

Inquiry into the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022

Submission No: 714
Submitted by: [REDACTED]
Publication: Make my submission public but keep my name confidential
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

I am an owner of a purebred border collie. She was homed to me at the age of 8 weeks by a ANKC registered breeder however has struggled with reactivity since she was young after being exposed to a series of negative experiences including invasive chiropractic adjustments, a series of animal hospital admissions, other dogs barking at her from behind the fence, dog park where other dogs chased her around and were too rough, and being attacked by two other dogs during a hike. Due to these negative experiences she has formed associations with triggers, meaning when she comes across other dogs she associates them a threat of being attacked. In anticipating this, she will overreact by barking and lunging at that trigger. I have ensured she received all the help she could and attended 3 obedience courses and employed the help of a certified dog trainer to assist with the reactivity. It is through this formal training that I learned that correct communication with the dog is crucial in helping them respond positively and engage with the owner/handler even in the face of a trigger. My trainer explained that proper handling of the lead and flat collar will help a dog do this. But in some cases a dog's reaction to the trigger is so extreme where a flat collar is not as effective in communicating to the dog. A prong collar is not at all damaging to the dog's body and ONLY when used under the guidance of a trained professional should be used to direct the dog - it means that the dog is more sensitive to the communication without the need to tug at the flat collar. In my personal experience, a flat collar can be difficult to communicate through, which is why I understand for many dogs who struggle with aggression and extreme reactivity where they would likely benefit from a prong collar - not for their harm but to enable them to hear what their handlers have to say to them in that given moment and ultimately manage their behaviour for the greater good of society. No dog owner who has spent so many countless hours and money on training would do anything to harm their dog - in fact in most cases most reactive dog owners are much more proactive in training to ensure their dog can work through the reactivity. The prong collar is a tool and when used correctly will effectively help an owner and dog to work through the reactivity and is in no way physically harmful to the dog. It is CRUCIAL that the government listens to the countless dog trainers and professionals who have successfully used this tool with multiple cases of aggressive and reactive dogs and saved them from behavioural euthanasia. If prong collars are prohibited, the Australian public will be in greater danger of dogs who are not given the opportunity and proper training with the tools they need to help them work through extreme reactions to triggers in the urban society. I implore you to listen to the dog training community and consult them.