

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

**Submission No:** 1454  
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**Publication:**  
**Attachments:**   
**Submitter Comments:**

7<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Mr Chris Whiting MP  
Member for Bancroft  
Chair, State Development and Regional Industries Committee  
Queensland Parliament

Dear Sir

**RE: Animal Care and Protection Bill Amendment 2022 – specifically - Clause 14 Insertion of new chapter 3, part 5, divisions 5 to 7 New section 37A (Possession or use of prohibited devices)**

I am generally in support of legislation which protects wildlife and domestic animals from cruelty. The need to protect domestic pets from cruelty must be balanced with safety in the community. As a dog owner for most of my life I've had countless experiences with irresponsible pet owners who have not trained their animal to walk safely on a leash when out in public. I'd much rather meet a person with a Staffordshire Terrier walking calmly beside his owner on a prong collar and leash than a person with a small white fluffy dog pulling down the street. My dog will walk calmly past the Staffy and stress at sight of the fluffy little target. The banning of tools which assist dog owners to train their animals should be considered carefully.

Blanket banning of prong collars may lead to unfair penalty on dog owners who understand how to use restraint tools safely; those who own dog breeds or temperament types which do not respond well to a flat collar. A flat collar applies firm pressure over a small area at the front of the neck. Pressure applied at this point on the dog's neck over a period of time can lead to a life threatening condition called tracheal collapse. Dogs with a higher drive to pull are at risk of this kind of trauma from the flat collar. A prong collar is designed to apply lighter pressure over a wider area at the top of the neck where it will not cause damage to the trachea. It is designed to teach the dog to respond to a light touch from the owner redirecting the dog from pulling forward. It is not designed to "*bruise or pierce a dog's skin*". If used correctly it is far safer for some animals to wear a prong collar than a flat collar. I lost one of my previous pets to tracheal collapse. It was a sad ending.

The Explanatory Notes to this legislation state that "*Prong collars are considered to be inappropriate as a training aid because they cause pain and fear in dogs which is used as a punishment. Research has shown that using aversive training methods including the use of prong collars can cause pain and distress and can compromise the dog's welfare*". Considered, by whom? I suggest that those who consider this do not understand the correct use of prong collars.


My previous dogs were all trained under the positive reinforcement only principals used by organisations such as Dogs Queensland. On purchasing a Belgian Shepherd I had an animal which did not respond well to this simplistic learning theory. I have now been exposed to a much broader section of the dog training world and have come to understand that this is a highly unregulated industry. Trainers all have their own theories about what works and what doesn't. The positive reinforcement only theory is considered by a number of training experts here and overseas to be too simplistic and somewhat old-fashioned. It gained momentum as a result of a reaction to the very old fashioned, 'negative consequences only' methods which were not kind to dogs. I refer you to the

following article on Operant Conditioning Theory. It applies to a learning model which I believe is useful for training independent, reactive or dominant dogs. <https://www.wshs-dg.org/resource-center/ask-the-trainer/131-ask-the-trainer/414-science-and-art-of-dog-training>.

This appears to be short-sighted legislation called for by a group of people in the community who have a poor understanding of responsible dog training. I agree that a prong collar should only be used by someone who has been correctly trained in its use and suggest that the clause relating to “reasonable excuse” could be made more relevant and applicable if a system were in place to ensure dog owners are using their prong collars correctly.

As implied by the legislative extension to other forms of restraint such as muzzles and harnesses, any form of restraint, including a flat collar, can be abused by the dog’s owner. The issue is complex and requires further definition before it can be fairly enshrined in legislation. I urge the Committee to provide more time for submissions and inquiries to be made. Pets are important to peoples’ lives. The suggested clauses are poorly defined and therefore open to abuse by regulating authorities.

Yours sincerely

  
Marie Gleeson