



BEHAVIOUR
COUNSELLING SERVICE

To Whom It May Concern

I have been asked by the Association of Pet Dog Trainers Australia to offer an opinion with respect to the use of prong collars for training dogs and whether this piece of equipment would be considered "dog friendly."

Prong collars are only an effective training tool if they punish an undesirable behaviour. This means that the action of a "correction" using a prong collar must be perceived as aversive by the dog i.e. the dog will change its behaviour to avoid the "correction". While there is some dispute about how much pain such devices inflict, it can be stated with certainty that the prong collar is only an effective training aid if the dog finds it aversive. As such, it does not, in my opinion, constitute a "dog friendly" approach to dog training.

Of particular concern is the use of such a collar by novice pet trainers. Correct timing and intensity is required for desirable learning to occur. The considerable skills required in this respect means that the potential for misuse (punishing behaviours when this has not been intended) and abuse is high – even when this is unintentional. There is also the risk that any fear or aggression issues may be exacerbated by the exposure to pain, when a challenging stimulus is presented.

It is not surprising that a report on humane dog training did not support the use of prong collars for walking or training dogs (1). By contrast, I consider reward based training methods to be safer and more reliable for training dogs.

I may be contacted at one of the points below if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

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(1) American Humane Association and Delta Society (2001) *Guide to Humane Dog Training*. Delta Society, Renton, WA

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