

15<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**

Dog Standards and Guidelines Consultation

Animal Welfare Regulation

*To whom it may concern,*

*I am writing to you today to oppose some of the new standards proposed in the Draft Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Dogs in WA, specifically those outlined below;*

***The flat ban on prong collars***

*S12.2 Prong collars must not be used on a dog.*

***The adjustments to the accepted method of use of Electronic Collars, points (a) & (b)***

*S13.1 An electronic collar must only be used on a dog in accordance with the generally accepted method of use. For the purposes of these Standards, the generally accepted method of use includes:*

*(a) if a reasonable and documented effort has been made to use other training techniques to modify behaviour and these have not been effective;*

*(b) a veterinarian has examined the health and temperament of the dog and reasonably believes that the dog is suitable to wear an electronic collar.*

I own a dog, Odin, who suffers moderate anxiety and suffered from severe fear aggression.

Despite being appropriately socialised early in his life, he developed fear of people and other dogs and would react beyond any means that we could control.

I had tried positive reinforcement training, which was unsuccessful. He would continue to display outbursts towards anyone who would approach and any other dog that would come within 100m of him. We ceased this training as it was only causing him more stress and I could see it causing more damage psychologically down the road.

By this point, we only had 1 option. Keep him confined to our house and backyard, with no outside stimulation – which would only continue to feed his fear.

That was until I was recommended Lauren at The Holistic Hound Dog Training.

At our first appointment Lauren had tried to approach my dog with little resolve, he was terrified, he was vocal and would quickly snap if she tried to approach him.

Lauren told me that she would like me to use a prong collar on Odin and see if we could gain some control over him – Now I had seen prong collars used in the past and I had seen the damage caused by incorrect use. I was hesitant to use this tool as I had only seen the negative side of them.

However, I now know that this was because the collar was not used correctly and the users had received little to no education how to use the tools.

Lauren explained to me that the prong collar is not a punishment, is it not to be used to cause fear to gain control. It is a tool used to help communicate with the dog.

In short, a quick 'pop and release' of the collar is enough to distract the dog from whatever may have caught its attention, giving the owner time to step in and praise or insert a command. When used correctly, it does not hurt.

Lauren has demonstrated this on herself and I have also used it on myself. I have placed the collar on my arm and leg and tightened the collar significantly harder than I would ever dream to on an animal and am yet to break my own skin.

Through proper education and demonstration, Lauren has been able to work with myself and Odin, using the prong collar without my dog developing a fear towards the tool, and the transformation not only with his relationship to Lauren, but his reaction to strangers and other dogs now is incredible.

For us personally I use this tool whenever I walk Odin. I must. Without this tool I simply would not be able to walk him. Period.

On the rare occasion now that I see Odin's hackles come up (a tell-tale sign he is about to have an outburst) I 'pop and release' his collar to break his attention, praise and treat him for diverting his attention to me, and we continue.

I have been using the prong collar for 11 months now, and in that time I have only witnessed one outburst from Odin, which in turn I was able to quickly gain control and calm him down through the use of his prong collar.

He does not fear his collar, in fact like most dogs, he sees it as a sign that he is going for a walk and he is just as happy as a dog with a flat collar would be.

Throughout my training with Lauren, she has gone above and beyond to educate me on the proper use of training tools, such as prong collars and e-collars. Without these tools, so many dogs would be confined to their garden and suffer. Or worse, be euthanised because lighter methods of treatment do not work for all dogs.

Through using the prong collar alone, I have seen firsthand how they have changed a dog's life. My dog has a happy life now. A life that I would not have been able to give him had I not enlisted the help of Lauren and been educated on the proper use of training tools. A life that no vet was able to promise me, despite medicating him.

I think, from my experience above it is clear that I oppose the above-mentioned standards. And I plead that the proposed standards be reconsidered.

If these laws come into place, too many dogs will suffer. They will be rehomed, confined to backyards or euthanised because there would be no other way to help them through their problems. My own dog will suffer, his anxiety and fear will grow, and I fear what I would do to help him if I am no longer able to use tools to work with him.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I would be happy to substantiate the above information by answering any questions or submit further if needed as I feel so strongly about this cause.

Kind Regards,  
Chloé Higgins

**Client of**  
**The Holistic Hound Dog Training**  
Lauren Maslen (Owner-Operator)

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