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Attn: Manager, Animal Care and Protection Act Review
Animal Biosecurity and Welfare, Biosecurity Queensland
GPO Box 46, Brisbane QLD 4001

I am writing to you today in relation to the Review of the Animal Care and Protection Act on behalf of Firearm Owners United Ltd.

Our organisation operates nationwide to advocate for the shooting community. We are a purely volunteer driven Not-For-Profit with a diverse membership ranging across hunters, primary producers and professional pest controllers. With such a significant component of our membership engaged in primary production, occupational vertebrate pest control and recreational hunting, we feel it vital to express our views relating to the review of this act.

At present Section (42) of the act provides an exemption to what would otherwise be an offence for acts performed to control a feral animal or pest animal. This section requires that this is done in a way to cause as little pain as reasonable to the animal, and that a prohibited trap or spur is not used. The restrictions on prohibited traps are rendered immaterial as no traps are currently prescribed under the regulation as prohibited.

It is our organisation's firm belief that this exemption is absolutely vital to the ongoing ability of our members to conduct their activities. Furthermore, we believe that the present situation on the lack of prohibited traps is appropriate, and any change to this situation would need a detailed and specific inquiry to truly understand how traps are currently being used in industry.

With that said, in the experience of our membership we do not believe there are any significant issues in the community with animal cruelty and the use of traps. People who set traps for pest control overwhelmingly do so responsibly, choosing traps designed to provide adequate restraint without causing pain to the animal, and checking traps regularly to ensure any trapped animal is destroyed and non-target animals released without causing undue stress.

Hunting for both professional pest control and recreation is an important activity in much of Queensland, and provides control of pest animal populations that significantly impact agriculture. Recreational hunting generates significant economic activity for rural Queensland, and is also a recreation of cultural significance that generates incredible passion from its vast membership.

With regards to the prohibitions on events, we do not believe that there is any need to create additional prohibited events, or change those that are currently prohibited. At present coursing and hunting of animals recently released from captivity is prohibited, and we do not believe there is any appetite in our community to change this.

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We note there are considerations to make it an offence to transport unrestrained dogs on vehicles. Whilst we understand the concerns, especially on public roads, we think it is important that if such legislation is brought into being that there are exemptions created for dogs used in hunting and primary production. Working dogs are used unrestrained in a number of circumstances which provide no added risk to the dog and are essential for agriculture operations. Some examples are as follows:

1. At low speeds dogs are unrestrained on the back of quad bikes, side by sides and tray back vehicles while travelling across paddocks to where livestock will be for the purpose of mustering. This provides benefits such as less work for the dogs as to not drain their stamina so they are fresh when they are needed, also when a dog needs a break they can rest on the back of a bike etc if needed while the operator follows a herd from behind.
2. Dogs have been transported in the back of stock crates safely for years, whilst technically not restrained they are no less restrained than cattle in the same crate and it is extremely rare to see an incident from this form of transport.
3. Dogs are used to detect the scents of feral animals such as pigs when engaged in pest control, hunters will drive a low speed with unrestrained dogs to allow the dogs to pick up and follow the scent of pigs when they detect it. This is done at speeds slow enough to enable the dogs to safely exit the vehicle on their own volition.

Thank you for your consideration,

Vice-President
Firearm Owners United Ltd

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