

Consultative Committee

Waragul Controlled Native Species Management Plan



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COMMUNIQUÉ

Inaugural Meeting - 11 March 2026

The Waragul Consultative Committee (the Committee) met for the first time on 11 March 2026 to provide advice and stakeholder input into a Controlled Native Species Management Plan (CNSMP) for the Waragul in the ACT (the Plan). The Plan will be developed by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

The Committee is chaired by the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna and includes representatives from ACT and NSW government agencies, conservation and animal welfare organisations, scientific experts, and rural stakeholders. Its role is to support informed, transparent and inclusive development of the CNSMP.

Purpose of the Plan

The Plan will guide how Waragul are managed in the ACT into the future. The Plan will seek to balance cultural, ecological, animal welfare, and agricultural considerations, recognising the Waragul's role as a native animal while also acknowledging the need to manage impacts on livestock and neighbouring landholders.

Development of the Plan does not remove the need for management or control activities. Instead, the Plan will provide a structured and evidence-based framework for decision-making.

Scientific briefing

Members received a scientific and research update from the Office of Nature Conservation, covering recent genetic, ecological and monitoring research. Key points included:

- Recent genomic testing confirms that the ACT Waragul population is predominantly dingo in ancestry, supporting recognition of Waragul as a native animal.
- Ongoing monitoring using remote sensing cameras in Namadgi National Park is improving understanding of Waragul distribution, movement, prey use and density.
- Further research is underway through PhD projects examining predator–prey dynamics, movement and population structure.
- The Committee supported inclusion of a research prospectus as part of the forthcoming Plan.

Current management

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service outlined current Waragul management arrangements, which occur under cross-border agreements with NSW. These include seasonal ground baiting and trapping to manage stock losses for neighbouring rural landholders.

Members agreed that future management under the Plan will need to consider:

- Clear definition of control and conservation zones, based on evidence
- Cross-border coordination with NSW
- Transparency about management approaches and outcomes
- Appropriate consideration of non-lethal management options

Key discussion themes

The Committee held a respectful and open discussion on a range of issues, including:

- The importance of moving beyond genetics alone to consider cultural values, ecology, animal welfare and practical management needs
- Timing and impacts of control activities
- The role of non-lethal management tools
- The need for deeper and broader engagement with Traditional Custodians
- The need to reassess current control methods for humaneness (i.e. 1080)
- The importance of ongoing, coordinated engagement and consultation with land managers across the ACT and NSW
- Managing expectations, noting that full consensus across all stakeholders may not be possible

The Committee also agreed that early, broad and repeated consultation will be critical to building trust and improving outcomes.

Next steps

The Office of Nature Conservation will:

- Revise the Committee's Terms of Reference and circulate them for member feedback.
- Progress procurement of independent facilitation and scientific writing support
- Develop an indicative consultation and engagement approach.
- Prepare a public webpage providing Committee information and future updates.

An indicative timeline proposes consultant engagement in mid-2026, stakeholder workshops later in 2026, and completion of the Plan by the end of the 2027–28 financial year, following public consultation.

The Chair thanked members for their constructive and professional contributions. The Committee will continue to meet as the Plan progresses.