



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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To the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, thank you for the authorisation and opportunity to express my concerns with the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026. My name is Ryan Hayward; I live in Queensland and hold twelve licenced firearms. I medically discharged from the Australian Defence Force in October 2025 and I'm currently looking for work predominantly in the ACT. The proposed legislation, as far as I'm aware is as follows:

- Imposing a cap on the number of firearms an individual may possess or use. In general, the limit is five firearms. Persons holding a licence for a prescribed genuine reason (including animal welfare, business or employment, or primary production) may possess and use up to ten firearms, with possession and use of additional firearms subject to approval by the ACT Firearms Registrar.
- Changes to the firearms that may be possessed and used under category A, B, C, and D licences, including restrictions on magazine capacity and action mechanisms authorised under each licence category.
- Introducing a prohibition on belt-fed firearms.
- Creating a new offence for the possession of digital blueprints for the computer-aided manufacture of firearms and firearm parts.

I agree with the final proposal, but my initial response to the first three points is:

- Professional exposure and analysis to Western Australia amendments in 2023/24 placing firearms limits, (which New South Wales modelled off in 2025) led to the conclusion the information collected to justify the changes was poor and politically driven. It disproportionately affected First Nations people, created anxiety and uncertainty within the wider community thereby leading to widescale disenfranchisement with government institutions.
- Firearm recategorization is arbitrary and contradictory within an already flawed system. Straight-pull bolt-action and pump-action rifles¹ aren't faster or more accurate than standard turn-bolt or lever actions². Any firearm: manually operated, semi or fully automatic, rely on user experience and training to get best performance. Advertising or branding that suggests otherwise is purely for the purpose of selling merchandise in accordance with consumer trends. I assess the use of a Berretta BRX1 straight-pull rifle and Stoeger M3000 M3K straight-pull shotguns in the Bondi Massacre was probably due to advertising influence as opposed to tactical considerations.
- Belt-fed weapons, i.e. machine guns, which use disintegrating and non-disintegrating link, articulated feed belt, feed strips or are chain fed are already classified and banned as Category R in every state and territory.

¹ "Straight pull/pump action firearm means a straight pull or pump action repeating rifle, shotgun or other firearm— (a) in which the action is cycled using a linear motion using the shooter's hand on a handle, bolt or other part, and (b) that does not require rotation during unlocking and locking as in a traditional bolt action repeating firearm when cycling the action." – Page 4, Section 2, *Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*

² A rifle action in which the extracting and ejecting of the shell case and the re-cocking of the weapon are accomplished by a hand-operated lever arm behind the trigger housing.

I want to focus on the personal cost to myself emotionally and financially. Eleven of the twelve firearms I own are working, historical firearms from the Second Boer War to World War Two. The final firearm is a custom-made flintlock musket thematically set in the Seven Years War (1756-63). A firearms cap will force me to surrender over half of my collection. Three rifles will simultaneously be affected by the reclassification: my Ross Rifle Mk II*3, Ross Rifle Mk III and Remington Model 14-1/2. The first two are Canadian straight-pull bolt-action rifles from World War 1, which was used by British Empire forces as training, reserve and sniping rifles. The Model 14-1/2 was inherited from my grandfather; my example was used by the Royal Navy in World War 1 for boarding parties and aircrew. These three firearms are exceptionally rare, but I have also used them for hunting and target shooting. The three firearms are currently worth ~\$20'000 AUD, notwithstanding the rest of my collection. The Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill puts me financially at risk, especially since there are no clear indicators relating to how the buy-back scheme is going to be funded or done at fair market value. My firearms are my passion, giving me a sense of purpose and wellbeing; my collection is one of the few positive outcomes my service has rendered to myself. I served eight and a half years in the Australian Army and suffered significant trauma from unacceptable behaviour, impacting my personal confidence and social lifestyle. Being forced to surrender any firearm I own would aggravate my frustration, sadness and anger, simultaneously degrading opportunities to reintegrate into civilian life.

Although I live in Queensland, I've been looking for work in across the country as part of my transition from service. I have already been forced to pass over job opportunities in NSW because of the Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. ACT has the best job prospects, but the proposed legislation will impact my ability to work in the ACT. Although I am excited to work and live in the ACT, I cannot accept the detrimental effect the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill will have to my quality of life. I detest implicitly being made a criminal, after a significant portion of my life was given in service to Australia at great emotional, physical and financial cost to myself and my family. If the bill was passed, I would have to reconsider working and living within the ACT and possibly an alternative career, which is also detrimental to my wellbeing and sense of purpose. The Bill puts me in a no-win situation, disempowering and delegitimising myself and my interests. I urge legislators to focus the bill on criminal and terrorist activity, reconsider its approach on licenced firearm owners and work with subject-matter experts to adjust laws accordingly. I am happy to discuss further on alternative firearm legislation and address any potential questions.

For your consideration,

Ryan Hayward