



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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Submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly

Inquiry into Proposed Firearms Legislation Reforms

Name: Callum Town

Date: 5 March 2026

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the inquiry into proposed reforms to firearms legislation in the Australian Capital Territory.

I am a law-abiding firearms licence holder and long-term participant in recreational hunting and pest control. I support reasonable, evidence-based reforms that enhance community safety while preserving legitimate sporting, agricultural and pest-management activities.

This submission opposes the proposed five-firearm ownership cap but supports targeted, evidence-based measures, particularly those addressing emerging risks such as 3D-printed firearms and illicit parts manufacture, as well as stronger interagency coordination relating to firearms licencing controls.

1. Opposition to the Proposed Five-Firearm Limit

The proposed blanket cap of five firearms per individual is not supported by evidence demonstrating that licensed firearm quantity correlates with increased criminal misuse.

A. Lack of Evidentiary Basis

ACT firearm licence holders are already subject to:

- Strict background checks
- Ongoing suitability monitoring
- Secure storage requirements
- Genuine reason tests

There is no publicly presented data demonstrating that lawfully owned firearms, held in greater numbers by compliant licence holders, are contributing to violent crime within the ACT. Without clear evidence of risk linked specifically to the number of firearms owned, a numerical cap risks being arbitrary rather than preventative.

B. Legitimate Functional Needs

Different lawful activities require different firearms:

- Calibres suitable for varying game species
- Firearms configured for small game and pest control vs. humane waterfowl, deer, goat and pig harvesting
- Firearms used for different competitive disciplines
- Backup equipment to ensure humane outcomes in the field

Legislation should account for the functional realities of ethical hunting and sporting practice rather than apply blunt numerical restrictions.

C. Disproportionate Impact on Compliant Owners

A fixed cap risks:

- Penalising experienced, compliant shooters
- Forcing unnecessary disposal of lawfully acquired property
- Creating administrative burden without measurable safety benefit

Public safety is better served by focusing regulatory energy on criminal acquisition pathways rather than restricting those already complying with a rigorous licensing system.

2. Support for Stronger Controls on 3D-Printed Firearms and Parts

I do support the proposed controls around possession and distribution of digital blueprints for illicit firearm manufacture.

Emerging technologies present genuine regulatory gaps. Unlike licensed firearm ownership, these areas directly intersect with untraceable weapons entering illicit markets.

Targeting these risks is:

- Evidence-based
- Forward-looking
- Focused on criminal misuse rather than lawful participation

Such reforms align with the principle that regulation should address demonstrated threats, not hypothetical risk among compliant licence holders.

3. Evidence-Based Reform

I submit that any reform should:

- Be grounded in publicly available crime and misuse data
- Include meaningful consultation with lawful firearm stakeholders
- Focus on illegal supply chains and criminal misuse
- Preserve legitimate hunting, pest control and sporting disciplines

Evidence-based reform strengthens public confidence and reduces unnecessary division between rural, recreational and urban communities.

4. Public Safety Considerations

Community safety must remain the paramount objective of firearm regulation.

However, policy effectiveness depends upon

- Targeting criminal behaviour
- Addressing illegal importation
- Improving intelligence sharing and
- Ensuring enforcement resources are properly directed

Ownership caps that apply only to already vetted, licensed individuals risk creating symbolic reform rather than measurable safety improvement.

Recent firearm policy discussions across Australia have frequently referenced high-profile incidents such as the tragic attack at Bondi. That event understandably caused significant concern within the community and prompted calls for stronger measures aimed at preventing similar incidents.

However, it is important that legislative responses remain evidence-based and proportionate to the risks they are intended to address. Based on publicly available reporting regarding the Bondi incident, it does not appear that the types of changes currently being proposed in the ACT, such as numerical limits on lawful firearm ownership or additional restrictions on already licensed and regulated sporting firearms, would have altered the circumstances of that event.

The available information suggests that the issues involved were not related to lawful firearms ownership within the regulatory framework, nor to the number of firearms held by licensed and law-abiding firearm owners. Rather, public reporting has pointed toward matters relating to risk assessment, information sharing, and coordination between different government and law-enforcement agencies across jurisdictions.

If legislative reform is to be effective in improving community safety, it should focus on addressing clearly identified risk pathways. Measures that primarily affect already licensed and compliant firearm owners, without clear evidence that they would prevent incidents of this nature, risk imposing significant regulatory burdens while offering limited practical benefit.

5. Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that the Committee:

1. Reconsider the five-firearm ownership restriction unless supported by clear empirical evidence of risk.
2. Proceed with strengthened regulation concerning 3D-printed firearms, unserialised parts and digital blueprints.
3. Continue structured consultation with hunting and sporting organisations.
4. Commission and publish data assessing sources of firearms used in ACT criminal offending.
5. Ensure reforms are proportionate, targeted and evidence driven.

Conclusion

The ACT can modernise its firearms framework in a way that enhances safety without unfairly burdening compliant licence holders.

Targeted reform - particularly addressing illicit manufacture and trafficking deserves strong support. Blanket numerical limits that lack a demonstrated safety rationale should be reconsidered.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Callum Town