



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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Standing Committee on Legal Affairs
Inquiry into Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

To whom it may concern,

I tender this submission having been a responsible firearms owner since my early teens. After a lifetime of involvement in both sport and professional shooting I speak with real knowledge on the topic.

I have been a law abiding citizen my entire life, always done the right thing, whatever was expected of me regardless of personal cost. I handed my possessions in after Port Arthur even though the compensation was grossly inadequate. If I have to take a financial loss and restrictions on my chosen recreation a second time since Port Arthur, then I'll reluctantly go along with it, however I wish to point out a few facts first.

While I and the licenced shooting fraternity will divest ourselves of our possessions, what of those who are intent on doing the wrong thing? They won't hand anything in. If they are prepared to murder innocent strangers, children among them, are they really going to obey new gun laws? I submit that's a ridiculous proposition. Even if firearms were totally banned in every way they'll still find a way to carry out their plans. The only way to prevent future tragedies is to identify those with hate in their hearts who wish our society harm and take action against them. Removing my possessions or limiting how many I can own will have zero effect, apart from reducing my enjoyment of life.

Limiting the number of firearms an individual can own does not appear to be based on any studies or statistics that I can find. If the possessions of law abiding citizens are forcibly removed under threat of law, it should be based on evidence.

If I am restricted to five firearms, I'll have to surrender a couple. But now my wife and three adult children are so incensed by the effect this is having on my chosen recreation, they are all lining up to get their firearms licences too. So now instead of seven firearms under my roof, you potentially have 25, or 50 if they target shoot. Multiplied this across every shooting household in the ACT that's a huge increase in firearms number in the community.

In reality the public don't really seek to ban firearms. They are happy for firearms to be carried publicly by police and protective services. In reality what they seek is to ban the wrong type of person from having firearms. I have proven over a lifetime of responsible ownership that I am trustworthy and have proven I'm responsible enough to own sporting firearms. Arbitrarily limiting numbers doesn't make any sense if you examine it carefully. If I'm no public danger with five firearms, why do I suddenly become dangerous when I own six? The police don't carry around multiple firearms and neither do I. Only one can be used at a time.

I'll summarize the main thrust of my submission:

- The focus on limiting firearm numbers is missing a golden opportunity to concentrate intelligence and enforcement on the relentless pursuit of those with evil in their hearts. Criminals or terrorists will not be deterred by any laws. They will obtain firearms or make explosives, drive cars through crowds or some other action regardless of any law. The emphasis must be on identifying and pursuing those who seek to harm others. Licensed shooters will surrender our property, criminals and extremists will not.
- I've searched in vain for studies or other evidence that limiting firearm numbers will reduce public risk. Initially it sounds good but without evidence it's just an empty distraction. In 2017 a mentally disturbed individual mowed down more than 30 innocent people in Bourke St in Melbourne. If he had ten cars parked in his driveway it would not have affected the tragic toll. This reinforces my point above about misplaced focus on my firearms rather than inappropriate people who pose the actual risk.
- I'm concerned by the rate of compensation should I be forced to surrender my possessions. In 1996 I was not fairly compensated for my firearms and suffered financial loss. Insufficient compensation encourages non-compliance and increases risk. In the current financial climate I fear there may be temptation to sell firearms illicitly for profit rather than accept a pittance from an underfunded compensation scheme.
- Forcibly confiscating private property from citizens under threat of law should be an absolute last resort in a democracy and only be done with evidence to support that course of action. Particularly when those licenced owners have a long record of responsible ownership. Criminals and terrorists will not surrender anything.
- Limiting firearms numbers has backfired in NSW leading to an increase in firearm numbers within the community. This is already playing out in my household with my wife and adult children now becoming licensed. This has increased the potential number of firearms in my house by 500%. I have to stand in line at the range these last few weekends with so many people flocking to Majura range, that's never happened before.
- Those with minor children in the shooting sports need to own extra firearms they can't use themselves, will these be counted under the cap? Minors in the shooting sports can't own their own firearms so parents have to own them. In my family we had three children who all required their own firearm. Firearms are like any other sporting equipment, I wouldn't expect them to share footy boots or mouthguards, firearms are the same. Consideration should be given to extending the cap for parents.
- I'm concerned about the lack of clarity around the manufacture of firearm parts. Does this include the wooden stock or grips, replacing a retaining screw? Firearm screws usually have odd specifications not readily available over the counter. Would it be against the law for me to download a technical drawing of that screw and manufacture it in my shed as I've done numerous times in the past? That would make me a criminal with a firearms manufacturing charge for making a screw. Manufacture of 'parts' should be specified as functional parts such as barrel, trigger, action, bolt etc. This will remove any ambiguity for people like myself who genuinely wish to do the right thing.

Thank you for considering my submission. Please let me know if you require anything further.

Yours sincerely

S. Dingley