




Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**

**MEMBER FOR BANCROFT**

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### **ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (6.36 pm): I rise to speak on the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill. I start by thanking our secretariat for helping the State Development and Regional Industries Committee with its inquiry. I thank all members of the committee for contributing in a truly collegiate fashion to this report. I know that LNP members often talk about how our committee system does not work. There are a few examples from our committee that demonstrate how well the committee system within this parliament is working.

I learned many things in this inquiry, as we all did, but I want to cover three main issues in my speech. First I will address the issue of prong collars. We will hear a lot about prong collars this evening, but I want to point out the really important fact that these devices are starting to be banned across Australia and across the world. They are banned in Victoria and New Zealand. The issue is coming before the parliament in Tasmania.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr WHITING:** They have? Tasmania has now banned prong collars. They are banned in Austria, Denmark and Sweden. The importation of prong collars to Australia is banned unless there is a ministerial exemption.

The member for Gympie has quoted a response by manufacturer Herm Sprenger about its product, but bear in mind that this company is marketing a product banned by the federal government from being imported into our country. Members of the LNP seem to be really keen on prong collars at the moment. I do not know why. I do not want to go into the reasons. At Christmas time, all I can say is that they really want to be the 'Grinch with the pinch'. Before those opposite stand up and say, 'I cannot see what is wrong with them. I had one on my arm,' we should ask: how did these devices get into the country? We are talking about an item that is banned from importation.

One of the things to come out of this inquiry is that most canine groups in Australia seem to be opposed to prong collars. We should consider that carefully. The groups wanting prong collars seem to be outnumbered. They are in the minority. Those opposed to prong collars that made a submission include the RSPCA, the Pet Industry Association Australia, the Pet Professional Guild Australia and Dogs Queensland. Many proponents of prong collars have said, 'Where is the proof that prong collars are harmful?' We heard the member for Gympie state that as well.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): The members for Hinchinbrook and Bundaberg will cease their quarrelling across the chamber.

**Mr WHITING:** In the departmental response they mention three articles for a start that provide evidence of harm. I table those articles.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of journal articles, various dates, relating to evidence concerning the risks of using aversive training methods on dogs [2018](#).

There is an article from the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which states—

... the use of aversive devices such as choke, pinch, or prong collars are strongly discouraged in favour of more humane alternatives.

A paper from the journal of the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society details how a case of permanent damage to a Belgian police dog was 'exacerbated by the disruption of blood flow to the head from the prong collar worn during the episode'. A paper from the *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* states—

The results of this study suggest that the use of positive punishment in the form of a pinch collar or an electronic collar can have detrimental effects on dogs' physical and mental welfare ...

The last two are peer reviewed and respected papers. That is fairly conclusive to me. I think they show the reason it is sensible to follow the federal government's lead and ban prong collars.

I also want to talk about the use of CSSP. I mention the very important point that CSSP is banned everywhere in Australia except for Queensland and the Northern Territory. The reason it is banned—and members can read this in the submissions—is that it is very clear that it is dangerous to other species. We heard in our hearings that it lingers in tissue and especially bones. A carcass can pose a long-term threat to the environment.

Secondly, it is very clear that it is the most inhumane thing to use to kill feral pigs. Death from CSSP can take days and up to three weeks. Death is caused by liver failure or heart failure. What we found in this inquiry is that 1080 or warfarin are just as effective and more humane. The banning of CSSP is supported by Australian Pork Ltd, the Queensland Farmers' Federation and the Pet Industry Association Australia. Quite simply, it is not needed.

I want to talk about the impact of the QAO report. Firstly, I commend the minister for guiding the implementation and acceptance of the findings of the QAO report on the administration of animal compliance contracts. I also thank the department, led by outstanding public servant Bob Gee, for taking on the role of implementing these findings. I think they should get a lot of kudos for that. This bill will implement all of the findings of the Auditor-General's report. This was welcomed by all members of our committee. This report came about after our committee requested the Auditor-General examine the governance of these contracts administered by the department after we had heard stories from some Queenslanders about being prosecuted by the RSPCA.

The QAO found what we had expected. It found that there needed to be greater oversight by the department of prosecutions launched by the RSPCA, that all information gathered by contracted inspectors should be accessible to the department, that there should be better management of conflicts of interest, that contracted inspectors should be properly trained and their performance checked by the department and that the fee schedule charged by a third party should be reasonable and transparent. Bear in mind, in this inquiry we were informed by Queenslanders that they had to bear tens of thousands of dollars in fees and costs charged by third parties on behalf of the Queensland government. It is very clear that there have been changes made by the department. They are now doing things differently to the way they were done in the past. The here is now. We will be implementing the inquiry findings into the future.

I once again thank the minister and department for taking our recommendations on board. There are many other improvements included in this legislation. We were contacted by and talked to many people. We received submissions from many organisations. The member for Gympie talked about the number of submissions. I point out that we had 850 submissions on the use of glue paper—fly paper. When we talk about submissions, I ask members to bear in mind that this is a bill that everyone wanted to have their say on. I commend the minister, his staff and the department for dealing with a complex range of issues in a very sensitive and comprehensive manner. I commend this bill to the House.