




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Dangerous Dogs

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.29 am): Today I will introduce into the House a number of changes to the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008. We are doing this because we want to keep our communities safe. We want to keep our communities as safe as possible from dog attacks. Today I will be introducing a bill that, amongst other things, outlines tougher penalties for irresponsible dog owners after thousands of Queenslanders backed proposed changes to dangerous dog laws. Penalties will include fines of up to \$108,000 or up to three years jail for the owner of a dog that causes the death or seriously injures a person.

I thank the Premier for her leadership and her commitment to progressing these amendments. I would also like to put on the record my thanks to the Local Government Association of Queensland, the RSPCA and my department that made up the animal management taskforce. From the outset they were 100 per cent committed to the task of reviewing the act and to progressing reforms that will better protect our communities.

I would also like to thank all the people who took the time to make a submission to the *Strong dog laws: safer communities* consultation paper. Thank you. People from across Queensland gave their voice to these amendments. From the cape to the west of Queensland, people let their voices be heard. Close to 4,000 people took the time to send a submission or complete an online survey. In fact, in the first couple of days of the dangerous dog consultation site going live, the department received 2,100 submissions. That is without a doubt a great response. What will this mean to Queenslanders? It means they are committed to reducing attacks and reducing the number of people who present to emergency departments. In 2021-22, Queensland recorded almost a third of the 9,500 hospitalisations from dog attacks.

It is heartbreaking to know that children and the elderly are the most vulnerable when it comes to dog attacks. We also know that without strong laws anyone is vulnerable to attacks. I have seen the photographs of young children who have been attacked. I remember seeing a photo of the cheek of a toddler who was viciously attacked by a dog; the size of a hole in her cheek was so big you could put a finger through it. That image will stay with me forever. I hope that memory fades for her and her family. In fact, 81 per cent of dog attacks on children in Queensland occur in the child's own home. We all remember the heartbreak when we heard of the fatal attack in Greenbank this year. No-one wants to see these attacks happen ever again.

I say thank you again to the Premier for her leadership and for her commitment to getting these amendments right for Queensland communities. I say thank you again to the taskforce and to all the people who made a submission. Their voices have been heard. I look forward to giving the House more details in the first reading of the bill.