




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2022

ANIMAL CARE AND PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (5.36 pm): In the winter of 2018 my flock of beloved backyard chooks got an unexpected new resident hen. Our home embraced her and so did our Pine Rivers community, voting to name her Hennifer Lopez. Yes, Hansard, that is Hennifer with an 'H'. She was a placid and calm hen who quickly settled in to my little brood of chickens. Hennifer Lopez was a rescue and she was in pretty bad shape when she came to us. She was discovered in the yard of a vacated rental home with no food or water. She was locked inside a coop for an unidentifiable period of time with the rotting carcass of a possum. She was left abandoned.

I think it is fair to say that not many of us have the stomach to dwell for long on what mistreated animals go through. There is something profoundly disturbing and sickening to consider what the consequence of inhumane treatment is, to consider what it would be like in those circumstances. Community attitudes and expectations on animal welfare are developed and ever developing. We need to clarify the law so a neighbour opening a door and putting out some food or water to Hennifer is not a loophole for the reckless actions of her previous owners abandoning her to go unpunished. To that end, I absolutely welcome the clarification of the meaning of 'unreasonable abandonment', ensuring that there are penalties for this kind of action.

The question familiarised by Patti Page of 'How much is that doggy in the window?' is no longer the key question. A modern-day equivalent would be, 'Can we care for that doggy in the window?' Care is paramount. We need to keep strengthening provisions to ensure the humane treatment of animals. This bill moves forward on a number of protections. Some of these, frankly, during my lifetime were not on our radar as inhumane or cause for much concern amongst many in our community, let alone considered dangerous. I recall many dogs I encountered, particularly through my childhood, who for aesthetic purposes had their tails docked. Further protections are included in this legislation to ensure that, when an animal changes hands and that animal's tail is docked, it needs to have and pass along the signed veterinary surgeon's certificate stating that the procedure was done in the interests of the animal's welfare.

My miniature Roman nose bull terrier, Cassius, used to love it when we would take him for a spin in the tray of our Ford ute. He used to love it so much that on the two occasions when the gate was accidentally left opened, he could be located sleeping under the ute, just waiting for his next ride. This legislation will see a new section to the act to prohibit the transportation of an unsecured dog travelling on the tray of a vehicle or in a trailer attached to the vehicle, or for a dog whose body other than its head is able to protrude from an open window. We know that, from RSPCA statistics, thousands of dogs die or are injured each year while unsecured on the tray of a vehicle or in a trailer attached to a vehicle, so this is an essential move for the welfare of our dogs. This bill also implements recommendations of the Queensland Audit Office to strengthen oversight of the RSPCA Queensland in providing inspectorate services for the state. This is a significant step towards enhancing accountability and public confidence in the delivery of these important services.

I note the report particularly acknowledges a submission from Mrs Leichelle McMahon, who is a business owner in my electorate and who has raised concerns regarding her treatment through the current framework. I welcome that the committee has taken the time to duly consider these concerns and make recommendations through the committee reporting process.

Finally in my contribution, I turn to the topic of prong collars for dogs. I have followed this debate with real interest. The LNP, through the committee report, are representing a position that they are fine to use, and they then reference federal rules, yet then propose to limit the use of prong collars to only professional trainers and owners who have been trained in the use of the collar. Are they only safe to use when owners are trained? Or are they only safe when they are a particular brand? Or should we just not act at all because we are handballing this to the feds? Granted, their statement of reservation is even more peculiar than usual and you really do need to do some brain gymnastics to get to the flip-flop of something they are trying to land, but let's be real: their position is a total flop. If they are proposing the government ban is overreach, how is their proposal through the statement of reservation also not a ban? Their proposal by its very nature concedes that there is a need to act. They themselves propose action too and then in the same breath criticise the government for doing so.

My current rescue dog is a ridgeback x staffy and she weighs about 30 kilograms. Mabel is a sweet dog, but she is playful and a puppy at heart. From the time my daughter has been aware in her pram that the lead is helping guide walking our dog, she has always wanted to hold the lead. I, of course, do not allow her. There is a question that arises through this debate that requires some responsible logic and common sense. I do not allow my daughter, now aged three, to control a 30-kilogram dog because it is not appropriate and she would not be able to. I would not fit a prong collar to that dog to better facilitate that ability for my daughter.

Logic needs to come into this debate as well when the opposition reference instances in their statement of reservation that just defy logic, much like Evie controlling Mabel. You do not need a prong collar to control your dog; you need a dog that you are able to control. I do not buy into the argument that using a prong collar is the only training or control situation that allows you to mitigate risk. I have not seen a single example that you can apply that logic to that stacks up. Further, I would turn promptly and leave the company of any training professional who advised me that the use of a prong collar was the best or the only way to train an animal. I am certain that the majority of Queenslanders would do the same. Our logical considerations in our mind weigh up the environmental exposure factors.

Let's go back to our children. Is it a comparable argument that through my daughter's schooling I will allow her educators to cane her because they are qualified? Absolutely not. The point I am trying to make here is that there are plenty of other alternatives to train and control our dogs. Understandably, the instances of prong collars are already very limited. Their efficacy in the minds of many is even more limited. Fundamentally, as a society, we appreciate that the use of pain for conditioning or control, quite frankly, is completely inappropriate without qualification and that we see this being universally stamped out.

I take the time to congratulate not just my friend but the farmers' friend, the member for Ferny Grove and the minister for agriculture. I have seen his affinity with, and love for, animals. There was a redistribution to our electoral boundaries. Through the Samford RDA, Riding for the Disabled, we co-sponsored for a time, until I took over the sponsorship, a beautiful horse, Charlie Bun. I know, through talking with the minister, just how much he is a lover of horses. In fact, Charlie famously made a Christmas card with the minister—I love the photo and I know locals do, too—sending season's greetings. I know how much he cares for animals across the state. I want to back in the wonderful work that he and the committee have done through this bill.

Mrs McMahon: Neigh, neigh, neigh.

Ms BOYD: Neigh, neigh, neigh. I take that interjection from the member for Macalister. Humans have such a wonderful affinity with animals. Many of us have the enormous pleasure and responsibility to care for them. It is incumbent upon us to ensure when we take on that responsibility that it is not on a whim and that we are in fact matched with and able to control and care for that animal safely and humanely. The vast majority of us understand the weight of that responsibility. For others, there needs to be legislative change and penalties applied as the community attitude and expectation of animal welfare continues to progress. It is for these reasons that I commend the bill to the House.