

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

**Submission No:** 568  
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**Submitter Comments:**

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[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

Dear Parliamentary Committee,

### **Submission on proposed amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001**

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

My name is [REDACTED], I participate in IGP dog sports with my two dogs and also previously taught weekly obedience classes and private lessons with many different clients from various backgrounds.

I have been a member of the dog sports and training community for 8 years. I am strongly against the proposed amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 in regards to the use of prong collars particularly.

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. Lack of community consultation means the impacts on the community have not been adequately assessed. Conclusions drawn regarding restraint based tools, specifically the prong collar, have been made based on unsubstantiated research and without consultation of key stakeholders.

As a dog trainer and owner of highly driven sport dogs, the use of a prong collar is absolutely essential in the control of my own dogs. Previously, under supervision and guidance, I have also recommended prong collars to certain clients that may have struggled with their own dogs. Whether this be a predisposition to pull on a collar, over arousal or the owners own strength levels with a larger dog.

We as a community have seem to have forgotten what dogs have been bred for, for hundreds of years. A cute Jack Russel Terrier has a genetic desire to chase, rats and the like. This is not conducive with everyday life with middle aged Joan who just wants to walk her sweet little dog every day. The border Collie owned by Melanie is taken on walks to the local waterfront walking path, but when he sees the kids on their bikes or scooters, the wheels send him into a frenzy and Melanie has trouble holding him back from causing an issue. Jack loves his Rottweiler who is twice as strong as him and is a natural guardian, so when people approach the duo in a threatening way, his Rottweiler pulls to tell the stranger to give space.

ALL of the above scenarios require a trainer/behaviourist assistance. But NONE can be solved with food. Equipment is a necessary part of training an animal, some are more 'scary' than others but they provide results, efficiently and with minimal discomfort, of that I can attest to.

Prior to fitting any dog/handler duo with a prong collar, I have always placed the collar on my arm/leg to show the mechanics. I will then request the owner do the same to understand the pressure applied, evenly (unlike a correction chain which seem to be the preferred method and also choke the dog when fitted incorrectly) on the dogs neck, up high, right behind the ears to avoid pressure on the throat. Food and toys are also used in this equation to achieve a truly balanced training method – this is what balanced trainers strive for.

I reflect back to my time training assistance dogs for our war heroes who returned to life with severe post traumatic stress disorder. Their dogs feel the emotions of their handlers and are there to provide a service. One dog in particular, a Rottweiler named Lucy, utilised her protective instincts for her handler and would stand between her handler and a person who was approaching from behind which was a trigger for her handler. ANY dog can be a service dog with the right tools available. Who are we to say 'that dog is too strong, you cannot have that as your service dog' when these people rely on a bond and connection, not to mention, to feel safe.

I now work in a government role which involves the investigation of dog attacks and the euthanasia of dogs. 90% of these situations could have been avoided with correct training and access to a trainer with these tools to utilise.

If this law is passed and prong collars, electric collars and anything else are banned, I can assure you, dog attacks will absolutely rise and many many more animals will be surrendered and euthanised.

I am of course frustrated that no balanced trainer or behaviourist was included in the initial conversation regarding the use of these collars.

So, if you have never used a collar or discussed their use with a key stakeholder, how can you say they will be banned?

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Invested in tools to better our dog community.