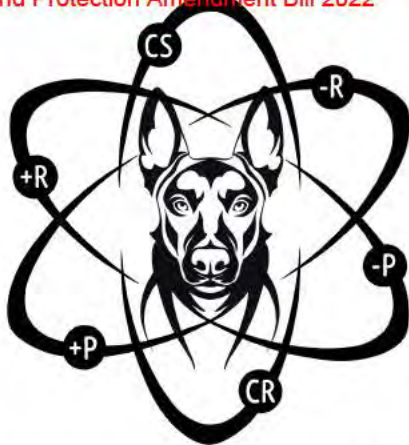


Inquiry into the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022

Submission No: 856
Submitted by: Pat Stuart
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Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:



OPERANT CANINE

31 March 2022

Parliamentary Committee

Queensland Government

CLA@parliament.qld.gov.au

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 Pat Stuart and I am a dog trainer specialising in police and military type work as well as competition sport dog training. I have been in this role since I left the Army in 2015, I am also a member of the International Association of Canine Professionals. I travel the world teaching and my speciality is training those who work with dogs professionally. That includes other trainers as well as dog handlers from other government agencies. Of note I have worked with and provided training to members of the QLD Police, Corrections and Military Units (both Airforce and Army) within QLD.

I would like my submission to be considered by the committee in relation to the process that was taken by the Queensland Government in developing the proposed amendments to the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (the Act) being presented to Parliament. I represent a broad cross section of the dog training and dog sports community and until the Premier announced the ban of prong collars on her social media feeds on 8 May, we were collectively unaware of the proposal to do so. **It is therefore my request that the proposed ban on prong collars and any other restriction on training tools and/or methods be removed from the collective amendments to the Act until consultation has occurred with the dog training industry, associated industries (police and military units that use dogs for work) and the broader community on these important issues.**

During April 2021, the Queensland Government released a discussion paper seeking feedback on the proposed amendments to the Act. 16 topics and subsequent questions were explained in detail within that discussion paper. The only proposals that involved dogs were:

- A proposal to legislate dogfighting, coursing, certain types of hunting and events that cause an animal pain as a 'prohibited event'
- A requirement for only veterinary surgeons to perform ear cropping, tail docking and debarking if deemed necessary.

- To impose an offence for the use of a dog to knowingly kill or injure another animal.
- To impose an offence for not exercising a dog that has been closely confined for more than 24 hours.
- To impose a specific offence for having an unrestrained dog in an open vehicle tray or trailer etc.
- Various amendments to inspector powers under the Act as they relate to the management of dogs.

There was at no point within the public consultation material made available by the Queensland Government any mention of restrictions to dog training tools and/or methods. Indeed, training dogs was not mentioned at all as a focus of the proposed reforms. Many members of the dog training community, including myself, reviewed the public discussion paper and did not submit feedback as the proposals presented by the Queensland Government did not engage issues that were specific to us collectively.

However, following the Premier's announcement and subsequent media releases from the Queensland Government, it has been made clear that proposal to amend the Act do very much affect our industry and will have a profound effect on the individual viability and effectiveness of our businesses. Further, as consultation with our industry has not occurred, the true economic and social impact of the proposed changes has not been adequately represented throughout the amendment process and the Queensland Government has not considered the true cost of the proposals.

Considering the above, I challenge whether the proposals and the legislative process that has been applied to this issue adheres to best practise regulation or fundamental legislative principles. The Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation (the guidelines) states that public policy development is essential for government decision makers as it provides them with the necessary information and advice to make informed decisions. The guidelines also go on to state that this is particularly important for policy proposals that introduce or amend government legislation as these decisions can have significant impacts on business, the community and the Queensland economy. Further, these considerations of regulatory best practice principles help ensure the introduction or amendment of legislation is necessary, effective and minimises the burden on affected stakeholders. Considering the proposal to ban prong collars and possibly other training tools was not mentioned at all until announced as pending law, how can the above requirements even be understood by the Queensland Government, let alone considered as part of a supposed 'well informed decision making process'.

The dog training community calls on the Queensland Government to remove the proposed ban on prong collars and any other training tool from the collective amendments to the Act until a fair and transparent process has been carried out. A process that engages all stakeholders that this proposal affects so that a full and complete understanding of how banning prong collars and possibly other dog training tools would have on our industry, and therefore provide decisions makes with a true representation of the issue.

Within the industry, I am considered something of an expert in the use and application of the prong collar and it would be a great honour to answer any questions the committee may have about prong collars and their necessary use in Queensland.

Regards

