

Barbara Hodel
Pet Professional Guild Australia (PPGA)
secretary@ppgaustralia.net.au
Pet Industry Professional Membership Organisation

We commend the Tasmanian Government on making the amendments, particularly in regards to the proposed ban on Prong Collars. The Pet Professional Guild Australia supports this amendment to the bill.

We have recently provided input to the Queensland Government in regards to their proposed amendments to the Animal Care and Protection Bill, in regards to the banning of prong collars. The following is a summary of our input which we provided to the Queensland Government:

We have moved on from those times when tools like these were acceptable. Science tells us that positive reinforcement is the most ethical and efficient way of training dogs.

Prong collars cause animals to become distressed, anxious, fearful and sometimes aggressive.

Injuries from collars range from skin irritation, neck punctures to crushed and collapsed tracheas, spinal cord and back problems. Prong collars work by both Positive Punishment (adding an aversive to decrease a behaviour) and Negative Reinforcement (Delaying an aversive to increase a behaviour). A prong collar is designed to be 'aversive' to the dog by applying an unpleasant stimulus that the dog is aiming to avoid (e.g. a 'do it or else' method)

Prong collars inflict pain to the animal and the use of punishment with our pets can damage relationships permanently. Prong collars should be prohibited under all circumstances.

Prong collar advocates may argue a number of incorrect statements. One in particular is that some dogs (especially some breeds) can only be controlled with a prong collar. The fact is that if you're working with a skilled and qualified trainer who's using positive reinforcement based training, they are using techniques based on up to date scientific evidence, you can teach your dog (and any species) to perform any behavior without the use of pain or fear.

Another incorrect statement that prong collar are a tool of last resort for aggressive dogs that may otherwise be euthanised. As the attached study references will support, the utilisation of punishment to train, is more likely to cause increased aggression, fearfulness and anxiety. For many dogs, the appearance of 'compliance' and lack of aggression is actually a state of 'learned helplessness'. The punishment does not address the cause of the aggression, it merely acts to suppress it, which in itself can lead to disastrous consequences. Aggression in dogs can be due to a number of factors such as genetics, poor breeding, lack of socialisation, training methods as well as medical reasons.

Many of our PPGA members work with reactive and aggressive dogs, assistance dogs as well as dogs required for protection and have successfully helped these dogs either learn the required behaviours or change their behaviour without the need for aversive training techniques. It may also be argued that there will be working dogs such as police, detector, search and rescue or army dogs that require these to get a certain behaviour. Again, there are plenty of organisations across the world that have successfully switched to more human, positive reinforcement based methods.

Attached to this submission are links to the following documents:

- PPGA Media Release - Prong Collars and the proposed banning of their use in QLD
- Position Statement on The Use of Shock in Animal Training
- Position Statement on the Use of Pet Correction Devices
- Position Statement on the Use of Dominance Theory in Animal Training
- Position Statement on The Use of Chock and Prong Collars

These position documents contain further advice and more specifically references to numerous scientific studies that have been conducted that provide evidence to the fact that the use of this

cruel tool has long term negative effects on the training process, increases stress and anxiety in dogs and can result in both short-term and long-term psychological damage to animals.

A further document will be provided with this submission which also includes references to scientific studies, articles, statements and photo evidence of prong collar harm.

The Pet Professional Guild Australia (PPGA) is a membership organisation representing pet industry professionals who are committed to science-based, force-free training and pet care. We are an official branch of the Pet Professional Guild, a worldwide organisation committed to advocating, educating and encouraging improvements in companion animal welfare through the use of fear free techniques. Currently we have over 350 professional members and around 700 other pet owners around Australia, many of these professional trainers in the animal industry, mostly with companion animals such as dogs, cats, horses, birds and pocket pets.

The Pet Professional Guild Australia members and affiliates focus on a pet's physical, mental, environmental and nutritional well-being, a holistic approach to the care and training of family pets. It is heartening to see in the bill that animal's behavioural needs will be considered as part of minimum care requirements.

The Pet Professional Guild Australia thanks for the opportunity to provide some feedback on the Tasmanian Animal Welfare Act Amendment Bill 2022 and would like to be considered in the near future as one of the Tasmanian Government key stakeholders for consultation for any future amendments or development of Animal Welfare legislation, regulations and guidelines, particularly in regards to companion animal welfare.

While not included in this amendment, we would also like to raise that the following items that should have 'prohibited use status – under all circumstances' and that should be considered in your list of 'prohibited devices' are:

- E-collars or electric shock collars/invisible fences
- Choker/check chains

PPGA would also like to see:

- The recognition of animal sentience in the animal welfare law in Tasmania.
- That animals are sentient beings that are conscious, feel pain and experience emotions.
- That humans should strive to provide positive experiences to promote a life worth living for the animals in their care.

Our PPGA members include some of most well renowned veterinary behaviourists and trainers, many of which have worked with rescues and councils in the past and have a wealth of knowledge in behavioural modification.

Our companion animals deserve a much better future - free of pain, fear and intimidation where they can have a lasting and loving relationships with their people.

If you would like to contact us further to discuss, please email us at president@ppgaustralia.net.au
Yours Sincerely

Barbara Hodel
President
Pet Professional Guild Australia