

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

**Submission No:** 480  
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Jill Bowman

To: State Development and Regional Industries Committee; Submission on proposed amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001

Dear Parliamentary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposed amendments.

My name is Jill Bowman, I participate in obedience competition with my dog and teach weekly classes at Toowoomba Dog Obedience Club. I have been a member of the dog sports and training community for 18 years. I am strongly against the proposed amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001.

First, the government has not followed its own best practice guide for the amendment of legislation. As a result, key stakeholders and the wider community have not been afforded the opportunity to be consulted on the proposed amendments to the Act. That they have not done so in this instance sets a worrying precedent that stakeholders are not properly identified and consulted in favour of more powerful lobby groups. Dogs Queensland and its members hold a wealth of experience and knowledge on current best practice. This practice of failing to fully disclose the scope of the amendment means there must be a hidden agenda.

There was no correlating subject matter in the initial discussion paper and yet there are 3 e-petitions relevant to my objection: Ban the use of shock collars on dogs (Petition no. 3526-21) Illegal to import - Prohibit the use of prong collars in Queensland (Petition no. 3530- 21) Prohibit the use of choke collars in Queensland (Petition no. 3531-21)

Lack of community consultation means the impacts on the community have not been adequately assessed. As a dog instructor, I volunteer countless hours to the community, giving assistance to members of the community who would otherwise misuse equipment and/or be driven to use extreme methods of control.

As such there has been no acknowledgement of current best practice methods, only an assumption that dog training continues to operate on the old-fashioned principles of fear and pain. For many decades, positive reinforcement methods have been in use and that includes the use of many different tools to assist.

Conclusions drawn regarding restraint-based tools, specifically the prong collar, have been made based on unsubstantiated research and without consultation of key stakeholders.

“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; fitted to an animal for the purpose of restraining it. Examples— collars, leads, harnesses, muzzles, halters”

This means the government can at any time, choose to add **any** other tool to their prohibited list.

Regarding the exclusion of (a) prong collars, I'd ask you to consult with Members of the Queensland Government currently utilising these training tools, including Police and Military units, Certified Animal Training Professionals, working to improve standards of pet ownership and care, community

safety and education around responsible pet training and ownership and Animal Welfare Organisations who do a lot to rehabilitate dogs.

It seems illogical and ridiculous that (b) is included in the submission at all because that by definition means any other restraint. Whilst even a flat collar can cause damage when used by the wrong tempered person, or a frustrated or physically overpowered handler, if (b) is introduced then potentially no dog can be restrained at all and to follow that logic means dogs on the loose or else permanently kept in yards which is certainly neglect.

As a dog obedience instructor, we must have options available to assist handlers make the right choice of restraints – we consider many things such as the breed, size of dog and constitution of the handler. Furthermore, the public will become more at risk from dogs who are not sufficiently controlled, unless of course the intent from animal welfare groups is that no dog shall ever be owned. If the intent of the government continues to allow people to own a dog (or any pet) for the benefit of their exercise and mental health, then they must also continue to allow said people to adequately control their pet as a public safety concern.

To ban all devices because they are associated with fear and pain demonstrates a lack of understanding of behavioural science and the means in which training tools are most used as a means of Negative Reinforcement (guiding the dog towards the correct behaviour), not Punishment.

In conclusion, I would ask that a) you properly identify all relevant stakeholders b) refer to research on how restraints are used and conversely investigate the ramifications of introducing a restriction on all restraints and c) remove clause b) from the restriction on restraints because of the potential for misuse of the term.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Bowman