



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026

Submission number: 008

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Date authorised for publication: 4 March 2026

From:
To: [LA Committee - Legal](#)
Date: Sunday, 22 February 2026 8:35:54 PM

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Good evening,

Please see below my own opinions of the proposed ACT Firearms/Public safety Bill.

The purpose of this submission is to respectfully argue that no further restrictions on lawful firearms ownership should be introduced beyond the existing regulatory framework. While public safety is paramount and widely supported by licensed firearm owners, the proposed amendments risk imposing additional burdens on compliant individuals without demonstrable evidence that such measures will materially enhance community safety.

The ACT already operates under one of the most comprehensive firearms regulatory systems in Australia. Current law requires a demonstrated genuine reason for firearm ownership, rigorous background checks and suitability assessments, mandatory licensing, registration, and secure storage requirements, as well as ongoing compliance monitoring and significant penalties for breaches. The existing provisions under the *Firearms Act 1996* establish strict controls over acquisition, possession, and use. There is limited publicly available evidence indicating that licensed firearm owners operating within this framework present a systemic public safety risk warranting further restriction. Public policy should be evidence-based. Absent clear data demonstrating that current laws are insufficient, additional restrictions risk being disproportionate to the problem they seek to address.

The Bill proposes numerical caps on firearms possessed under certain licence categories. While the intention may be to limit accumulation, a fixed numerical cap does not inherently correlate with increased safety. Lawful firearm owners often acquire different firearms for distinct legitimate purposes, including target disciplines requiring specific configurations, pest management in rural or peri-urban environments, and collecting historically or mechanically distinct firearms. The proposed limits may disproportionately affect sport shooters and primary producers who have demonstrated long-term compliance. There is no clear evidence that the number of lawfully owned firearms by a licensed individual, in itself, is predictive of misuse. If the concern is risk, existing suitability and fit-and-proper-person assessments already provide a mechanism to address individuals who may pose danger. A blanket numerical limit may therefore be unnecessary and inflexible.

The Bill proposes amendments to Schedule 1 and Schedule 3, including the prohibition of belt-fed firearms and changes to licence authorities. Belt-fed firearms are not allowed in civilian possession, and legislative change should be based on demonstrated risk within the ACT context. If such firearms are not currently in circulation among civilian licensees, the practical public safety benefit may be negligible. Similarly, amendments expanding restrictions on certain action types and magazine capacities may further narrow already limited civilian access without clear evidence that licensed owners of these categories have contributed to public harm. Regulatory changes should be proportionate, targeted, and

supported by demonstrable need.

The proposed amendments introduce additional grounds for refusal of permits to acquire and user registrations tied to numerical limits. This may result in increased administrative processing burdens, delays for compliant applicants, and greater regulatory complexity without measurable safety gain. Effective public safety policy should prioritise enforcement against unlawful possession and trafficking rather than increasing procedural restrictions on compliant licensees.

Firearms regulation must balance public safety with the rights and legitimate interests of law-abiding citizens. Proportionality requires that restrictions address clearly identified risks, that measures are demonstrably effective, and that less restrictive alternatives are considered where available. Before implementing further restrictions, it would be prudent to assess whether existing laws are being fully enforced, whether data supports the conclusion that additional controls are necessary, and whether targeted enforcement or education measures could achieve similar outcomes.

The ACT's firearms regulatory system under the 'Firearms Act 1996' is already stringent and comprehensive. The proposed 'Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026' introduces additional restrictions that may not be supported by clear evidence of necessity or effectiveness. In the absence of demonstrated systemic deficiencies in the current framework, further restrictions on lawful firearms ownership risk being disproportionate and may place undue burdens on compliant members of the community.

For these reasons, this submission respectfully recommends that no additional restrictions on lawful firearms ownership be enacted without clear, evidence-based justification demonstrating that such measures are necessary and will materially improve public safety.

Submitted respectfully for consideration.

Regards,

Declan Noack.