

Inquiry into the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022

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PAWS Hope and Understanding Inc

EXPECT A MIRACLE WITH 4 PAWS WALKING BESIDE YOU

30 May 2022

ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Submission to the Committee

We write this submission as Paws for Hope and Understanding Inc. (referred to as Paws) does not support the amendment to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 in its proposed form

Paws works totally independent of the RSL but does have working relationships with Wounded Heroes', Soldier On and the Department of Veterans Affairs who refer veterans to Paws who are in need of a Service Dog, and we are:

1. Registered Australian Charity,
2. Members International Association of Canine Professionals 2019,
3. Member of International Associates of Assistance Dog Partners 2017,
4. Achievement Award for Mental Health-Open Minds 2019,
5. Mental Health First Aider Facilitator 2018,
6. Queensland Day Volunteer Award for Mental Health of Veterans 2018, and
7. Member Chamber of Commerce – Mt Ommaney,
8. Member of Psychiatric Service Dog Society 2019
9. Member of Purple Heart Foundation USA 2020.

At Paws we only train Service Dogs to work with Military Veterans that suffer from PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), this is a specialised area that we have been very successful in for over five years. Our goal is the same as that of the Purple Heart Foundation, and that is to assist and empower veterans to return to life with dignity and independence. Our service dogs are focused on mitigating the symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury.

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Our Head Trainer is Hannah Richards and some of her background is as follows:

1. Her initial training was at TAFE Queensland in the AMCM30410 Certificate III in Companion Animal Services and my instructor then was Gaille Perry, head trainer and veterinarian and Dogs Queensland member
2. This training covered topics from basic obedience to PAT (Public Assess Test) Service dog, grooming and Diets & Feeding, Handling and Capturing Animals, Animal Care and Management Training, and Products and Services, as well as animal Health and First Aid.
3. Hannah also trained with Val Bonny, the noted trainer of the Vale Bonny Dog Obedience and Puppy School which is the acknowledge leader in dog obedience training for over 40 years.

Hannah also has an Adv Dip in Acupuncture and Dip. In Laser Therapy, treatments that she employs when needed on Service Dogs that are trained at our Training Academy.

In an attempt to further her knowledge, she also under took a number of other courses including "My Service Dog and Me", "Canine Matters Training" and "Upstate Canine Academy training". Some of this training took place in the USA at the Purple Heart Foundation where their training of Service Dogs was far more advanced than ours.

In 2016 Paws was approached by Nigel Allsopp (ANZAC of the year 2017) of AWAMO (Australian War Animals Memorial Organisation) to help train dogs for Veterans, Emergency responders and police with PTSD. I trained a Rough Collie (Lara) who went through PAT approval by Guide Dogs Queensland, a Golden Retriever (Harley) and the beginning training (Basic Obedience) for a Grey Hound (Rose) with great success, these dogs went on to change the lives of their handler/veterans.

Paws operates a training school which we refer to as the Paws Training Academy and currently we have a number of attendees who we are in training to work with military veterans and their Service Dogs.

As mentioned above we have been operating for just over five years and over that time have employed what you refer to as prong collars but we call correction collars with great success. This success is primarily because we know and teach the correct method of fitting the device.

When fitted in the correct placement on the dog the correction collar can actually protect the dog from trachea damage caused by an inexperienced handler or by the dog itself when it pulls on the collar excessively due to excitement or bad behaviour.

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The correction collar distributes the pull all the way around the neck instead of directly on the throat. When employing the correction collar, we use mild corrections or use the collar as a self-correcting collar. For example, if we are in the heeling position and halt but the dog continues forward, the collar will tighten and self-correct the dog. This usually results in the dog stopping in the halt position. In this situation no additional correction is needed – not even a pull on the leash. We instruct both our trainers and handlers that the lead/collar is not to be jerked as the dog's own momentum is sufficient to correct the unwanted behaviour.

Again, we acknowledge that the correction collar needs to be fitted properly to ensure that no harm is inflicted on the dog. It should always be placed high on the dog's neck just behind the ears and all the extra links should be removed so that it is snug to the neck and not drooping. A drooping collar can cause the dogs neck to actually get pinched and hurt the dog. It could also cause the dog to slip out of the collar which could hurt him/her as it is pulled over its head. There will be attachments to this submission illustrating the correct placement.

While wearing the collar, we insist that the dog should never be left unattended or tied up. We train our trainers and handlers to place the collar on the dog 10-20 minutes before they start training for a session, this is to ensure the dog is fitted correctly and that the dog is comfortable. Correction collars should not be used on dogs that are timid or on those that are responsive to a simple regular collar.

We also insist that the use of the correction collar is a short-term training tool and not used for extended periods. All trainers and handlers only use them under the direction of our Head Trainer who is experienced in using this collar and should always pair its use with positive reinforcement of the desired behaviour from the dog.

As previously stated, when fitted correctly and with handlers and trainers instructed in the use of, for short periods of time, the correction collar it is a valuable tool.

It should be pointed out that this collar isn't used on all dogs in training, only those that have not responded to praise and regular collar use but the dog still has the potential of becoming a Service Dog.

The correction collar is only one of many different training aids that Paws utilise, and the type of collar/aid will vary dependant on the temperament of the dog.

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To conclude, Paws as a training facility, not only see's our role as training both trainers and owner/handlers in the correct methods of working with their dogs, but our organisation has a very strict policy that acknowledges we have a duty of care for every dog that goes through our program.

Our primary concern in the amendment to the Act is the very broad negative perception of the correction collar that does not address the many advantages when it is fitted and used correctly.

As a training organisation we also note that the Act does recognise that a person may have a reasonable excuse to possess or use a correction collar, which we believe is a major error.

The end result of our training ensures that the veteran has a Service Dog that, as per our stated goal, is able to assist and empower the veteran to return to life with confidence, dignity, and independent.

We request that consideration be given that there be some form of acknowledgement and exemption given to registered Service Dog training establishments for the limited use of correction collars for short-term training periods.

Bob Richards MID, CG, MICDA
CEO

Bill Marklew OAM, JP (QUAL), AFAIM, MAHRI, MICDA
Secretary

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MYTH: Prong Collars work because they are painful to the dog.

FACT: A Prong Collar is no more painful than a front clip harness or head collar if fitted and used correctly.

MYTH: Prong Collars are dangerous.

FACT: Prong Collars are a safe and effective tool when used properly. In some situations Prong Collars are actually SAFER, as they disperse pressure across the entirety of the neck as opposed to having the force center on the trachea.

MYTH: Dogs hate wearing Prong Collars.

FACT: Many working dogs regard the Prong Collar as part of their working gear and get excited when they see it come out, as it signals that there is work to do. Even pet dogs enjoy seeing the Prong Collar, as it often means training or a walk with their owner.

MORAL OF THE STORY:

FIT YOUR PRONG AND USE IT RIGHT!

www.facebook.com/ServiceDogSaxon



DOG COLLAR

PURPOSE:

- CONTROL
- CLEAR COMMUNICATION
- CLEAR CORRECTION

HOW TO USE:

- HIGH AND TIGHT
- CORRECTIONS THROUGH A 'POP' RATHER THAN CONSTANT PRESSURE
- IF DOG IS A PULLER:
 - STOP THE WALK UNTIL NO LONGER PULLING
 - USE 'POP' TO CORRECT
 - REWARD WITH 'YES' AND TREATS
 - BE MORE INTERESTING THAT THE BACKGROUND CHANGE DIRECTIONS, ENGAGE THE DOG

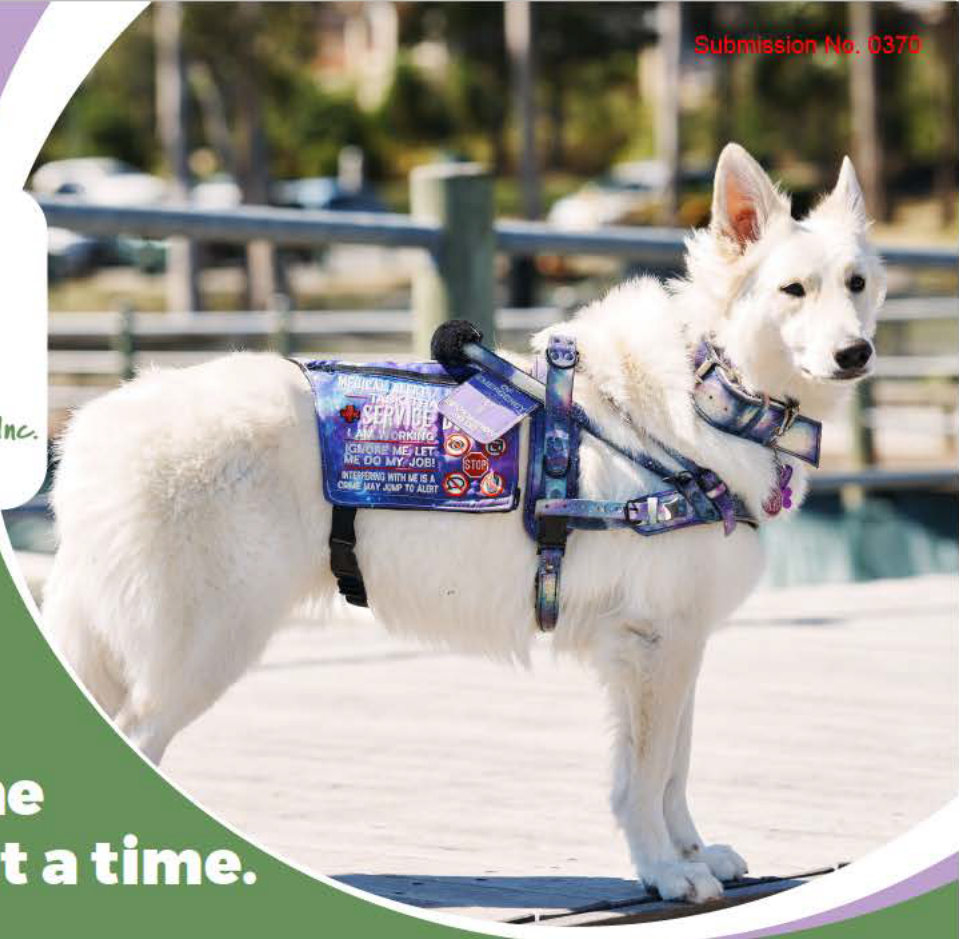
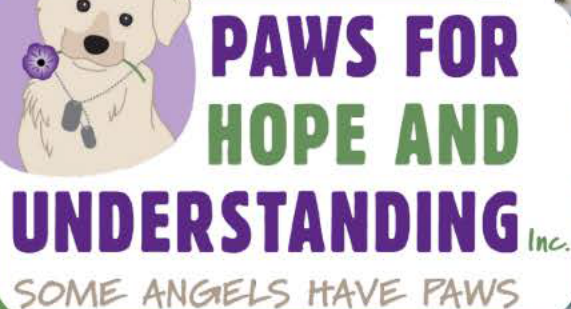
LOOK OUT FOR:

- POORLY FITTED COLLARS CAN CAUSE IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE TO THE DOG'S TRACHEA
- ALLERGIES
- WIDE FLAT COLLAR FOR THIN NECK BREEDS
- HAVE A NAME TAG ON THE FLAT COLLAR
- ONLY USE ADVANCED COLLARS FOR THE DURATION OF THE TRAINING



@ALVIN_THEGOLDEN





**Enriching lives, one
angel with paws at a time.**

Training and providing service dogs for war veterans, emergency responders and those with special needs. Dedicated to overcoming the challenges of demand and funding to deliver life changing outcomes to those in need.

The PAWS' charity exists by the generosity of the community. We receive no State or Federal Government funding.

In 2002-2017 the age-adjusted rate of suicide in ex-serving men was 18% higher than in Australian men.

“I have been diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety, depression and generalised epileptic seizures. I tried to take my life once in 2018. My dog Faith saved me. PAWS are amazing in giving multiple options in their training, handling, and equipment making it fun for the dogs and handlers.”

- Laura T.
(name changed for privacy)



Source: National suicide monitoring of serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel: 2019 update, Data - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au).



**When you can't look on the bright side,
I will sit with you in the dark.**



Hannah Richards - Founder, Head Service Dog Task Trainer

With a love of animals and in particular dogs, Hannah was looking at ways she could help her father, Bob, mitigate his mental condition due to PTSD from service in South Vietnam.

Given her own diagnosis of generalized epileptic seizures, secondary PTSD and migraines, it was a caring and brave decision for her to travel to the US in 2015 to learn to be a K9 task trained service dog instructor, which ultimately led to a service angel with paws for her dad, profoundly enriching his life. As it turns out Hannah's condition means she has her own Angel.

Jump forward to 2021 and Hannah in partnership with Bob and others on the charity committee, are delivering lifesaving and life changing services to those who can benefit most in our community. In an environment where need outstrips the ability to train and finance these beautiful Angels, Hannah's dedication to the cause is amazing.



"Above all that we do, it is the enormous love for my dogs that keeps me going! I apologise in advance, but if I meet you with your dog, I'll remember the dog's name, but probably not yours!" - Hannah

Bob Richards - Charity CEO

Bob is a veteran who has served in South Vietnam, 1967/68 as a platoon medic and was wounded in action.

He earned a gallantry medal but unfortunately his service left him with PTSD that ironically led to his daughter Hannah seeking out training to provide her dad with a service dog. From this, the charity PAWS was formed and Bob is now CEO.

As a passionate supporter of his country and with his service background, he now finds his purpose as a strong and empathetic advocate of men and women soldiers returning to civilian life. How valuable is it to have a man of his experience navigate that return to society, with all the emotion and adjustment that it brings?

Thank you so much for your dedicated service Bob – past, present and future!



"We not only have to keep this program going, but it also needs to flourish. I know from personal experience that our service dogs will save lives for eligible souls. The advocacy work I do in this space tells me continuity of our service is critical" - Bob

"I served in the Army (Infantry) for 24 years, with a diagnosis of PTSD, and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD). Raven, my Angel with paws, settles me during nightmares or panic attacks by putting her paws on my shoulder and sits across my lap until the panic subsides. Without her I may not be here. She has made such a difference in my life."

- Graham J.

(name changed for privacy)



Donate Here

Paws for Hope & Understanding Inc

BSB 642 170 Account No 201074622

Please email us so we can say thanks and send your tax-deductible receipt with thanks!

Contact Bob on 0412 747 529 or email admin@pawsforhope.org.au

"I am proud to be a Patron of PAWS given their incredible work with our veteran and emergency responder community. I love Shepherds and wonderful that the White Swiss Shepherd has the ideal temperament for this important service. Keep up the good work Bob, Hannah and team."

Dawn Fraser

Patron of:
PAWS for Hope and
Understanding; German
Shepherd Dog Council
of Australia (GSDCA).



Our Impact Since 2015

118 Angels with paws to worthy veterans

2536 Veterans assisted with disability claims

82 Community presentations

300 Training expeditions in the community

3102 Kilos of quality dog food prepared per year

Advocacy on behalf of the Veteran community ongoing

Patrons

Heston Russell Retired Special Forces Major
and Founder of Voice of a Veteran
(voiceofaveteran.org)

Dawn Fraser AC; MBE; OLY

Jessica Pugh MP



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SOME ANGELS HAVE PAWS

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