

## Maeve Bannister

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**From:** POV eSubmission Form <ecosystems@parliament.vic.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 31 August 2020 1:08 AM  
**To:** ecosystems  
**Subject:** New Submission to Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

**Categories:** Submissions

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

DR Justine Philip Philip  
[REDACTED]

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### SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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My name is Dr Justine Philip. I am an environmental historian, writer, and Museums Victoria Associate. In 2017, I received my PhD in Ecosystem Management from the School of Environmental and Rural Science at the University of New England, NSW. The thesis, on the cultural history of the Australian dingo, was awarded the Chancellors Doctoral Research Medal UNE 2017. It was also shortlisted for the SERLE Award for the best thesis in Australian history.

My research examines Indigenous ecological knowledge systems, the impact of colonization on cultural heritage and biodiversity. Increasingly it has specialized in documenting Australia's 200 year long dependence on agro-chemical farming systems.

The United Nations Decade for Ecosystem Reconstruction 2021-2030 commences in four months. The initiative is designed to actively assist in policy and management directives to encourage ecological resilience in the time of climate change. Commitment from European Governments includes a reduction in the use of environmental pesticides by 50% by 2030. I strongly encourage the Victorian Parliament to follow this lead.

My research has centered on the Australian dingo, their ecological role as top order predator, and status as a cultural keystone species in Aboriginal society. Dingoes were celebrated for thousands of years as companions, hunters, water finders, and as protectors of the waterways. There is no indication in any Victorian policy that this heritage is acknowledged or respected. Even the listing of the dingo as a threatened species in 2008 has not improved the situation for their survival in the State, in fact things have got far worse in recent years. Extraordinary exemptions have been granted, allowing for the eradication of remaining dingo populations, rewarding hunters of this threatened species with bounty schemes, and increasing the use of ground and aerial baiting, using broad-spectrum 1080 poison. Research shows that there is a 71% uptake of these baits by non-target species, and they are not benign (see Philip[a] 2020). The nil-tenure approach to dingo management on private and public lands in Victoria ensures that there is nowhere safe for the dingo in the State, and that they are functionally obsolete.

As top order predator, the dingo contributes towards the health and fitness of the entire ecosystem, from

controlling invasive predators – fox and cat populations, down to the health of the soils and waterways. These topics are covered in my recent papers published in the Royal Zoological Society of NSW journal, Australian Zoologist:

Philip, J [a] (2020) A historical review of Australian aerial vertebrate pest control, targeting dingoes and wild dogs 1946 - 2019. Australian Zoologist <https://publications.rzsnsw.org.au/doi/pdf/10.7882/AZ.2020.011>

Philip, J [b] (2020) In Press. The Waterfinders. A cultural history of the dingo. Special report for the Royal Zoological Society of NSW forum: The dingo; cull contain or conserve?

Philip, J (2018) The Institutionalisation of Poison: A historical review of vertebrate pest control in Australia, 1814 to 2018. Australian Zoology <https://publications.rzsnsw.org.au/doi/pdf/10.7882/AZ.2018.025>

There is a call from scientists across Australia to stop the use of vertebrate pesticides, and to promote positive management of dingo populations (see <https://conservationbytes.com/2020/04/14/south-australia-is-still-killing-dingoes/>). This process is essential to ecological construction, and to the reversal of Australia's biodiversity crisis. Indeed from my research I have concluded that the use of vertebrate pesticides and the extermination policy towards the dingo that commenced in 1814, was the catalyst for the current biodiversity crisis Australia wide (Philip 2018).

I strongly recommend that the body of work being produced by geneticists, ecologists, biologists and animal behaviorists into positive dingo management, be actively engaged in your review. These scientists are researching non-lethal and culturally sensitive ways to manage dingo populations. These new methods support biodiversity and promote agricultural practices in line with International guidelines and interests, without further exhausting our limited and seriously compromised environment.

Many thanks,  
Justine Philip

  
30 August 2020

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File1:

File2:

File3: