




Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (12.33 pm): I rise to support the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022. The member for Mirani's speech highlights what a diverse state we have in Queensland and how the issues that impact electorates such as the member for Mirani's versus my electorate of Mansfield are so different, and that is why this place is so important to debate such bills.

This legislation is so important in ensuring that the protection of the welfare of animals is improved. I am proud to be a part of a government that is so committed to ensuring that there are such high standards for animal welfare in our state. It has always been my belief that owning a pet or any animal comes with a duty of care and an immense responsibility. This bill will reinforce this duty of care with the extension of the existing breach of duty of care provisions. These provisions will apply in circumstances where a breach has resulted in the death, serious deformity, serious disablement or prolonged suffering of an animal. The extension will meet the same penalty as the existing provisions of 2,000 penalty units or three years imprisonment. These penalties and additional provisions are a reinforcement of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the high standards for animal welfare.

I believe it is so important that our animals are well protected, especially given the unforgiving Queensland weather that we have all become so familiar with. Under the bill, enforcement powers of inspectors will be strengthened to improve animal welfare by allowing the inspectors to have limited entry to a place to provide relief to an animal given adverse weather conditions. Given the climate we live in where we can experience an incredibly hot and humid day and the next day be on a flood warning—something we have certainly seen recently—I believe that this is a very important amendment which will protect our animals.

The amendments presented in this bill have come from recommendations from the Queensland Audit Office report *Regulating animal welfare services*, report No. 6 of 2021-22, which will allow the strengthening of the appointment and accountability of RSPCA inspectors and the department's oversight of proceedings undertaken by the RSPCA.

I was recently joined by Minister Furner at Stackpole Street dog park in Wishart—a popular dog park within my electorate where often up to 30 dogs can gather on a Saturday and Sunday afternoon, with their owners, to have a play and for their owners to enjoy some food and drinks with other owners. It was wonderful to welcome the minister to my community to inform my constituents about this important legislation because, like me, the minister knows how vital it is to protect our animals including our domestic animals.

These animal welfare reforms that he has introduced—and I congratulate the minister—are the most significant this state has seen in more than 20 years. The legislation will introduce an amendment to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936 to allow researchers using animals for scientific purposes to perform procedures currently only able to be performed by a veterinary surgeon such as anaesthetics. This will bring Queensland into line with other Australian jurisdictions but will also ensure that animal welfare will absolutely not be compromised as these researchers are already following the scientific use code and are overseen by an animal ethics committee.

Inhumane practices will be prohibited under this bill, including the firing of the leg of a horse and a dog. The bill will also prohibit the use of pig poison or yellow phosphorus. Both of these practices can lead to a long and painful death. There are much more humane alternatives available. By formally prohibiting these practices, the options will be limited and, therefore, more humane alternatives will be put in place.

I am a dog owner. I have a gorgeous two-year-old cavoodle. Her name is Coco and she is much loved by my community. In fact, I know that the Premier's mother's cat gets a lot of likes. I have to say that Coco often gets more likes than I do. She is an absolute angel. It breaks my heart to know that there are people out there who own and use prong collars on dogs. I am so glad that this legislation will prohibit such things from being used. They cause much pain and distress to dogs and absolutely compromise the welfare of dogs.

The Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill is a crucial piece of legislation in ensuring the protections of not just a person's best friend but all animals in Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.