

Murray Burgess

19th July 2022

To whom it may concern,

My name is Murray Burgess, I have owned dogs for 15 years and been training my Rottweiler for more than five years since she was a puppy. I have had professional help, been to group classes and used many instructional videos online. I absolutely love training and spending time with dogs.

I am strongly against the amendment to section 8(2) of the act which will specifically ban the use of pronged (or pinch) collars and make it an animal cruelty offence to use one.

The Pinch Collar is specifically designed to distribute pressure evenly around the neck of a dog and to prevent neck and tracheal injuries. For strong, powerful dogs, the amount of safe control that these collars can provide is invaluable.

Pinch collars, when used correctly, are gentle and effective tools for training some dogs. Pinch collars are a life saving tool and leads to better animal welfare outcomes. They can help fix a wide variety of behavioural issues in a short time, especially in cases where positive reinforcement training alone has failed. The reality of the animal world is that positive reinforcement can only bring so much success and most dogs require a different approach.

The proposed banning of pinch collars presents a number of adverse impacts on the community. This ban will limit access to the wider dog training market by limiting the options available to responsible dog owners. The removal of these tools prevents dog owners training in a way that is one of the most gentle ways you can train a dog. For many dogs, positive reinforcement only training is not effective, and balanced training is required to correct unwanted and dangerous behaviours. For dogs and owners who rely on this tool as a training aide to help with these behaviours, a ban will be devastating. The suggested alternative suggested by force free trainers who cannot fix the issue is to medicate or euthanise the dog, which is a poorer outcome that leads to a diminished quality of life for dogs whose behaviour can be fixed efficiently with a pinch collar.

It is reasonable to state that the misuse of any dog training tool (flat collar, harness, head halti etc.) can cause injury to an animal. When used correctly then they do not. The same can be said for pinch collars. My understanding is that under the current legislation, an individual can be convicted of animal cruelty for any injury that is caused by the misuse of ANY dog training tool, so the provision to specifically ban pinch collars is unnecessary and will lead to poorer animal outcomes for dogs in Tasmania.

At this point in time, I am unaware of any current or historical investigations by RSPCA Tasmania that have specifically involved the use of pinch collars so do not believe that the use of pinch collars is an animal welfare issue in Tasmania.

When my aforementioned Rottweiler was only 4 months old, she was brutally attacked, unprovoked on a dog beach in Kingston. From this point onwards, despite many hours of training, my dog became more and more reactive to other dogs that we came across, to the point where she was nearly un-walkable; this diminished her quality of life as she was unable to be walked and was confined to the yard. We tried many different techniques to help her but nothing worked. Eventually we took her to see Ben Barnes at Huon Valley K-9, a specialist in big dog training and reactive dogs. His company has experienced training all dogs, including dogs for police and military use. It was he who introduced my dog and me to the pinch collar and trained me how to correctly fit and use this fantastic training tool. The use of the pinch collar has transformed how my dog walks and acts exclusively for the better. She is no longer reactive around other dogs and I can say that this is directly attributed to the use of the pinch collar. I can confidently say that, due to the correct use

and handling of the pinch collar, my dog becomes excited when she sees it as she simply attributes it to a walk, not as a punishment - just like any other appropriately used training tool.!

Any form of collar can harm a dog, it is simply a matter of who uses it and whether it's being used correctly. This principle applies to the pinch collar, when used in the correct manner, it can be a very effective training tool and give many dogs a much better life. If the pinch collar is banned, I will no longer be able to walk my dog which in my opinion is more of an example of animal cruelty as she will be confined to the yard. This will be the case for many dog owners in the same position as me: our dogs are not aggressive and do not deserve punishment, we simply want our bigger dogs with different requirements to live their lives like any other breed does.

Based on the above, I would request that the amendment to the use and legality of pinch collars be removed as part of the proposed amendments to the Act.

Kind Regards,

Murray Burgess