




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGEES

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ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.54 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill. The bill includes provisions designed to modernise, clarify and reinforce Queensland's animal welfare framework. I will seek to keep my contribution fairly brief in the hope that there may be a few minutes for other members.

This review is timely, as the current act has been operating for 20 years without a significant review. In that time animals have of course continued to be deeply valued members of our families, but the public view and acceptance of certain practices such as prong collars and docking has changed and moved on.

The bill will strengthen the framework of the act, importantly introduce new penalties, enhance inspectors' powers and implement recommendations from the Martin inquiry and the recent audit by the Queensland Audit Office on regulating animal welfare services. The recommendations from the Martin inquiry, including requiring abattoirs to use CCTV at all animal handling and processing areas, providing inspectors with the power to visit a livestock facility and requiring a livestock facility to give two days notice to the chief executive, are important.

The bill will also expand on the Racing Integrity Act and the function of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission to include the management of retired horses. This is incredibly important because the graphic footage that was released by the ABC 7.30 program in 2019 was deeply disturbing. As a member of this House who represents numerous thoroughbred strappers, trainers and avid horse riders, of which I am also one, I can say that the moves in this bill to safeguard animal welfare are necessary and they are welcomed.

The bill also makes several changes to improve the wellbeing of dogs. Tail docking and debarking procedures will be deregulated. Clause 12 legislates that a person will not be able to sell or give away a dog that has had a debarking procedure unless they also have a signed certificate from a vet stating that the operation was performed in accordance with the act. Animal shelters and pounds will be required to provide a certificate indicating that the dog was debarked before coming into their possession. Clause 9 prohibits a person other than a vet from docking a dog's tail, and a vet may also do so if they deem it is in the dog's best interest.

With regard to prohibiting the use of prong collars—and there has been some commentary in the House from those opposite with which I strongly disagree, particularly the member for Currumbin—they are designed so that when a dog pulls on a lead the collar is tightened and metal prongs dig into the dog's neck. These forms of collars are used to train a dog using negative reinforcement. The RSPCA has called on the government to ban the use of these collars and their importation is currently banned, as we know, under Commonwealth legislation.

As the owner of a large-breed herding dog that has high drive and guarding instincts, I know how vital obedience training is to ensure the welfare of the dog and, in my case, my children's safety and that of the community. As anyone knows from my social media account, I have a large GSD; he is

always willing to test the pack structure in our home. He is 70 per cent of my weight. That is a significant, powerful animal; I appreciate that. However, control has to come with training, technique and mutual respect but never cruelty.

As noted in the committee report, the department stated that if aversive methods are required to control a dog's behaviour it is reasonable to question whether the dog is suitable for that person. I strongly support the prohibition of such aversive measures. People should not need them.

The bill also introduces a new offence that will apply to a person who commits an aggravated breach of duty of care, prohibits the transportation of unsecured dogs on the back of the tray of a vehicle—and we see this all too often; it is cruel; it is a risk; it is wrong—also prohibits the firing or blistering of the leg of a dog or horse.

Our government is committed to preventing cruelty to animals, ensuring Queensland's animal welfare system is equipped to respond to community concerns. I commend the bill to the House.