

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jane Scarafiotti, I have been training my dogs with Huon Valley for almost 4 years. I own 2 large rottweilers and an Australian Cattle Dog cross. I regularly attend group classes with all of my dogs and have proceeded to the advanced classes. I have also partaken in several private lessons during this time. I currently use pinch collars on my 2 rottweilers to help me enjoy life with them whilst having them under effective control.

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, such as my rottweilers, the amount of safe control that these collars can provide is invaluable.

Pinch collars, when used correctly, are gentle and effective tools for training dogs. Pinch collars are a lifesaving tool and lead 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 and myself. 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 suits them and their dogs personality. 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, such as myself, who rely on this tool as a training aide to help with these behaviours, a ban will be devastating. The alternative suggested by force free trainers who cannot fix these issues, is to medicate or euthanise the dog, which is a poorer outcome and 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, any 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 I do not believe that the use of pinch collars is an animal welfare issue in Tasmania. I would ask that you review the evidence provided to you carefully by the RSPCA regarding the damage that the pinch collar causes, as studies have been misrepresented in the past and the decision that is made should be made with all the accurate information and evidence.

As my rottweilers grew, they were beginning to become too strong for me to safely manage whilst walking. Under the advice and supervision of professional trainers at Huon Valley K9, me and my dogs were introduced to the pinch collar in a way that ensured that they were used correctly, gently and resulted in a positive change in my dog's behaviour. The training involved mostly positive reinforcement, however, this was now used in conjunction with the pinch collar. At no stage were my dogs in pain, unhappy or shut down. When used correctly, the pinch collar allowed for my dogs to

remain their happy selves, but now with an increased control whilst wearing the collar.

By utilising the pinch collar, I am able to walk my 3 dogs together in a safe manner and allow them to have the best quality of life that I can provide to them. My dogs are happy, well balanced and relaxed when out and whilst at home.

My dogs are friendly with other dogs and people, including children. When out and about with my dogs, I often am approached by people and other dogs who wish to greet my dogs. With the pinch collar, I am able to control my dogs and the situation to allow for the greatest level of safety for myself, my dogs and other members of the public. It is unfortunate, but when out and about you can't trust that other dogs or people will behave appropriately, so it is important that I am able to maintain control of my dogs and the situation to avoid any additional danger.

My dogs are always excited when they see their pinch collars as they know that they are about to go for a walk or go out and train. My dogs are part of my family, they are very well looked after and enjoy hanging out with us on the couch after a fulfilling day. I love my dogs and I would never do anything to harm them.

The pinch collar has been a vital tool in helping me walk my dogs and have them under effective control in public. The pinch collar has allowed me to walk my dogs regularly in a safe manner and allowed me to attend obedience training classes to improve their skills and quality of life.

If the pinch collar is banned, I am afraid that my dogs will no longer be able to be taken out safely and will need to be managed in a way that is not fulfilling for a dog. If they are banned, it will be much harder to manage training and daily walks and I am worried that there will be many other dogs in Tasmania who will suffer the same fate.

Pinch collars have allowed several people to be able to safely manage their dogs, so by banning these, many dogs and their owners will be negatively affected.

I encourage you to get in touch with Huon Valley K9 to discuss their use of the pinch collar and to arrange to come and observe a training class where pinch collars are used. There, you will be able to see the way that these collars have benefitted many dogs in Tasmania.

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,
Jane Scarafiotti