do and all I could say is that there surely are other places to visit on holidays, and they also could rather easily spread the word globally because, as the late and incredibly passionate animal advocate, Gretchen Wyler, once wisely said, "Cruelty can't stand the spotlight." Nor should it.

Marc Bekoff's latest books are Jasper's Story: Saving Moon Bears (with Jill Robinson), Ignoring Nature No More: The Case for Compassionate Conservation, Why Dogs Hump and Bees Get Depressed: The Fascinating Science of Animal Intelligence, Emotions, Friendship, and Conservation, Rewilding Our Hearts: Building Pathways of Compassion and Coexistence, and The Jane Effect: Celebrating Jane Goodall (edited with Dale Peterson). The Animals' Agenda: Freedom, Compassion, and Coexistence in the Human Age (with Jessica Pierce) will be published in early 2017. (Homepage: marcbekoff.com; @MarcBekoff)



Pelorus Island UPDATE



Media release

Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef
The Honourable Steven Miles

Rare bird blocks bizarre death row dingoes plan

Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef The Honourable Steven Miles

Thursday, August 18, 2016

Rare bird blocks bizarre death row dingoes plan

Environment Minister Dr Steven Miles has stopped a controversial plan to deploy wild dogs to kill goats on a North Queensland island to protect the threatened Beach stone-curlew.

Dr Miles today made an Interim Conservation Order under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 requiring Hinchinbrook Shire Council to immediately cease the use of dingoes to eradicate feral goats on Pelorus Island.

"I was shocked to learn of this cruel experiment but even more alarming is the lack of thought for the native animals on the island.

"Pest control should always be carried out in the most humane way possible – not by death row dingoes.

"As of today no dogs can be released on to Pelorus Island and any wild dogs already on the island must be removed within the next 14 days," Dr Miles said.

"I do not take this action lightly but on the advice of experts from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection it's clear that this misconceived program needs to stop before irrevocable harm is done to the island's population of Beach stone-curlews.

"While the control of feral goats and other pests is a responsibility of all landholders, the methods employed should not pose a risk to threatened native wildlife species."

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries Leanne Donaldson said the program was 'inhumane'.

"I fully support the action Minister Miles is taking today," Ms Donaldson said.

"It was very frustrating for me to learn that under current legislation I had no power to intervene.

"As soon as I heard the detail of the council's plan I sought urgent advice on whether I could step in on the grounds that it is a cruel and inhumane solution.

Pelorus Island UPDATE

“At the inaugural meeting of the Animal Welfare Advisory Board I asked members to consider whether such practices are in line with current community expectations on animal welfare.

“There has to be a more humane way to deal with a feral pest problem.”

RSPCA Queensland CEO Mark Townend said the RSPCA also supported the decision.

“We at the RSPCA had a number of concerns regarding the decision to put dingoes on the island in the first place,” Mr Townend said.

“We felt there were significant animal welfare issues not just for the goats but for smaller, native animals on the island and the dingoes themselves.”

Dr Miles said there were estimated to be only around 5000 Beach stone-curlews left across Australia.

“The Beach stone-curlew is listed as Vulnerable in Queensland, Critically Endangered in New South Wales and Near Threatened on the global IUCN Red List of Threatened Species,” Dr Miles said.

“It is believed to be in decline across most of its range due to human disturbance and predation by cats, pigs and dogs.

“I will not stand by while one of the main predators of this vulnerable bird is deliberately released into its habitat.”

Interim Conservation Orders are designed for use where there is a likelihood of a significant detrimental impact on threatened wildlife.

Earlier this year Dr Miles took similar action when an Interim Conservation Order was issued in relation to the recently rediscovered night parrot.

ENDS



The Inaugural Simon Validzic NDPRP Excellence Award

As there are so many 'unsung heroes' in the conservation world, the NDPRP decided it would present an award each year at our AGM to an outstanding achiever. We have named this award after Simon Validzic, a Croatian activist who has made several generous donations to us. More about Simon on the next page.

This year's award goes to Sally Chapman, who established the Lightning Rock Conservation area in NSW. Congratulations Sally, and thank you for all the hard work you have done this year towards the preservation of dingoes, despite great personal adversity.

Sally explains how Lightning Rock Conservation Area came to exist:

In 2000, due to a health issue that removed me from the workforce, it seemed time to attempt to manifest a long held dream to 'go bush' and live amongst the wildlife that had fascinated me for decades. I began the search for a bit of Australia with high natural heritage values appropriate for a wildlife refuge or conservation area. A property in the Great Dividing Range that had previously been the source of the beautiful timber used on the walls of the Sydney Opera House was the best of the dozen properties inspected over a period of nearly 2 years. Sixteen endangered or vulnerable species were identified during the professional fauna survey, as well as a significant number of vulnerable or endangered native plants. The property is surrounded on 3 sides by Birriwal Bulga National Park.



It was the presence of a family of dingoes that finalised my decision to purchase the property, spend the required sums to meet all the criteria for a change of title and go live in a tent in the wilderness. (I now have a nice little house, but it took 11 years).

I am sorry to report that despite my efforts, there are now fewer endangered/vulnerable species in the conservation area than there were in 2002 when it was set up.

The dingo family was decimated by an aerial baiting campaign in 2004 despite my legal efforts to 'stop the drop' and the fact that a dingo DNA project was currently underway in the Conservation Area. The legal action produced considerable animosity from the local community who hate dingoes (which is what they call all wild dogs). Once the dingoes were gone, the inevitable cats, rabbits and foxes began to make their appearance. I have seen no trace of a quoll or powerful owl since the baiting. Local shooters decided to 'seed' the area with pigs in 2014-15, as the NSW government was about to permit recreational shooting in National Parks, and the shooters hoped that if they could get ferals to 'take' in the park again, they would have a place to shoot. Now, changes to the NSW biodiversity legislation include proposals to allow conservation areas to be nominated as development offsets, so that some other high natural heritage location can be despoiled by mining.

Lightning Rock is still a spectacular place where wildlife still abounds. According to the laws at the time it was created, it was to be protected 'in perpetuity', but the government of the day can change that at any time – and is about to do so despite the efforts of many conservation groups and other owners of these private attempts to protect the heritage of the nation.

GETTING TO KNOW SIMON

After living in Australia from 1970, I returned to my country of origin (Croatia) in 1992.

I found out about the NDPRP from occasional articles about dingoes that Maryland Wilson of the Australian Wildlife Protection Council (AWPC) sends around to members. I work with Maryland Wilson and I am their Croatian representative. I was shocked that Jennifer Parkhurst was fined 40,000 Australian Dollars for feeding dingoes.

Before most plastics had recycling codes (in 1990), I called the factories that made all the plastic packages (and lids) to ask what plastic they were made from. I then found factories that would take the plastics. They had to be perfectly clean since they did not accept post-consumer HDPE, PVC, LDPE and PP. I could not find any to take PS. I recycle over 99% (by mass) of all my waste.

I have been vegan since 1995. I avoid palm oil and its by-products.

In 1999, I had the words "FUR IS MURDER" (in Croatian) printed on a coat. An activist noticed my coat and asked me if I were interested in forming the first animal rights organization in Croatia - Animal Friends Croatia.

In early 2002, there was a news report on Croatian Television about the Australian Government increasing the kill quota of kangaroos from 5.5 million to 7 million.

I started with a leaflet from VIVA-UK and produced my own campaign materials in Croatian and English.

Attitudes regarding animals and the environment in Croatia seemed very backward in the past but things have improved greatly. A ban on fur-farming in Croatia is due to go into effect in 2017 although there are attempts to overturn it. The "use" of dolphins in entertainment has been banned. No primates are used in experimentation. Even the leading brands of personal hygiene and cleaning products are not tested on animals. GMOs are not grown in Croatia. About 45% of the land is covered in natural and nature-identical forest.

I try to donate to and take action regarding a selection of causes that I believe in, in various countries. It has been my pleasure to donate to the NDPRP.

It is things like "humane slaughter", "sustainable palm oil", bio-mass, the destruction of natural ecosystems or taking land from indigenous peoples for "organic agriculture", the protection of feral cats "because they are as important as native animals" that I do not support.

Simon Validzic



BITS & PIECES...

Daniel Jitnah

We would like to thank Daniel Jitnah for the service he provides to us free of charge on our website and with any IT problems we have. Thanks so much Daniel. If anyone wants a very kind, helpful IT person we highly recommend contacting Daniel. His e-mail address is: djitnah@greenwareit.com.au

Dr Ernest Healy

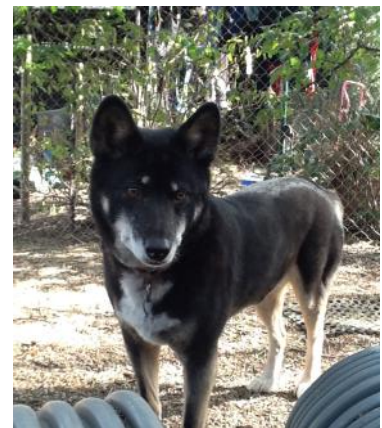
We would like to thank Dr Ernest Healy for his tireless and ongoing efforts to liaise with Victorian Government Environment officials to obtain change for the dingoes in Victoria. Dr Healy spends nearly every waking hour thinking about initiatives to take, having meetings, networking, taking part in political party discussions, writing media releases, working on submissions, co-authoring various papers and generally doing his utmost to make sure the government is apprised of our demands, and acts on them. If hard work got us our wish, then Ernest would be our Genie!

Sheba – den digging and food caching

Sheba, an alpine, bred by Gill and Richard Ryhorchuk in central Victoria, is now an 11 year old female kept by Ernest and Robyn Healy in Melbourne, who have had her since about 5 weeks of age. Sheba is kept with Jack, an 8 year old neutered hybrid male. As a young adult, Sheba adopted and mothered Jack as a pup. She let him suckle her even though she did not have milk. Sheba goes into den digging mode on an annual basis and has done so since she was a juvenile, after being exposed to the activity by an older female, Mahlee, who died some time ago. Sheba would stand at the edge of the hole getting covered in dirt as Mahlee excavated with great determination. The dens were big enough for Mahlee to disappear into.

This year, we have seen Sheba hiding food in the den (chicken necks), which we have not noticed before. It appears to be preparing for pups, even though there is no prospect for any.

Food for thought .



BITS & PIECES...

Michael Kennedy

Campaign Director for Humane Society International (HSI) and the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT). HSI is a global NGO which concentrates in Australia on national and international biodiversity policy and law, and specialises in marine conservation matters. Michael has been a professional environmentalist for 35 years, is the joint editor/author of four books on threatened species conservation, and was previously a senior ministerial adviser on the environment in the Hawke Government. We would like to thank Michael for all the dedicated hard work he has done over the years. A job very well done. Don't retire, we need you!

Multi-coloured dingoes seen in 1866

J. MCKINLAY'S NORTHERN TERRITORY EXPLORATIONS, 1866.

Saturday, March 24.—Looked very like rain during the night and this morning ; but passed off without any. Heard no more of the natives till sunrise this morning when their distant cooeing was heard ; and about 8 a.m., thirty-three men, women, and children came over the stream to us. The women were very shy of approach, but in a short time seemed more at home. I distributed beads and empty tins amongst them, and they took their leave, saying they would return to-morrow. They had several wild dogs with them which they could handle about as we could tame ones. They were of various colors—red, black, and cream, and are called as a body “cadden”—same as they apply to all quadrupeds. We got several names of themselves and other things from them which may be of some use to intending settlers, and appended to this journal, showing the locality that such language is used—as in a very short distance the dialect varies so much as not to be understood. By afternoon, the weather has cleared up, and will tend to dry our crossing place. From a view I had the other day when out on one of the ridges, I fancy we will meet a considerable impediment during our first day's march in the shape of a large boggy morass that drains the waters of a number of ridges to the west of north-west, and will come in our course about three miles after our crossing the first creek from this. Visited late in the afternoon by a few natives who wished to camp with us, which, however, was declined. In the evening, a smart gale from the south-east, terminating in a smart shower. Fine night otherwise.

If you haven't joined the NDPRP yet,
PLEASE SEE FORM AT END OF NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO OUR NEW AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION EAGLE'S NEST WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT EAGLE'S NEST AND ITS CURATOR, HARRY KUNZ

I arrived in Australia in 1982 from Vienna Austria and upon visiting several zoos I immediately became interested and instantly fell in love with the very unique Australian wildlife. In Sydney I bought a black & tan rainforest dingo not actually aware it was a dingo assuming I had just bought a dog. Shortly after that I began my journey around Australia from NSW to Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory before travelling down the centre towards Alice Springs, staying with several Aboriginal tribes along the way. I learned the tribal customs and traditions of these tribes, which was a culture shock for a city born Austrian that arrived in Australia speaking not a word of English. They taught me how to survive in the outback and I learned how to feed myself and find water etc.



Encountering dingoes in the outback only furthered my intrigue into this amazing animal. Camping in one remote spot I remember seeing my first wild dingoes in the bush. I learned that they were elusive and independent; on my approach they would retreat but would come towards me ever so closer day by day as I camped until they would come in for food scraps when I was at a distance decided by them.

From Coober Pedy I headed north and found myself eventually in Cairns four years later in 1986. My initial passion for wildlife conservation began back in Europe where all the animals were basically eradicated, re-wilding was beginning but Australia made me realise that I could do something here so things didn't go the same way as in Europe. Along my travels I had picked up injured animals like kangaroo joeys but I knew not how to take care of them at this time. In Cairns I started a business and networking with people. I tried to learn as much as possible about wildlife care; I had some help but mostly it was trial and error myself. I later moved to Kuranda where there was a large colony of spectacled flying foxes, over 5000 in numbers and I began caring for the injured animals earning myself a reputation as the "Bat Man", of course in reference to the misunderstood term for flying foxes genus. In the area I created the first wildlife rescue group in Cairns with a vet and other local wildlife carers.

After a short time I decided to start my own organisation I named Eagles Nest wildlife Sanctuary after an eagle I received for care injured from the rainforest. Learning along the way from self-research and contacting zoos and vets and national parks services to gain as much knowledge of our Australian native wildlife and how to care for them I began taking all manner of native wildlife from reptiles to larger mammals, turning no animal needing care away. In 1999 I bought my current property in Ravenshoe Queensland. The biggest selling point that cemented the sale for me was the big gum tree on the property that had a wedge tailed eagle's nest. I started Eagles Nest Wildlife Hospital. From the first year receiving and caring for perhaps 40 animals by the year 2009 I was caring for between 1200 and 1300 injured animals.

EAGLE'S NEST WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

I had my first dingo rescue pups in 1996 not long after my black and tan dingo Aries had died. Dingo behaviour I was learning from Aries over his lifetime but at that time those stages I did not know the difference between a dingo and a domestic dog thinking I just had a very special and highly intelligent breed of dog. From the first orphaned pups in 1996 I started receiving dingo pups every year at breeding season from the age of 2 weeks to 4-5 months old, numbers increasing every year. I also had YAPS (young animal protection society) and the RSPCA and local vets contacting me to take on board orphan pups they could obviously not care for themselves but did not want to euthanise.

In 2003 the DEPI came to my property and seized my two adult dingoes I had raised from orphans in 1996. They told me my dingoes were pest animals and said they would be killed in 24 hours. I appealed for them to allow me to receive legal advice so they said they gave me 72 hours. In this time I contacted local media appealing for help and support but to no avail so on the third and final day I went to my local library and began to read the constitutional act on feral pest animals. I found in this act that if you have a feral pest animal under sufficient control that was contained and in no way a threat to the environment or people it was legal to keep them as your property. I contacted them after learning this and told them they cannot legally kill my dingoes and I would fight them in court. They kept my dingoes for seven months moving them from kennel to kennel all over north Queensland until I finally got my day in court.



After my statement in court the judge dismissed the case and gave me my dingoes back. The damage was done with the dingoes despicable care in kennels at the hands of the DEPI and less than 6 months after returning home very much mentally scarred my female dingo died from physical injuries no doubt as a result of this treatment.

Since then I have cared for many dingoes both adults and pups and have learned much more every day about their unique behaviour and physical habits and traits. I firmly believe that the dingo as the apex predator and regulator of biodiversity in Australia must be protected at all costs and the current measures of lethal control such as 1080 poison should cease immediately. If we protect and preserve the dingo populations in

the bush we in turn protect all manner of native species from feral predators such as the cat and fox and dog.





THE MT BUFFALO DINGO DEBATE

On the 5th July 2016 an article featured in the Border Mail (Albury/Wodonga newspaper) about dingoes being spotted at Mt Buffalo. Tour guides were thrilled; it added a new and positive dimension to their tours. 'It's just added a bit of interest this winter, it's the first winter we've been able to see them,' Adventure Guides Australia owner David Chitty said. Mr Chitty said they were not pests, saying they had adapted well to the alpine environment.

'They don't pose any danger to the public,' he said. 'Here at Dingo Dell, it'll come and stand next to your car, if it gets scared it'll run away.' He said dingoes were actually good for the animal life of Mount Buffalo because although they did eat some small animals, they also eliminated some of the bigger cats and foxes which did far more damage.

This positive article was then followed by a not-so-positive one, on the 7th July. The article said: 'The "beautiful dingo" which has excited tourists at Mount Buffalo has been labelled an aggressive wild dog.'

Benambra MLA Bill Tilley said they were not dingoes, they were wild dogs. "If you want to see an Alpine dingo, you have to go out of this region." Mr Tilley said DNA research conducted over many years showed dingoes were bred out of the wild dog population in Victoria. "Unfortunately these dogs are aggressive," Mr Tilley said.



FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND: An Alpine dingo has been hanging around the Dingo Dell area of Mount Buffalo. Picture: JAYNIE COLSTON

On July 14, 2016 The Weekly Times then entered the debate. Their article said: 'North East Victorians are debating whether the dogs are pure-blood dingoes living under the protection of the law or wild dogs to be hunted and killed. Mountain tour guide David Chitty said he believed the dogs were dingoes: 'There are wild dogs which can cause problems lower down the mountain, but we have known for many years there are dingoes up here,' Mr Chitty said. Former long-serving Mt Buffalo ranger Bob Adams said dingoes had been 'part of the ecology of the area for a long time'.

But Benambra MLA Bill Tilley reiterated that the animals were 'clearly wild dogs, as scientific research had proved any wild dingoes had been bred out of the Victorian population.' MLA Tilley said the dogs regularly attacked sheep and cattle.



THE MT BUFFALO DINGO DEBATE

In a rejoinder to the comments made by MLA Tilly, NDPRP Secretary Ernest Healy wrote to the paper with this comment, which appeared on-line, and partially appeared in print in the Weekly Times:

Benambra MLA, Mr Bill Tilley, needs to get his facts straight rather than misinforming the public about the identity of the canines that are subject to discussion here. Genetic analysis of the dingoes in Victoria does not show that the dingo 'has been bred out' of them, as the member claims. Genetic testing shows that there are pure dingoes and there are dingoes with varying degrees of hybridisation with domestic dogs.

Limitations and inaccuracy of the genetic testing technique used needs to be understood. So uncertain is the DNA testing technique that the scientist who developed the test is on the record as saying that dingoes that test between 75% and 100% pure should be treated as pure for conservation purposes in the wild. More recent research has concluded that two or more introductions of the dingo to the Australian continent appear to have occurred some thousands of years ago. One of these introductions appears to have provided the founding stock for the populations found in south eastern Australia, including those found in the alpine regions of Victoria. Whereas once it was thought that the distinctive physical characteristics of the alpine dingoes in south eastern Australia were due to hybridisation with domestic dogs, there is now good reason to think that these differences are due to a different founding population.

Further, the nature of the great majority of the hybrids, in terms of their appearance and ecological role in maintaining environmental balance as apex predators, needs to be clearly understood. Much of the hybridisation that exists is very old, having occurred incrementally over the past 200 years. During this time, hybrids have continued to evolve and adapt to their natural environment. Hybridisation has not significantly altered either the physical appearance of the dingoes in Victoria, or their behaviour in the wild. Heavy selection pressure in a harsh, demanding environment means that any offspring that are significantly different in size, behaviour and skull conformation are not likely to survive. The survivors tend to conform to the pre-European template. Recent research has shown that hybrids throw very strongly towards the dingo skull shape. For all

intentions and purposes they are dingoes. The vast majority of hybrids look and behave like pre-European dingoes. They are dingoes and unique to the Australian alpine ecosystems.

There is a mounting body of scientific research which shows how crucial the modern dingo, as apex predator, is to the health of Australian ecosystems, including in Victoria.

Such evidence appears to be lost on the MLA for Benambra. His comments are unhelpful and potentially environmentally harmful. Appealing to the perceived vested interests of one's political constituency is one thing; shouldering a broader political responsibility is another.





Humane Society International continues dingo conservation focus in 2016

Humane Society International's (HSI) efforts for dingo conservation have continued apace throughout 2016. A member of the NDRPR since 2012, we have recently collaborated with the program on Victorian issues in particular, such as improving the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 threatened listing through a more reasonable and scientifically-justified approach to hybridisation. We do this because emerging conservation science is increasingly pointing to the importance of dingoes (and dingo hybrids) as Australia's top order mammalian predator, helping to control both introduced foxes and feral cats, and fulfilling critical ecosystem functions. This in turn means that dingoes play an equally important role in protecting a long list of threatened and non-threatened Australian species preyed upon in almost incomprehensible numbers by these feral interlopers.

HSI also had a dingo focus in this year's round of Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) nominations for listings, with submissions for the dingo as a Threatened (Conservation Dependent) Species, the loss of the dingo as a Key Threatening Process, and dingo values of the Simpson Desert as a National Heritage place.

Threatened Species:

This wide-ranging nomination to have the dingo recognised as threatened nationally offered a number of conservation outcomes, including protection of dingo populations known to be particularly important, as well as a nationwide Conservation Dependent listing. Such a listing requires a National Conservation Plan for a species to be in place, and noting this requirement of further information and a need for research in a range of areas, HSI has continued to lobby for a comprehensive review to be conducted through Government initiatives such as the National Environmental Science Programme (NESP) Threatened Species Recovery Hub. We believe it vital that the development of a national dingo recovery/conservation plan be initiated by the Government, and have promoted for this strongly to the Minister for the Environment and Threatened Species Commissioner. We remain hopeful for news of the dingo being included on the 2016 Finalised Priority Assessment List (FPAL).

Key Threatening Process:

Our Key Threatening Process (KTP) nomination for the loss of dingoes under the EPBC Act was unfortunately not placed on the 2015 FPAL, with the Threatened Species Scientific Committee suggesting that "While the detrimental effect of the removal of the dingo on ecosystems and species is a valid hypothesis, there is little direct evidence that the removal of dingoes will i) cause a species or ecological community to become eligible for listing; or eligible for listing in a higher threat category; or ii) that it will have an adverse affect on a listed threatened species or ecological community." Based on this response, HSI updated and re-submitted a strengthened KTP nomination as 'The cascading effects of the loss or removal of dingoes from Australian landscapes' in 2016, providing a greater focus on the positive effects dingo presence has on a variety of birds and small mammals listed as threatened. As with the threatened species nomination, we await news on the submission's inclusion on the 2016 FPAL.



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL
AUSTRALIA**

National Heritage:

With significant assistance from NDPRP Secretary Dr Ernest Healy, HSI also submitted a National Heritage nomination for the Simpson Desert “for its critical Dingo populations and related and essential natural, indigenous and cultural heritage values.” This submission was a much-improved version of one made by HSI around 10 years ago, but disappointingly appears set to suffer the same fate - we have just received the response from the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy that all of our National Heritage nominations for this year, the Simpson Desert dingo values among them, were unsuccessful. The (unsatisfactory) response highlighted a lack of evidence of support from various jurisdictions involved as a major factor of the nomination’s lack of inclusion, and we will consider what supplementary information to provide before it is considered again next year.

What’s in store?

We continue to advocate for a National Dingo Conservation Plan for the benefit of a wide range of native species and habitats, and are considering the potential development and submission of faunal-based dingo Threatened Ecological Community nomination for listing under the EPBC Act along with enhancement and resubmission of any unsuccessful this year. HSI’s dingo conservation efforts are also a major feature of an upcoming threatened species publication, which is expected to be printed in the coming months. We look forward to continuing the productive collaboration developed with the NDPRP, in particular ensuring that the landmark Victorian species listing is effective as it can be.



Jennifer Parkhurst



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL
AUSTRALIA

The Victorian Government is considering re-introducing a wild dog bounty. HSI has written a very strong letter opposing this:

Minister for Agriculture and Regional Development
Level 20, 1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
By email to: jaala.pulford@parliament.vic.gov.au
9 August, 2016

Dear Minister Pulford,

I write on behalf of Humane Society International's (HSI) 65,000 Australian and 12,000,000 global supporters with regard to the potential reintroduction of a 'wild dog' bounty in Victoria. HSI understands your Government is currently considering such a move and is highly concerned due to impacts on dingo populations and in turn threatened species across Victoria. As apex predators, dingoes play a vital ecological role and their presence is beneficial to biodiversity conservation.

If population reduction for stock protection has been presented as a driver for a 'wild dog' bounty, it should be noted that shooting has been found to be an ineffective dog control measure and inappropriate for reducing populations over extensive areas. Hybridisation with 'pure' dingoes is also often used as grounds for control of 'wild dogs' under the auspices of dingo conservation, however there is no evidence that it has led to a predominance of dog genes in dingoes due to the selection processes that led to the evolution of the dingo still acting on hybrids today. A growing body of evidence has confirmed that hybrids share many important aspects of dingo social behaviour such as pack formation and feeding habits. Since hybrids share the same ecological role as dingoes they should be considered equally as important to conserve in Australian ecosystems.

There is little agreement between genetics and morphology when assessing dingo purity, and the difficulty in distinguishing hybrids from 'pure' dingoes essentially means all 'wild dog' controls are indiscriminate and will inevitably impact on 'pure' dingoes. Their Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 threatened species listing may have serious legal implications for any bounty program. Research also suggests that dog control is counter-productive for stock predation, with intact dingo packs exhibiting behavioural boundaries that limit such predation. When packs are fractured through shooting, loss of social cohesion leads to more opportunistic feeding patterns. The reduced ability of dingo packs to hunt prey such as kangaroos sees greater herbivore pasture competition with stock, so an increase in dog control is likely to be economically detrimental for pastoralists.

HSI urges you to reject any call to reintroduce the 'wild dog' bounty removed by your Government in 2015, and seeks prompt confirmation that you have no intention of reinstating such a program.

Yours sincerely,

Evan Quartermain
Senior Program Manager



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL
AUSTRALIA**

HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

Media Release

10th August 2016



Shooting threatened dingoes back on the table in Victoria

Humane Society International (HSI) was appalled this week after being informed that the Victorian Government is considering the reintroduction of a 'wild dog' bounty, just over a year after the same Labor Government ceased the program. Dingoes are listed as threatened under Victoria's *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and as they will be indiscriminately killed through any shooting program **HSI** has written to Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford seeking confirmation that there is no intention of reinstating the bounty.

"Over the four years before the ban more than 2,000 dogs were shot in Victoria and their scalps handed in for \$200,000 of publically funded bounties. But how do we know they were so-called 'wild dogs' and not dingoes? The latest research shows determining purity in the field borders on impossible, so there were undoubtedly many dingoes shot for Government incentives in the only State they are listed as a threatened species," said **HSI Senior Program Manager Evan Quartermain**.

Shooting has been found to be an ineffective dog control measure and inappropriate for reducing populations over extensive areas¹. Research also suggests that dog control can be counterproductive for stock predation, with intact dingo packs exhibiting behavioural boundaries that limit such impacts. When packs are fractured through shooting, loss of social cohesion leads to more opportunistic feeding patterns, meaning an increased dog control could actually be economically detrimental for pastoralists.

Furthermore, a growing body of evidence shows that dingo-dog hybrids share many important aspects of dingo social behaviour such as pack formation and feeding habits, and **HSI** continues to argue that as hybrids are performing the same ecological role as dingoes, they should be considered equally as important to conserve in Australian ecosystems. Dingoes are important predators on feral cats and foxes. The first step is treating hybrid dingoes as wildlife instead of pest animals, and avoiding compounding the pressures on them through programs such as 'wild dog' bounties.

Mr Quartermain concluded, *"The same selection processes that led to the evolution of the dingo are still acting on hybrids today and we quickly see dingo traits and characteristics assert themselves in these animals. Indiscriminate killing programs don't just hurt pure dingoes; they hurt the entire ecosystem thrown out of balance when you start shooting apex predators. Victoria took a very positive step in 2008 by listing the dingo as a threatened species, but any move to bring back a dog bounty would be in stark contrast. For the good of the environment and dingo conservation it simply must not happen."*

Media Contact:

Evan Quartermain, Senior Program Manager – 0404 306 993 or (02) 9973 1728

¹ Invasive Species Council: Recreational hunting NSW: claims v facts http://invasives.org.au/files/2014/02/fs_rechunt2_NSWvfacts.pdf

HSI concentrates on the preservation of endangered animals and ecosystems and works to ensure quality of life for all animals, both domestic and wild. HSI is the largest animal protection not-for-profit organisation in the world and has been established in Australia since 1994.

FRASER ISLAND REPORT

On June 17, six dingoes were found dead on world Heritage Listed Fraser Island, where the high conservation value dingo population is protected as an ecological and cultural asset. As Queensland Minister for the Environment, Dr Stephen Miles, states: “Dingoes are as much a part of Fraser Island as the world-renowned sand dunes and crystal-clear blue lakes”.

A dingo from the Eurong area, fitted with a tracking collar, had travelled all the way up to Orchid Beach. The collar tracking signal showed that the dingo had stopped moving and this alerted the authorities that something was wrong.

The 6 dingoes were poisoned, found within a short distance of one another, and with one dingo in a partly dug shallow grave, as if the perpetrator were disturbed or caught in the act. Initial indications are that the poison used was ‘1080’.

Many concerned locals have long believed that dingoes on Fraser Island were being illegally poisoned although the perpetrator(s) have remained undetected (perhaps protected). Such ‘unexplained’ dingo deaths have comprised part of the significant annual count of ‘non-cull’ dingo deaths – that is, deaths not legally conducted by wildlife authorities on the Island.

In the last two years there have been 46 deaths of dingoes, due purportedly to ‘natural culling, vehicle strike, and unknown causes’, and this number does not include dingoes that have been destroyed, or bodies that have not been found. If the population really does fluctuate between 100 and 200 dingoes as some researchers claim, then the loss of at least 46 dingoes is of great concern. Of greater concern is the fact that authorities are claiming that there are 20 packs of dingoes comprising 10 dingoes in each pack, which is simply not true, even in the whelping season when packs increase from an actual average of 3 dingoes to 8 if they whelp 5 pups. Thus the actual population would be closer to 60, plus pups and sub-adults from the previous year. The latest death of these six poisoned dingoes only compounds the stress and pressure the population is subjected to on a regular basis.

We had hoped that there would be a full and comprehensive investigation into the poisoning of the dingoes at Orchid Beach, but of course, the investigation has revealed nothing. With so many cameras positioned on the Island now, we are at a loss as to why crimes against dingoes are not being photographed.



Jennifer Parkhurst

FRASER ISLAND REPORT

President of the National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program, Dr Ian Gunn, stated that:

“Not only do the particular circumstances of these poisonings need to thoroughly independently investigated and the perpetrator(s) caught and punished to the fullest extent of the law, but these dingo deaths need to be understood in context of a long history of dingo mistreatment and mismanagement on Fraser Island”.

While expressing confidence in the Queensland Police to adequately investigate this crime and identify the perpetrator(s), Dr Gunn emphasised a number of issues relating to the poisoning:

Initial enquiries indicated that the poison used was 1080, a widely used poison in Australia, but one which is highly regulated. Persons with access to this poison need to have undergone at least rudimentary training and to be registered users.

The vehicle registration numbers of persons visiting Fraser Island at the time of the deaths might be checked against persons registered to use 1080 poison.

One of the poisoned dingoes had a radio tracking collar. Reportedly, the collar showed that the dingo had been immobile for 12 hours. What did the radio collar show the dingo’s location and movements to be prior to that time?

There are also questions about the thoroughness of the necropsies being conducted on the poisoned animals. In the past, necropsy reports conducted on dingoes killed on the Fraser Island have often been incomplete and sub-standard. The necropsies must be genuinely independent, comprehensive and of a professional standard.

Dr Gunn also emphasised that:

“While the Queensland Wildlife authorities should thoroughly investigate this crime, the Queensland Police investigation should be independent from that of the Queensland wildlife authorities. In the view of the NDPRP, no one should be above suspicion in the investigation of this crime.

“Historically, the official mindset towards the dingo on Fraser Island has been largely negative, with greater priority being given to tourism numbers than dingo well-being. Contrary to the belief of the NDPRP Inc., the Queensland Government’s dingo management advice is that the Fraser Island dingo population is too large. Has this advice encouraged someone to feel justified in taking dingo culling on Fraser Island into their own hands?”

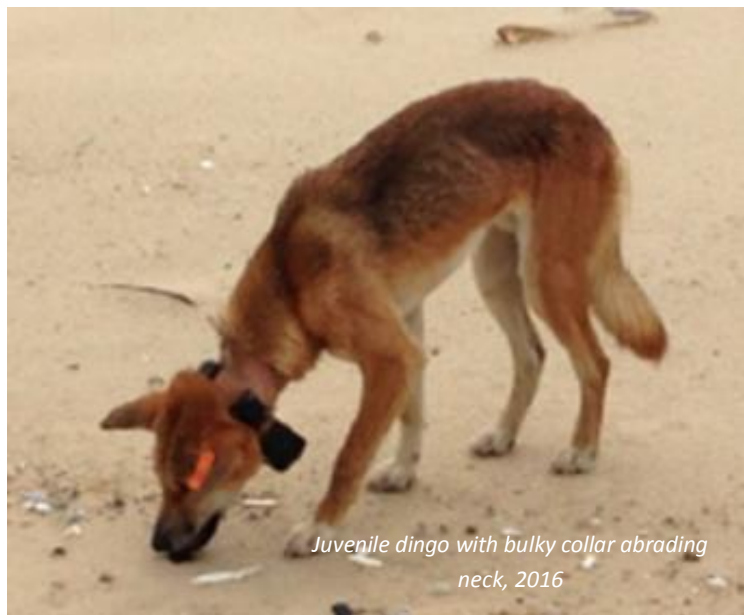
A, NDPRP media release: ‘Sad History of Dingo Mismanagement on Fraser Island and Now a Whole Pack Illegally Poisoned – Police Inquiry Must be Completely Independent’ was distributed Wednesday June 29, 2016

FRASER ISLAND REPORT

In a different matter, a dingo was chased by a car with the intent of the driver and occupants clearly to run the dingo over. The numberplate of the vehicle had been removed but a SFID member supplied photographs of the vehicle to the authorities and the persons involved were allegedly intercepted on the barge but were not charged.

On Monday April 18, 2016 President of the NDPRP, Dr Ian Gunn, called upon the Queensland Environment Minister, the Hon. Dr Steven Miles, to initiate and independent inquiry into cruelty and mismanagement of the dingo population on Fraser Island as a matter of urgency.

Dr Gunn stated that the recent inappropriate collaring of a juvenile dingo, which had obviously put the animal in distress was the latest in a sequence of events which raise serious questions about animal welfare aspects of current dingo management practices on Fraser Island.



Juvenile dingo with bulky collar abrading neck, 2016

This incident involved the use of a cumbersome radio tracking collar on a juvenile dingo, which was purportedly being tracked for public safety reasons. Photographs taken by a tourist clearly show that the edges of the collar had worn away the fur on the dingo's neck and would have unnecessarily interfered with the young dingo's mobility and well-being. After pictures of the dingo were made public, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service decided to remove the collar. However the young dingo was killed by a vehicle strike, incurring massive internal injuries, before the collar could be removed. "These events raise serious animal welfare questions" Dr Gunn said.

Dr Gunn stated:

"Why was a radio tracking collar used when ear tag identification was already attached to the dingo? What animal ethics approval had been obtained by the QPWS to use the collar for non-research purposes? If ethics approval was acquired, questions need to be raised about thoroughness of the approval process. Why was a collar also applied to this juvenile dingo's litter sister, when no radio tracking was intended for that animal? There appears to be no consistent rationale for the use of the collars and serious questions about animal welfare are left without adequate answers".

FRASER ISLAND REPORT

These events follow an incident, in 2015, when another juvenile dingo was ‘humanely’ euthanased after allegedly becoming aggressive. Necropsy photographs obtained through Queensland Right to Information legislation point to severe physical trauma prior to death. Dr Gunn, who conferred with senior veterinary colleagues over the photographic evidence, concluded that the dingo had suffered massive internal bleeding in the abdominal cavity consistent with a heavy blow or impact prior to being put down through lethal injection to the heart. Yet, there is no discussion of this evidence in the inadequate official necropsy report. Dr Gunn stated that: “Again, we have evidence of unacknowledged animal trauma and unanswered animal welfare questions.”



*Necropsy report , October 2015
Internal bleeding within abdominal cavity – severe pre-death trauma*

Possibly the most serious dingo cruelty incident at the hands of Queensland wildlife authorities occurred on Fraser Island in May 2011, as part of dingo trapping for radio collaring research. The necropsy report for this juvenile male dingo reads like a horror story. Upon examination of the report at the time, Dr Ian Gunn stated:

In all my years as a veterinary surgeon, I have never witnessed anything like this. This animal died in agony while trapped and restrained as part of ‘research’ being conducted by Queensland government authorities charged with its protection. The necropsy report stated that the otherwise healthy dingo had been restrained for ‘some period of time’. It had been pinned down by a pole noose and pinning device. It had chipped and fractured teeth, extensive internal bleeding, including widespread bruising and haemorrhaging to the thorax, limbs, neck and lumbar spine region, bleeding from the eye, tearing of the muscles between the ribs and the chest wall, and congested and collapsed lungs. In its final moments of life, the dingo vomited its stomach contents into its airways.

FRASER ISLAND REPORT



Necropsy report 2011

The NDPRP subsequently sent a solicitor's letter to the relevant Queensland government departments and Ministers alleging serious breaches of the law and inadequate animal ethics practices relating to this incident. No acknowledgement was received, let alone action taken. Not one person was held to account.

"It is time for the buck to stop and it has to stop with either the Queensland Environment Minister, or the Federal Minister for the Environment who, because of Fraser Island's World Heritage Listing, has compliance responsibilities under the EPBC Act", Dr Gunn said. "The Queensland government's claim that the Fraser Island dingo population is being managed 'humanely' is now in serious doubt. The only way to get to the bottom of this mess and possible cover up is to conduct a genuinely independent animal welfare inquiry into dingo management on Fraser Island."



Jennifer Parkhurst

FRASER ISLAND REPORT



Jennifer Parkhurst

Voluminous dark smoke billowed from the southern end of Fraser Island on Tuesday 26th July, seen clearly from Rainbow beach and wafting on the light breeze to form a cloud over the region. This is but one of many fires currently burning on Fraser Island. A local said to me 'Sparks and Wildfire [Parks and Wildlife as they are not-so-affectionately known] are at it again.'

As Peta Rakela wrote in her essay 'The ethics of prescribed Burns: human wrong and animal rights' (May, 2012, p 16):

The pro fire lobby and fire disciples maintain fire setting is 'for the greater good' and is the 'right' thing to do: reasoning mitigation against wildfires, and conservation benefits, outweigh costs in terms of 'animal' lives lost, and their suffering. Their argument aligns with utilitarian moral theory, but is ethically flawed, nevertheless. It ignores the obvious – what is the 'greater good,' and whose 'greater good' are they talking about? Moreover it assumes that the 'rights' of individual fauna, species, and communities can be forfeited for a 'greater good' which, invariably, is framed in terms of human benefit.

The casualties of these Island burns - its unique flora and fauna - appear to far exceed any human benefit.

It seems no coincidence that these burns occur every year during the dingo whelping season. Right now, there are pups in dens all over the Island, dens which are usually excavated out of fallen trees or dug into shallow burrows, both of which would afford little protection from a hot fire. And in my opinion the fire at Hook Point was hot. It did not appear to be a mosaic burn, but a blanket burn that covered many hectares. There would have been little opportunity for any animals to escape. Some of us can't help but speculate whether this is some sort of unofficial culling program, a clandestine dingo control policy, executed at this time of year because it *will* kill pups.

FRASER ISLAND REPORT



The dingo pups, if they were by some miracle to survive, would most probably subsequently die from starvation, because their food supply, the small herbivores that they hunt may well have been burnt in the fire, affording the dingoes a quick piece of barbeque meat, but no long-term prey. The small herbivores may find it very difficult to sustain their own lives into the short-term future due to lack of ground foliage/food, and may also be casualties in their own right, completely putting the ecosystem into disarray.

We may ask: What historical evidence do we have that Fraser Island was ever burnt by the Aborigines? It is an extremely fragile ecosystem, constructed on sand; it takes hundreds of years for the leaf herbage and other plant litter to build up a kind of soil covering the sandy ground, to maintain the life and diversity of the flora. A hot fire, burning right through this delicate layer of rich, fertile 'soil' and undergrowth, leaves nothing but sand. In some cases in the past (especially after the massive 22,000 hectare fire of 2009) the result was a newly formed collection of 'sand blows'; exposed sand, initially covered by ash, subsequently blown away by the wind therefore leaving pristine white sand and no foliage. Not only had the floor of the forest been burned, but the canopy as well, leaving ghost-like remnants of once beautiful trees, charred and misshapen.



FRASER ISLAND REPORT

If this was a cool burn, as hazard reduction burns should be, then there would be little concern. But the next day, I went down to Inskip Point, the closest point on the mainland to Fraser Island and a kilometre across the water from Hook Point, to have a closer look. Not only was the fire still burning but had increased in intensity behind the barge landing zone, in an area known to me on the Island as being behind a swamp the dingoes use as their main fresh water source. The smoke was incredibly dark, indicating that some of the swamp grass, which burns oily and black, was involved. It is known to me that the dingoes at Hook Point do have dens in this area.



Jennifer Parkhurst

I spoke to a camper and asked if he had camped at Inskip overnight. He told me:

Yes, the smoke was so thick we could barely breathe. We could see the red glow clearly at 10 o'clock last night.

The precautionary Principal, 'First do no harm' does not seem to apply when these 'common-place' and socially acceptable practices are repeated over and over again, accepted, because people are told by their governments, their scientist, that it is for the greater good. Once again, the question remains, the greater good of whom?



Jennifer Parkhurst



KANGAROOS AND THEIR KIN AS ESSENTIAL LAND MANAGERS, FIRE FUEL REDUCERS AND PRESERVERS OF WATER QUALITY

By Bob McDonald

THE KANGAROO SITUATION AS DESCRIBED IN THIS STORY HAS INTERESTING PARALLELS WITH THE DINGO SITUATION.

Australia was 'settled' with a European academic and nobleman's dream of cultivating 'wastelands'. Kangaroos were, and still are, mistakenly seen as 'the stock' of Aboriginal people – the key to their diet. The evidence from their eating places and stories shows the opposite is the fact.

Believed to be a hindrance to cultivation and competition for 'sheep and cattle' they are blamed for farming's failures. This belief is perpetuated by government and 'agricultural' scientists.

To those who know kangaroos, wallabies and their kin, each species has different social structures, make different noises and do different remarkable things – for which they are loved and cherished. To us, the shooting and wanton killing of kangaroos is as abhorrent as the love of them is intuitive.

But, despite our best efforts – the slaughter continues. Now, to end this needless slaughter, we reveal the role of kangaroos as essential land managers – to inform or, when necessary, dispute bad colonial science, to educate the public, farmers and the government.

Essentially, the role of kangaroos and their kin, is eating dangerously dry introduced grasses along and beyond fence-lines - the most common source of bush and grassfires. They are efficient graziers with even large kangaroo consuming only as much grass as two rabbits!

Their dry droppings do not contaminate water supplies, creeks, streams and estuaries with toxic bacteria as stock do. Their soft feet preserve soils and prevent erosion. Their abundance in time of drought is stupidly seen as competition for stock, when it's a clear sign of how poorly adapted the stock is that we have introduced are to this southern continent.

Kangaroos have adapted to periods of isolation and climate change with their own methods of population control – unlike people and their 'feral' animals. They are extremely efficient using little energy to move and gaining most from grazing. Invariably abundant in drought times which stock can barely survive they are shot in rancid colonial ignorance.



Jennifer Parkhurst

Region by region, place by place, the true story of kangaroos and their kin will be collated from history, the stories indigenous people share, observations and the knowledge of carers and others with special relationships with them. This will inform new science, management and their protection and change the minds of people who have never loved a kangaroo – and give more people reason to fall in love with them and bring light to this dark ignorance.

The restoration of a degraded woodland in South Australia

Recently I spent a week down at Calperum station with university. The area we were working in is a much degraded semi-arid woodland that has a massive problem with feral pest species such as goats, rabbits and foxes.

Calperum and Talyorville stations make up 300,000 ha of land on the South Olary Plains of South Australia. At the time of European settlement the terraces at Calperum supported woodlands of Murray Mallee Pine, Sugarwood and Bullock Bush¹. Historical land use has reduced these species by approximately 90%, particularly through overgrazing and timber-harvesting¹.

In 1994 the government brought the land with the aim of restoring it. The current restoration plan involves re-vegetation of the Murray Mallee Pine and assisting its establishment and germination¹. These trees provide habitat and protection for other understory species and can influence the soil moisture, nutrient levels and microclimate¹. The idea is that by restoring this species, other plants and animals will follow, biodiversity will increase and the woodland will start to transition back to its former health.

However, there are hundreds of thousands of introduced pest species on this land which cause havoc on native populations of animals and plants. The Murray Mallee Pine is a drought-tolerant species which puts a lot of energy into growing deep roots and can be very slow growing. These adaptations to dry environments have made young, small trees extremely susceptible to grazing.

Pest management is necessary at Calperum but using current methods is expensive, inconsistent and ineffective. In comparison, re-introducing dingoes into this area could be a cost effective way of controlling pest species, thereby reducing herbivory on the Murray Mallee Pine and other natives.

Studies have shown that dingoes help maintain ecosystem function and control feral pests such as goats, rabbits and foxes. Their influence is also much more consistent than sporadic control of pests when baiting, shooting or warren ripping. The reintroduction of dingoes into this environment may therefore facilitate the transition of this landscape back into Murray Mallee Pine woodland. With pest populations controlled, grazing pressure on small native trees would be reduced and biodiversity may increase, all the while reducing management costs and assisting the dingoes survival.

Shannan Courtenay
Fundraising Officer
Environment Victoria



- Cale, P., & Cale, B. (2011). Semi-arid Woodland: A conceptual model. DRAFT. The Australian Landscape Trust.
- Cheal, D. (2009). Twenty Years of Grazing Reduction in Semi-arid Woodlands. *Pacific Conservation Biology*, 15, 268–277.
- Glen, A., Dickman, C., Soul, É., & Mackey B. (2007). Evaluating the role of the dingo as a trophic regulator in Australian ecosystems. *Austral Ecology* 32, 492-501.

National Dingo Preservation & Recovery Program

Incorporated in Victoria No A0051763G

Affiliation/Membership Application/Renewal

Individual members please complete the personal details and sign. For Affiliated Organizations please complete the Name of Organization and position (e.g. President, Secretary Owner etc.) of person making application

Affiliated Organization Details

Name of Organization

Position of person making application

Personal Details

Title Given Name Family Name

Address Suburb

State Country Post Code

Home Phone (.....) Business Phone (.....) Mobile

Email Please notify NDPRP if you change your contact details.

Membership

Type	Cost	Amount
Single	\$20.00	
Affiliate Organization	\$50.00	
Donation		
Total		

Memberships can be paid by cheque or money order, and post to the address below; or by electronic banking to:

BSB: 033-289

Account No: 25-7130

Please snail mail or email copy of electronic banking slip with completed membership application.

Declaration

I agree to abide by the rules and the ethics of the NDPRP Inc and agree that my personal details may be released to other members of the organisation (as required by the constitution).

Signed Date

Forward completed form and remittance to:

Mr Ernest Healy

643 Pascoe Vale Rd

Oak Park Vic 3046

Ernest.Healy@monash.edu



***‘Great Spirits have
Always encountered violent
Opposition from mediocre
minds’
Albert Einstein***