



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026

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Submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly

Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

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

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1. Introduction

On behalf of the Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN), I thank the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs for the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry into the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026*.

As outlined in the Committee's announcement, the Bill seeks to strengthen gun laws in the ACT following recent tragic events and in alignment with National Cabinet commitments. The Committee has resolved to inquire into the Bill and report by 3 May 2026.

This submission is offered in a spirit of empathy, responsibility and shared purpose. Recent events in Australia and overseas have deeply shaken communities. While we avoid revisiting specific incidents, we acknowledge the grief, trauma and fear that ripple across families, faith groups, schools and neighbourhoods when violence occurs.

Public safety is not merely a legislative objective — it is a moral obligation.

AMAN represents culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities across the ACT and beyond. Our communities are diverse in language, faith, migration history, and lived experience. Many of our members come from regions where firearms proliferation has had devastating consequences. Their perspectives bring both caution and wisdom to this debate.

We support the intent of the Bill to strengthen public safety. However, we believe that legislation alone is not sufficient. True safety requires **law reform, community trust, preventive education, mental health responsiveness, and culturally informed implementation.**

2. Foundational Principles

Our submission is guided by five core principles:

1. **Human Dignity and the Sanctity of Life**
 2. **Proportionate and Evidence-Based Regulation**
 3. **Cultural Competence in Policy Implementation**
 4. **Prevention Over Reaction**
 5. **Shared Responsibility Across Government and Community**
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3. Community Safety in a Multicultural Context

The ACT is one of Australia's most diverse jurisdictions. Firearms policy must therefore consider:

- Cultural understandings of authority and compliance
- Language barriers in licensing and regulatory processes
- The risk of stigma towards particular communities
- The importance of maintaining trust between police and multicultural groups

When legislation is strengthened without corresponding community engagement, unintended consequences may occur:

- Misinformation spreading within diaspora communities
- Fear of disproportionate scrutiny
- Reduced cooperation with authorities

We therefore recommend that the implementation of the Bill include a **Multicultural Impact Assessment Framework** to evaluate:

- Whether new regulatory measures affect communities equitably
 - Whether communication materials are available in major community languages
 - Whether compliance systems are accessible and culturally appropriate
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4. Strengthening the Bill: Forward-Thinking Strategies

4.1 Integrated Risk-Based Licensing Model

We recommend the introduction of a **dynamic risk-based licensing review system**, which:

- Incorporates behavioural risk indicators
- Enables periodic re-evaluation based on life circumstances
- Integrates relevant mental health risk thresholds (with strong privacy safeguards)

Such a model moves beyond static background checks and instead creates a living regulatory framework responsive to emerging risks.

4.2 Community Safety Partnership Councils

We propose establishing **Community Safety Partnership Councils** within the ACT, involving:

- Police representatives
- Multicultural leaders
- Mental health professionals
- Youth advocates
- Sporting and shooting club representatives

These councils would:

- Provide early-warning community intelligence
- Address misinformation
- Strengthen mutual trust
- Offer culturally safe reporting pathways

This is not surveillance — it is partnership.

4.3 Culturally Responsive Safe Storage Campaign

Even the strongest laws are only effective if understood and followed.

AMAN proposes a **multilingual Safe Firearms Responsibility Campaign**, including:

- Community workshops
- Faith-based briefings
- Youth engagement sessions
- Easy-read guides
- Digital explainer videos

The campaign should frame compliance as **community care**, not state enforcement.

4.4 Early Intervention and Mental Health Pathways

Recent global events demonstrate the complex intersection of mental health, radicalisation, social isolation, and access to weapons.

We recommend:

- Clear, confidential pathways for families to raise concerns
- Temporary suspension mechanisms with due process protections
- Integration with ACT mental health crisis response systems

- Culturally competent counselling access

Public safety improves when people seek help early — not when they are afraid to do so.

4.5 Digital and Online Monitoring Considerations

While respecting civil liberties, the Committee may consider:

- Enhanced scrutiny of online firearms marketplaces
- Stronger verification systems for parts and accessories
- Collaboration with federal authorities on cross-border procurement risks

Technology is evolving rapidly. Regulation must anticipate—not chase—emerging threats.

5. Avoiding Community Division

It is essential that this Bill not become framed as:

- Urban vs rural
- Law-abiding firearm owners vs safety advocates
- Majority vs minority communities

Safety is a shared value.

AMAN strongly recommends language within the explanatory statement and public communications that:

- Recognises responsible firearm owners
- Avoids collective blame
- Emphasises prevention rather than punishment

Communities respond positively when legislation affirms trust.

6. Supporting Lawful and Legitimate Use

Many firearm owners in Australia are responsible, compliant and safety-conscious. Stronger regulation should not alienate them but should reinforce a culture of responsibility.

We recommend:

- Co-designed compliance education with shooting clubs
- Transparent appeals processes
- Clear, accessible licensing renewal pathways

Legitimacy strengthens compliance.

7. Youth and Radicalisation Prevention

Prevention must begin earlier.

AMAN proposes:

- Community-based youth resilience programs
- Digital literacy and misinformation awareness workshops
- Faith-community dialogues on non-violence
- Mentorship programs for at-risk youth

When young people feel connected and heard, the risk of harmful pathways decreases significantly.

8. Data Transparency and Evaluation

The Bill's implementation should include:

- Annual public reporting on firearm-related incidents
- Transparent evaluation of licensing outcomes
- Data disaggregation to ensure no unintended discriminatory impacts
- Independent review after three years

Evidence builds confidence.

9. Trauma-Informed Policy Approach

Communities are still healing from recent violent incidents. The ACT Government should:

- Provide community healing forums
- Support victim services
- Engage faith leaders in peace-building dialogue
- Avoid inflammatory rhetoric

Policy must calm, not inflame.

10. A Vision for the ACT

The ACT has historically demonstrated leadership in progressive, evidence-based policy.

This Bill presents an opportunity to:

- Strengthen safety
 - Model culturally intelligent governance
 - Embed prevention into firearms regulation
 - Demonstrate that security and inclusion are not opposing values
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11. Conclusion

AMAN supports the intent of the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026* to enhance public safety following deeply distressing events.

However, legislation must be accompanied by:

- Multicultural engagement
- Preventive mental health frameworks
- Community trust-building
- Transparent oversight

As President of AMAN, I respectfully submit that public safety in a multicultural democracy is strongest when it is built on **trust, partnership, and shared responsibility**.

We stand ready to assist the Committee, the ACT Government, and community stakeholders in implementing reforms that are principled, practical, and future-focused.

This moment calls for calm leadership.

It calls for compassion.

It calls for courage.

AMAN is committed to all three.

Submitted respectfully,

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