




Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

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ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (4.42 pm): I rise to support the bill, but before I make my contribution on the bill I want to address some of the Katter party amendments circulated by the member for Hinchinbrook. In particular, I bring members' attention to amendment No. 11, which requires inspectors to declare any ideological beliefs they hold, including whether or not they are a vegetarian. I have to say that I was a little surprised when I saw that amendment.

Ms Bush: Two-and-a-half million vegetarians.

Mr MARTIN: I take that interjection; there are 2½ million vegetarians in Australia and there are a lot of vegetarians in Queensland. I think that is an outrageous and unjustified attack on vegetarians in my community. It is discrimination.

In all seriousness, while I am not a vegetarian I do represent a very multicultural community and fantastic contributors to my community include people of the Buddhist faith, Hindus and Hare Krishnas. Recently at parliament we had people from the BAPS Hindu temple. My friend Janesh and I celebrated Diwali, which included a beautiful vegetarian feast. I attended the DJJS temple in Drewvale. I want to recognise the Chung Tian Temple, the Tzu Chi Foundation and the Buddhist Light International Association which are all made up of fantastic people. Some Buddhists are vegetarian but not all and some Hindus are vegetarian but not all; however, they all do fantastic work in our community. They work in many different jobs. They are lawyers, doctors, public servants and, no doubt, some of them would be inspectors.

I do not understand why the Katter party thinks it is acceptable that a vegetarian or a vegan has to declare that they are just to work as an inspector. That is unfair. I think it is an outrageous attack. I will always stand up for all of the people of my community, including the vegans, the vegetarians and, of course, the carnivores.

A government member: Pescetarians.

Mr MARTIN: And the pescetarians.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Come back to the bill, please, member for Stretton.

Mr MARTIN: I acknowledge the good work of the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and his efforts in developing the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill. Whether it is cats, dogs, birds, horses or even pet sharks, Queenslanders love their animals. For many of us, animals are considered to be part of the family. We all support high animal welfare standards and know that there should be strong laws in place to protect them. That is why the Palaszczuk government is committed to providing legislation that protects the welfare of all animals and meets community expectations. Animals are a key cog in our economy. They are integral to agriculture production, they provide valuable assistance to both individuals and service delivery, and they are involved in sport and recreational activities. In times like these, when public health and safety is paramount, animals have played a key role in quarantine, detection and inspection duties.

The Animal Care and Protection Act has provided a strong framework for animal welfare in Queensland since 2001, but after 20 years it was time for a review. In 2020 the Palaszczuk government committed to a review with the intent of modernising Queensland's animal welfare legislation to reflect contemporary attitudes and expectations towards the treatment of animals. A number of key stakeholders engaged in the review, including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Between April and May 2021, Queenslanders had their opportunity to provide feedback to the review through the release of a discussion paper for public comment. There was a massive response with 2,353 Queenslanders having their say. More than half of those responses came from regional and rural Queensland, and there was representation from a wide variety of interest groups including agriculture, animal welfare and advocacy, veterinary professionals, recreation and entertainment, education and research and, of course, compliance enforcement and many more. As a result of the community feedback, the consultation outcomes paper was released in December 2021. The paper provided a summary of all of the responses from across the state and helped us to shape the framework for this new legislation.

The legislation amends the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, the Racing Integrity Act 2016, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936, the Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012 and the Veterinary Surgeons Regulation 2016. The overarching policy objectives of the bill are to facilitate the ethical use of animals for scientific purposes whilst ensuring that animal welfare is not compromised; strengthen the enforcement powers to address risk to animal welfare by clarifying or prescribing new offences to prohibit inhumane practices; provide for an approved cattle procedures accreditation scheme to enable a person to gain accreditation to perform a prescribed procedure on an animal; and clarify and remove redundant provisions.

The bill will also implement recommendations of the independent inquiry into animal cruelty and the management of retired thoroughbred and standardbred racehorses, also known as the Martin inquiry; implement recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office report titled *Regulating animal welfare services*; and make minor amendments to the Disability Services Act. In November 2019, unacceptable animal cruelty towards retired racehorses was reported by the ABC's 7.30 program. After that report, the Palaszczuk Labor government acted swiftly by establishing the Martin inquiry. The inquiry made a number of recommendations that were all supported by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

This bill amends the Animal Care and Protection Act and includes the requirement for all livestock slaughter facilities to use closed circuit television equipment in all critical animal handling and processing areas. This will ensure that there is clear surveillance of the movement of animals from arrival to slaughter. Requirements for the CCTV equipment's use and signage as well as the storage and retention of recordings are also included in the bill.

Inspectors will also be given the power to enter a livestock processing facility and remain there while horses are being unloaded, kept and processed. Furthermore, it will require a livestock slaughter facility owner to give the chief executive officer notice of the arrival of any horses at the facility no later than two business days before the horses arrive at the facility. An inspector may enter a livestock slaughter facility without consent, but this power may only be exercised during regular business hours when horses are being processed.

In relation to the amendments to the Racing Integrity Act, the bill extends the functions of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission to protect the welfare of retired racehorses, clarifies that a standard for a licensing scheme for a code of racing can be made for horses and imposes reporting and recording obligations on suppliers and owners of a livestock slaughter facility. This will enable the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission to access information to verify whether retirement and rehoming information has been reported correctly. Overall, the amendments will ensure the greater protection and welfare of retired racehorses.

Situations such as those reported in late 2019 where a number of horses died after prolonged neglect will be covered by new, harsher penalties. The bill introduces a new offence that applies to any person who commits an aggravated breach of their duty of care. It will apply in circumstances where the breach results in the death, serious disability, serious deformity or prolonged suffering of an animal. The offences carry a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment, which recognises that an animal suffers significant pain and distress when it dies from malnutrition, dehydration, neglect or injuries. This penalty aligns with the maximum penalty under the act for animal cruelty. It will ensure that our animal welfare legislation meets community expectations.

Procedures such as firing or blistering of horses and dogs have also been prohibited. There is no scientific evidence that this provides any benefit. The procedure has long been considered by veterinarians and horse owners to cause unnecessary pain. Its prohibition matches that in other jurisdictions. For clarification, rodeos are not classified as prohibited events, but the conduct of rodeos will be subject to the code of practice which commenced earlier this year.

Banning the use of prong dog collars is something that has received widespread support across the community. Possession and use of prong collars without reasonable excuse will be prohibited. The welfare of dogs being transported has also been protected. Amendments will make it clear that dogs must be appropriately secured on the backs of trays and trailers except when assisting with the movement of livestock. There are no restrictions that would impact the use of dogs for livestock management, but protections will ensure that all dogs are being transported safely and securely.

The bill will also clarify provisions related to the abandonment of an animal by removing any doubt that the person in charge of the animal remains responsible even in circumstances where another person is temporarily providing for the animal food and water. In terms of enforcement powers for inspectors, the bill will allow inspectors to enter a facility without consent to provide relief to animals that are impacted by adverse weather conditions or animals that are aggressive. It extends existing powers of entry to provide food or water or to disentangle an animal. By doing this, the delay in responding to urgent situations is removed. I commend the bill to the House.