

11th August 2025

Dear Legislative Scrutiny Committee,

I'm writing to express my support in relation to the ANIMAL PROTECTION AND RELATED LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025.

As a long-term Northern Territory (NT) resident and a member of the public who unknowingly allowed a local dog trainer to use a prong collar on my dog that caused horrific physical and behavioural damage, I wish to express my support in the ban of them regarding both use and possession.

I unknowingly allowed a local dog trainer, that is still in business to date to use a prong collar on my dog to control and manage behaviour. I allowed this to occur in my presence and was told by the trainer that because they knew how to use them, it would not be of any harm to my dog.

The high pitch yelps from my dog, was just the beginning. It made her more reactive, counter to what I thought was the purpose of the tool. Furthermore, beyond the sheer fear in my dog's eyes every time it was used or the trainer approached her with it, she had to receive ongoing veterinary treatment from injuries caused by it.

While the device is not sharp in each of its edges, the pressure from the trainer and the repetitive use caused the skin around her neck to puncture and the wounds were so deep, they required surgical intervention and multiple courses of medication to stem infection. Further to this, she suffered extensive muscular damage to her neck and injury to her trachea.

While I consented to the use of the device and only undertook extensive research into them after this incident, I had no recourse to warn others of the dangers of prong collars. What 100s of scientific papers led me to understand is that these tools are not safe or effective but dangerous, draconian and cruel in nature. They only "work" by inflicting pain, suffering and torture on animals without their consent or choice. There is no scientific evidence to support the primary argument that if used by someone suitably trained, they are safe. My experience and research have taught me otherwise.

In light of my experiences with the use of these tools in Darwin, with no channels of being able to pursue a welfare complaint, I commend the proposed changes that strongly align with best practice in the industry but would encourage the committee to increase the penalty further. The fine for use and possession equates to a few hundred dollars, which comes nowhere near the cost of veterinary treatment these devices cost owners from their use, whether it may be one off or ongoing. It also isn't a hefty enough of a penalty to stop trainers and others using them, without simply purchasing more or simply charging more for the use in a training session.

I wish to again reiterate my support for the proposed changes and encourage the Assembly to pass the Bill.

Kind regards,

Mary Lukas