



# Submission cover sheet

## Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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# Submission to the Inquiry into the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill* 2026

## Introduction

I am a licenced firearms owner in the ACT and a very active member of the firearms community. I make this submission to outline the practical, personal impacts that the proposed reforms will have on me and my household, and to highlight the broader concerns regarding proportionality, fairness and the treatment of licence holders.

At the outset, I wish to acknowledge that the actions which have led to this review are abhorrent. They do not reflect the values, behaviours or attitudes of the overwhelming majority of firearm licence holders. Nothing in this submission should be taken as diminishing the seriousness of those events. However, it is important that policy responses are targeted, evidence-based and proportionate, rather than broadly applied to individuals who have demonstrated compliance with the law.

My submission does not seek to protect criminal behaviour. Rather, it seeks to highlight how provisions framed as addressing risk will, in practical application, adversely affect a group of lawful people through assumption, association or presumption rather than proven conduct.

## Demonstrated Suitability and Existing Oversight

I have been assessed by ACT Policing (ACT Firearms Registry) as a suitable person to hold a firearms licence. This assessment has not just occurred once, but repeatedly, both at the time of licencing and through the approval of each Permit to Acquire (PTA) I have applied for.

This means that:

- I have undergone comprehensive background and suitability checks,
- I have demonstrated a genuine need for each firearm I own,
- I have complied with all training, storage and regulatory requirements,
- My continued possession of firearms has been subject to ongoing oversight, including by welcoming ACT Policing into my home to inspect my storage and firearms.

The current framework already provides multiple points at which a person may be refused access to firearms or have that access revoked, either temporarily or permanently.

I have demonstrated consistently that I have met the thresholds of the law.

## Personal Impact: Forced Choices Between Lawful Activities

The proposed changes will require me to make difficult and unnecessary choices between different lawful uses of firearms.

As someone who possessed and uses firearms for both:

- Hunting and pest management on my rural property, and
- Sporting and recreational target shooting,

I may be required to reduce my firearms in a way that limits my ability to effectively undertake both of these activities.

I have competed at the national level in one of my chosen disciplines, and these changes will likely result in me not being able to continue this with all of my other firearms usage needs.

These firearms are not interchangeable in use. My firearms for pest management are not firearms that can be used for sporting purposes, particularly as my pest management is only through the use of rifles and the majority of my sporting firearms are pistols. The proposed framework will force licence holders like me to prioritise one lawful activity and/or obligation over another, despite both being recognised as valid genuine reasons under the law (both current and proposed).

This has direct implications to me and my household for:

- Subsistence and land management practices,
- Participation in organised sporting activities, and
- The practical and safe use of appropriate equipment for specific purposes.

## Impact on Shared Ownership and Storage Arrangements

My husband and I currently operate fully within the law by sharing firearms where permitted under our respective licences and compliant storage arrangements, including the use of shared safes, thanks to the ability for firearms to have both a registered owner and registered users. The current proposal says that registered user firearms contribute to the total number of firearms a person is allowed. In our case, my firearms are on my

husband's licence as a registered user, and some of his firearms are on my licence as a registered user.

The proposed changes will disrupt these arrangements and create two likely outcomes:

1. We will be required to purchase additional firearms and install another compliant safe in order to remain legally compliant, or
2. We will be forced to reduce our existing firearms, despite having already been assessed as suitable to possess them.

Both outcomes are problematic and do not satisfy the justification that appears to be mentioned that the laws will still ensure that people are able to access the firearms that they require for sporting, and other genuine reasons.

Requiring duplication of firearms and infrastructure:

- Increases cost without improving safety outcomes,
- Creates inefficiencies in a system that already tightly regulates access and storage.

Conversely, forcing reduction:

- Limits lawful participation in both sporting and practical activities, and
- Penalises compliant behaviours without evidence of risk.

This represents a disproportionate impact on households that are currently operating safely and lawfully with the existing framework.

## Presumption of Risk and Reputational Impact

For all of my life I have been told not to mention that as a family we own or use firearms because of the perception of firearms owners. As social media has become more prevalent this perception can be seen regularly, firearms owners are essentially either farmers, criminals or a risk to public safety.

As the person who started the e-petition relating to these laws, putting my name to it was a decision I grappled with for some time. I knew that by deciding not to hide my name I would be risking adverse outcomes. I also knew that by deciding to speak on ABC Canberra Radio I would be further exposing myself to these risks.

As firearms owners, we are one of the most regulated groups and who are constantly in contact with ACT Policing. We invite them into our homes for compliance checks, for each PTA we meet with them and have our history checked constantly. I have been trying to find another law-abiding group of people who have the same regular interactions with police, and I haven't been able to think of any.

I am concerned that the proposed reforms effectively position and reinforce firearms owners as an inherent risk to public safety, despite a lack of evidence supporting this characterisation.

As a licence holders, I have:

- Complied with all legal requirements,
- Demonstrated safe and responsible behaviour, and
- Been subject to ongoing regulatory scrutiny.

Despite this, the cumulative effect of the proposed measures suggests that ownership alone is sufficient to justify increased restriction. This creates a perception that individuals like myself are a risk by default, rather than being assessed based on our conduct and demonstrated suitability.

This has broader implications, including reputational harm and stigmatisation of lawful firearms ownership. It is effectively ensuring the broader public with no understanding of the licencing and ownership requirements only see firearms ownership one way.

## Proportionality and Policy Approach

The ACT already has a highly regulated, multilayered firearms framework, including:

- Licencing based on the suitability of a person,
- Mandatory training and safety requirements,
- Strict storage laws and inspection powers,
- Individual assessment of each firearm purchase through the PTA process,
- Strong powers to refuse, suspend or cancel licences.

Given this, it is important that any additional measures are:

- Evidence based
- Targeted at demonstrated risks,
- Proportionate to the problem being addressed, and
- Identify and focus on criminal misuse and illegal firearms.

Broad restrictions applied to already compliant individuals risk creating perverse outcomes, including reduced participation in regulated sporting and other environments and unnecessary burdens on lawful activities, without addressing the root causes of criminal misuse.

## Conclusion

I respectfully submit that the proposed reforms will have significant and disproportionate impacts on individuals who have already demonstrated compliance with one of the most stringent firearms regulatory systems in Australia.

In my case, this includes:

- being forced to choose between lawful and necessary uses of firearms,
- disruption to compliant shared ownership and storage arrangements,
- additional financial and administrative burdens without clear safety benefit, and
- being implicitly characterised as a risk despite demonstrated suitability and compliance with the law.

I urge the Committee to ensure that any reforms remain proportionate, evidence-based and targeted, and that they do not unnecessarily restrict or disadvantage individuals who are already operating safely, lawfully and responsibly with the existing framework.

I also respectfully ask the Committee to consider whether the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026*, as currently framed, sufficiently distinguishes between:

- individuals who pose a demonstrable risk to public safety, and
- law abiding licence holders who are being affected through association, presumption or regulatory overreach.