

**Inquiry into the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022**

**Submission No:** 344  
**Submitted by:** Michelle Howell  
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**Submitter Comments:**

I am writing regarding the proposed change with regard to restraints in the bill to make

amendments to the Animal Protection and Care Act (2001). I would like to be clear that I do not use, both professionally and personally, prong collars and I would never use them. However, I am writing due to the wording of “restraints” in the proposed bill. We cannot use the blanket word as restraints device means a device fitted to an animal for the purpose of restraining it. Examples— collars, leads, harnesses, muzzles, halters, martingales and the like. There are many tools designed to restrain dogs (and other animals) that are gentle including Haltis, and all similar head collars, Fixed collars, harnesses of all kinds and martingales. A “restraint” will encompass, things like: Halti, and all similar head collars, Fixed collars, Easy walk harnesses of all kind, martingales etc. and if the word 'animal' is used, could also include restraints for horse such as bridles for horses. The phrase below in bold is simply too broad: Possession or use of prohibited devices (1) A person must not possess any of the following devices (each a prohibited device) unless the person has a reasonable excuse— (a) a prong collar; (b) another restraint device prescribed by regulation As a professional dog trainer I use the gentlest most effective tool for the dog I am training and especially the owner. Some owners do not physically have the strength to handle their dog safely. Disabled people, people with PTSD for example. Some frail or

disabled people need to use restraints to manage strong, large dogs. Some restraints have chains and or metal fixings that make a noise or even slip to a fixed point, cause no pain, but they allow frail or disabled people to walk a large powerful animal that is stronger than them. Other restraints go over the nose or even the front of the chest of the dog to help change direction. There are many fantastic restraints available for training. My training methods are based on communication and reward training. Positive reinforcement of good behaviours. Prong collars do not fit into a positive category even if some Prong collars may have a communication chain on them, even in expert hands they have the protentional to cause pain and adrenaline. I don't believe they are ever appropriate. However, I do think that you need to enter into dialogue from all of the professional trainers before you make any legislation. My issue with the proposed bill is the wording “restraint devices”, as this covers all restraint devices that most trainers use and would then possibly prohibit them from being able to ensure public safety and the safety of their clients when working with their dogs. Walking dogs is a big issue for people who have large powerful dogs that without restraint of some kind, they cannot control them nor keep the public safe. Even many

small dogs need restraints to ensure content walking behaviours. I believe the blanket ban is too broad and feel that the dog training world should have been consulted with regards to the new bill. There needs to be discussion with professional dog trainers before a bill like this is passed.

Kind Regards Michelle Howell