



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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

### **Second Reading**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (11.37 am), in reply: I am very grateful for the contributions of members on all sides of the House in this debate on the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022. This is a significant update to our animal welfare laws and in line with community expectations, so in light of some of those contributions I want to be clear about what this bill does and what it does not do.

This bill: creates a new offence of breach of duty of care causing death, serious deformity, serious disablement or prolonged suffering of an animal with a maximum penalty of up to 2,000 penalty units or three years imprisonment; allows for the ethical use of animals for scientific purposes while protecting animal welfare; allows for the greater use of animal welfare directions; requires dogs to be secured while in the tray or trailer of a vehicle; bans the inhumane practice of firing or blistering horses and dogs; bans the use of CSSP pig poison; creates a new framework of accreditation schemes for cattle procedures, including lay pregnancy testing; implements the recommendations of the Martin inquiry into the treatment of racehorses; and implements the recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office to improve the appointment, training and governance of animal welfare investigations and prosecutions by RSPCA Queensland.

Following contributions from some non-government members I also want to be very clear about what this bill does not do. This bill does not in any way impact on the lawful use of hunting dogs while hunting. The Animal Care and Protection Act already requires the owners of dogs to take precautions for the care of their animals, and this is unchanged by this bill. The bill does not impede on a farmer's ability to use dogs to help manage livestock. This bill does not in any meaningful way reduce the ability of local governments or other stakeholders and landholders to manage feral pig populations in Queensland.

I want to touch on the contribution of the member for Gympie. It was extremely disappointing to hear the member peddling the fiction that the government has not consulted on these changes. What an insult to the thousands of Queenslanders—yes, thousands of them—who have had their say through the consultation process, either by making a submission or by taking part in the surveys. Never mind the almost 1,500 who had their say through the parliamentary committee process—a committee process where the opposition was strongly represented and where the committee, including the opposition members, recommended that the bill be passed. In fact they went so far as to develop subcommittees as well to explore other measures of the impact of this bill.

I will reiterate that the opposition members recommended, along with the committee, that this bill be passed. Even on the few matters that they have raised concerns over, the member for Gympie still has not done the work. He claims that the opposition opposes certain measures in the bill. Where are those amendments to the bill if there is opposition? If they are genuine, where are those amendments

from the LNP? The member for Gympie opposes giving our cattle industry the flexibility to use suitably trained and accredited people for certain procedures, including lay pregnancy testing. Where is that amendment?

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Acting Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr FURNER:** Where is that amendment and what is he basing that claim on? The member for Gympie stands in this place and makes wild accusations that we have failed to consult with AgForce.

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr FURNER:** How is it that the LNP opposes lay pregnancy testing when AgForce is fully behind it?

**Mr Perrett:** I never said that, Minister.

**Mr FURNER:** Yes—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Acting Manager of Opposition Business, you are given some latitude while you are holding that role. I have repeatedly called you to order. You have ignored my calls to order. You are now warned under the standing orders.

**Mr FURNER:** It is the Labor government that is listening to our multibillion dollar beef industry and putting in place practical measures to support it. Labor is the party of the bush and the party of Queensland farmers, and the LNP once again proves that it is nothing more than an insignificance piled on top of an irrelevance.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders. You know you are supposed to be in your seat if you are interjecting.

**Mr FURNER:** I note the member for Gympie raised concerns about the monitoring of livestock at slaughter facilities. It should be noted that companies such as Woolworths already have a policy that all Woolworths Group poultry, beef, lamb and pork abattoirs must have CCTV in place within key animal handling processing areas. Woolworths can access this CCTV during audits and upon request. Any nonconformances will be reported to Woolworths Group Ltd's animal welfare manager for investigation and resolution.

There was a contribution from the member for Gympie as well as others regarding CSSP. This is yet another example of the LNP being totally out of touch with industry. I note the following comments from submission No. 748 from Australian Pork Ltd—

Australian Pork Limited, as the manager of the National Feral Pig Management Coordinator Program funded by the Australian Government, supports the proposed amendments to Clause 16 Amendment of Section 43 (Feral or pest animals) to prohibit the use of poisons on feral or pest animals that include the ingredients of carbon disulphide and phosphorus (CSSP) on welfare grounds.

They go on—

The Model code of practice for the humane control of feral pigs (Sharp 2012) states that that the use of carbon disulphide and phosphorus (CSSP) or yellow phosphorus is inhumane and slow acting. When ingested by a pig, it is absorbed through the gastrointestinal tract. Symptoms include lethargy, depression, convulsions, liver damage, reluctance to move or eat, vomiting, diarrhoea, coma and death. Following the ingestion of a lethal dose, death may occur between 2 hours and 5 days after ingestion. CSSP is also not soluble in water, does not readily breakdown in the environment, is toxic to a large range of bird and animal species and can cause secondary poisoning.

My department's contribution to the committee highlights the availability of more humane alternatives to using CSSP, including sodium nitrite, 1080, trapping, and ground and aerial shooting. The bill does not make any changes that impact the availability of these more humane options on feral or pest animals. The bill is not prohibiting the use of 1080. It is not preventing the shooting of pigs either. Even the member for Lockyer noted—

Through my background in local government I oversaw the administration of poisons—in fact, 1080—for dog and feral pig control in the Lockyer area for nine years. It was a very successful program.

So 1080 is very suitable for the Queensland landscape as fluoroacetate occurs naturally in about 35 species of Australian plants, such as gidgee, heart-leaf poison bush and box poison bush. Consequently, native animal species are generally less susceptible to fluoroacetate than introduced species. Also, 1080 is water-soluble and is readily broken down by naturally occurring bacteria and fungi. It therefore does not cause a build-up of toxic residues in soil, water or plants, nor does it bioaccumulate in organisms. Fluoroacetate can be found in minute quantities in such common substances as guar gum and tea.

Some opposition speakers have spoken about their concerns that there is a lack of alternatives to CSSP when it comes to dealing with feral pigs. That claim is not supported by the evidence. The Centre for Invasive Species Solutions says research has shown sodium nitrite—marketed here as Hoggone—to be an effective measure for dealing with feral pigs. According to the centre, it is a humane poison in that it is rapid acting and brings unconsciousness and death within about two hours of ingestion by the target animal. This compares to between six and eight hours for 1080 poison and between two and four days for CSSP. CSSP poisons can leave an animal dying for up to four days, instead of a more humane process such as with sodium nitrite when it is all over for the animal in a couple of hours. I also note the member for Nanango's contribution that—

It is widely accepted that poison baiting is one of the most economical and effective ways to control feral pigs on a broad scale.

She noted the success in her area of a recent council campaign. I note that campaign used 1080 not CSSP, and I remind those opposite that this bill does not ban 1080 so such campaigns can and will continue.

This government takes biosecurity seriously, and we would not take action that would hamstring our primary producers. That is why we have invested in additional offices and ongoing support to take action on feral pests, and we acknowledge there are multiple tools in tackling feral pigs. The government accepts that FMD and LSD pose significant threats to our major livestock industries, and that is why we have taken bold steps—in partnership with the federal government—to ensure we are as prepared as any state can be to prevent an incursion. It was at the Ekka this year that the Premier announced \$22 million in additional measures, including new biosecurity officers in the regions, to ensure that biosecurity is front of mind throughout industry and we can support our producers to keep these diseases out of Queensland, as I indicated this morning in my ministerial statement. We have also just closed applications for round 7 of the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative, which will invest another \$1 million in pest control and management through local governments and Landcare groups.

I note the comments from the member for Gympie regarding the monsoonal event and what that would mean for animal welfare concerns. The department made it clear, in responding to AgForce's concerns, that—

... in the event of extenuating circumstances such as floods or fires which prevent farmers inspecting and dealing with livestock in a timely manner. In these types of emergency situations consideration would be given as to whether a person had a reasonable excuse.

Queenslanders understand what devastating impacts natural disasters have on our primary producers, and when there are impacts our Agriculture Coordination Group stands up to ensure government support is there. This bill does not target producers who are impacted by disaster and therefore unable to support or assist their livestock.

I note the member for Gympie also made comment regarding the transport of animals. The new section 33, 'Transporting dogs', prohibits the transportation of an unsecured dog on the back of the tray of a vehicle, or a trailer attached to a vehicle, except for dogs assisting in the movement of livestock, and transporting a dog whose body other than its head is protruding from inside a vehicle. The proposed maximum penalty of 60 penalty units is consistent with the maximum penalties in most other jurisdictions. The proposed maximum penalty is higher than the 20 penalty units that applies to the offence under section 44(1) of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2021 for a failure to use an appropriate method to secure a load. However, it reflects the potential harm that can be caused to an animal if it fell from a moving vehicle. The maximum penalty will act as a deterrent for a person to transport an unsecured dog, and the provision is directed at minimising the risks to a dog's welfare, and meeting community expectations that animal welfare risks are being appropriately managed.

This is about animal welfare, as opposed to treating a dog as an unsecured load. The member for Gympie's attacks show just how desperate the opposition is. It has abandoned reality in favour of disingenuous misrepresentation of industry needs. The opposition grasps for anyone who will speak ill of this government to such an extent that it would throw a multibillion-dollar industry under the bus for the sake of a cheap shot like we heard from the member for Gympie.

I cannot let the opportunity pass without making comment on the contribution by the member for Currumbin. The member claimed to have come to a profound understanding of the issues being addressed with this bill by two means. The first was that she read an article on the ABC website that included comments by a pest control expert criticising the government's proposal to ban CSSP poisons. Talk about hitting Google for a few words you want to hear! The second was even more remarkable. The member for Currumbin's second bit of piercing insight came by putting a prong collar on her arm which, by all reports, led her to an epiphany that these prong collars could not possibly hurt anyone, let alone a dog! You would not put an Akubra on your foot to decide that it would make an excellent hat,

would you? People on the Gold Coast should be horrified to think that a local LNP MP still wants to see these dangerous and harmful collars used on dogs in this state. In fact, you have to wonder, with the last few LNP contributions to this bill, whether there is a new divide opening up in the opposition. I have heard the most recent speakers seem to have lost enthusiasm for the LNP's opposition to prong collars. Is it the old Liberal versus National divide? Is it the former leader versus the new leader divide? Is it the Gold Coast versus everywhere?

These collars are banned from import into Australia by the federal government. Let me reiterate: these collars are banned from import in Australia by the Commonwealth government. They are banned in Victoria and there is a bill to ban them in Tasmania. These bans are for a reason: to protect the welfare of dogs.

Through this debate, we have heard several opposition members quote from dog trainer Steve Courtney who says it is essential to keep using these collars. However, the same Steve Courtney also wrote to me on this issue, not only pushing that case but also declaring that he and his dog trainer colleagues would continue to use the collars whether Queensland banned them or not. I would hope that those opposite would join with me in condemning that clear statement of intent to disobey the laws of this state. It is the same old LNP—too angry to see the truth, too lazy to do the work, and too out of touch to support an industry that is the lifeblood of rural and regional Queensland.

You do not have to take my word for it, colleagues. Former Cattle Board President of AgForce, my friend, Will Wilson, when I spoke to him about the LNP not backing in lay pregnancy testing wholeheartedly, said, 'In 2022 it makes no sense that any political party would not back in lay pregnancy testing—and I thank the minister for his strong support to industry on this issue over the years.' There you have it. You have a former Cattle Board President of AgForce backing in the Palaszczuk Labor government on this position.

You do not need to be a rocket scientist to work out the importance of lay pregnancy testing. Even I worked it out in 2018 while travelling around the property of Gypsy Plains with the current AgForce Cattle Board President explaining the importance of lay pregnancy testing to me and its existence for many years as a means of testing pregnant cattle and its importance to the live export industry. I quickly understood and accepted the importance of continuing that practice. That is why we engage with Agforce, to continue that dialogue and meet with them through the Agriculture Ministerial Advisory Council meetings on a regular basis, not only about this bill but also on the importance of lay pregnancy testing. That is why I supported it even when I was in the Senate and understanding the importance of the live cattle trade, and that is why it quickly came to me when it came to this round of consultation with AgForce the importance once again of lay pregnancy testing but also on the back of live cattle exporting.

The hypocrisy of the opposition to claim the government has not consulted with industry when its views are diametrically opposed to those of significant voices from what the industry says. I am left to wonder if the LNP is just too lazy to talk to industry in any depth at all, or whether they are so deaf or so arrogant that they just do not listen to what industry is actually saying.

I acknowledge the member for Mirani's strong interest in this area and I appreciated our conversation after his contribution as well. I was hopeful of hearing the thoughts of the member for Maiwar also, but unfortunately he did not seem all that interested in commenting on the content of the bill. I can assure the member, however, that the Palaszczuk Labor government still puts the safety of human life first.

I would like to thank my department for its work on this legislation and for overseeing the vital and important consultation process involved. I also want to place on record my acknowledgement of the many hours of work by my ministerial office, in particular my biosecurity advisor, Michelle Curran.

I would like to thank the committee for its extensive examination of this bill to ensure Queenslanders could have their say on this bill. It is an important bill. I once again commend the bill to the House.