




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.13 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022. Like all members of this House, I know that within my community there is always very strong interest when it comes to matters of animal welfare. We are also very lucky to have just outside my electorate the RSPCA facility at Wacol. It has a very strong influence in my electorate; a lot of people get their pets from there. Members may or may not be aware that it is the largest koala care facility in the state.

Mr Madden: I didn't know that.

Ms PUGH: There we go: it is the largest koala care facility in the state.

Mr Madden: Thanks for letting us know.

Ms PUGH: You are welcome, member for Ipswich West. We know that for many Queenslanders pets are more than just an animal that they own; they are absolutely part of the family. Indeed, many people now refer to their animals not as pets but as 'fur babies'. This is a sign of the increasing importance that owners place on their furry family members. My sister describes herself as a mother of three: she has two human children and an adorable little ragamuffin we call Captain Pants, a tiny but very energetic pugdog. There are a lot of people who would similarly describe themselves as parents of fur babies.

Due to this change in community attitudes, over the last little while in the electorate of Mount Ommaney and, I am sure, in electorates right across Queensland we have seen a lot of business growth and development in new and emerging industries. In my electorate, Pup PlayDates in Riverhills offers owners of small dogs—like my parents, who have a small dog—the opportunity to socialise their dogs with other small dogs of a similar size in a safe space. Also, Centenary Pet Sitting will check in on your furry mates while you are at work or are away. They feed, walk and play so that your animals' emotional needs are met. This is an incredibly popular business in my community. It is a growing team. Again, this speaks to the changing community attitudes about the importance of not just looking after your pets in a physical sense but also nurturing your animals and caring for them in a loving way. These guys have a growing team at Centenary Pet Sitting. They are previous winners of my small business awards, which I will be speaking about tomorrow.

Similarly, Oz Wagtails has emerged in just the past 10 years or so but now is fully subscribed. It is like a full doggy day care centre. They will pick up your dog in a bus from your home and take them to the play centre at Sumner Road. The dogs get to go around and play. You can actually book your dog in for an excursion—they can go for a trip to the beach—and they send you little regular updates, just like you would do with children via Facebook. It is really no exaggeration to say that for many Queenslanders their furry companions are akin to their babies.

In addition to being very successful businesses, both Centenary Pet Sitting and Oz Wagtails have previously won awards in the Mount Ommaney logies, aka the small business awards, because these businesses are really popular and are really important. The community wants to support any measures

that improve the safety and welfare outcomes for their furry pets. Whenever there are media reports about the mistreatment of animals, the neglect of animals or the need to rescue animals, there is always a community outcry that more needs to be done. That is what this legislation is all about.

Although Queensland has been at the forefront of animal welfare—I was glad to see us banning animal testing a few years ago—I am glad to be part of a government that is taking a very active interest and ensuring we have the most up-to-date legislation in the country when it comes to looking after our furry friends and our not-so-furry friends, as they do at the RSPCA. Queensland has often led the way when it comes to animal welfare, as I said. The interest shown in the submissions the committee received from the broader community is testament to the need for ongoing improvements and to the community sentiment about the importance of animals in our everyday lives. The member for Moggill highlighted that really beautifully when he spoke about some of the benefits that owning a dog, for example, can bring. I am on the fence: I also really love cats. I would not declare myself either a cat or a dog person. I think they are both great. I want to get one in there for the cats as well; they are good people.

An honourable member: Hear, hear!

Ms PUGH: Thank you. Cats for the win!

I express my support for the banning of prong collars on dogs. I know that there were submissions that supported these collars being kept, but I think most Queenslanders will agree that in this day and age prong collars do not need to be used. There is strong community support for the need to look after our fur babies. To put it simply, prong collars have the potential to cause fear and pain in dogs as part of their training. Surely, that cannot be good for the dogs' welfare. A number of groups also raised concerns with the use of prong collars. I note that in its submission Dogs Queensland said that it supports the banning of prong collars as detailed in proposed new section 37A(1)(a). This aligns with Dog Queensland's values regarding animal welfare, responsible dog ownership and the principles of positive reinforcement training.

This is another area that links to parenting as well. Once upon a time physically disciplining children was the norm and was what was expected. Then a lot of research emerged that it might not be the best way for people to discipline a child if they want to get a good parenting outcome. We are now seeing research emerge that when it comes to looking after animals that perhaps using fear and shock techniques is similarly not the way to get the best result from these animals. The explanatory notes outline—

If used incorrectly, prong collars can also cause physical injuries, such as bruising, scratching, and punctures to the skin of the dog. Over time, this can lead to scar tissue developing on the dog. In extreme but rare cases, prong collars have been associated with spinal cord injuries and other severe injuries.

I think we would all agree that that is the last thing we want to see for our furry friends.

It should also be noted that it is illegal to import prong collars into Australia. This was even law when the previous government was in power in Canberra. These collars are already prohibited in other states. I understand that Tasmania is investigating options when it comes to prong collars. Clearly, the time has come to stop being medieval to our animals.

There are a few other inhumane practices that this bill will prohibit. That includes the use of CSSP, otherwise known as yellow phosphorus, which is a poison used to kill pigs. That has already been stopped in other states. I know and understand that there is a need to kill feral pigs. From an environmental and agricultural point of view, most people in Queensland understand that, but wherever possible we want it done as humanely as possible. There is also an ongoing threat of foot-and-mouth disease. With other poisons on the market, there is no need to kill inhumanely. There are poisons available to undertake these broadscale actions.

With the recent focus on the Melbourne Cup and the treatment of horses there—I think I said in an earlier contribution that my horse did not cross the finish line first and I am not much of a punter; I understand the member for Mermaid Beach usually has a few good tips—there is good news for horses—

An opposition member: No, he doesn't.

Ms PUGH: I will leave it to other members of the House to determine the veracity or otherwise of that.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms PUGH: You can take offence, member for Mermaid Beach. This bill will prohibit the firing and blistering of horses. The explanatory notes highlight—

These procedures have long been considered by veterinarians and horse owners to cause unnecessary pain, and to be an obsolete practice, as there is no scientific evidence to support a belief that it provides any benefits. The Australian Rules of Thoroughbred and Harness Racing also do not support the practice, and the procedure has been prohibited in other jurisdictions.

Prohibiting inappropriate practices, such as the painful practice of firing or blistering of a horse or dog, meets community expectations in relation to reducing and regulating animal welfare risks.

Outdated practices that do nothing to assist the animal should rightly be banned.

I could go on, but I think the intent of the legislation is clear. It is going to improve the lives of many animals—our little fur babies—across Queensland, without too many extra regulations for everyday Queenslanders to worry about. For those who look after their animals, like I am sure every single member of this House does, there will not be any big changes. For those doing the wrong thing this bill is going to make a big difference. I commend the bill to the House.