



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026

Submission number: 013

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Submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly.

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

Opening Comments

I wish to begin by acknowledging the profound shock and grief felt across the nation following the horrendous shooting at Bondi Beach in December 2025. The loss of innocent life in such circumstances is devastating. My deepest sympathies go to the victims, their families, and the broader community who continue to feel the impact of that tragedy.

Introduction.

By way of introduction, I have owned firearms for over 50 years. I am an active hunter and have spent much of my life in the bush. Firearms ownership, for me, has always been associated with responsibility, discipline, and respect—for the law, for safety, and for the community in which I live.

Content.

Tragic events such as Bondi understandably lead to calls for immediate legislative change. However, we must be careful not to assume that further restrictions on lawful owners will prevent acts of evil. Legislation alone cannot eradicate malice or criminal intent. Those determined to cause harm do not typically concern themselves with compliance.

I respectfully submit that policy responses should focus on practical measures that enhance community safety rather than symbolic ones. Broad buy-back schemes, in my view, represent a significant expenditure of public funds with limited demonstrable impact on criminal behaviour. Those funds would be more effectively directed toward:

- Improved enforcement capabilities, including modern electronic data systems that better track criminal networks and illegal firearms trafficking.
- Intelligence-led policing and cross-jurisdictional information sharing.
- Education programs that promote responsible firearms handling, secure storage, and early intervention where individuals show signs of crisis or instability.

- Placing an arbitrary ceiling on the number of firearms a licensed, law-abiding citizen may own does not address the underlying causes of violent crime. Criminal misuse is not a function of quantity lawfully held under strict licensing, background checks, and storage requirements. It is a function of intent.

I also wish to address the broader public discourse. Media reporting on crime can at times lack context, amplifying fear without proportional analysis of trends, causes, or comparative data. Sensationalism may attract attention, but it does not necessarily contribute to informed policy-making. (Livings. 2025)

Equally concerning is the tendency of political opportunists to “get tough on crime” in the immediate aftermath of tragedy. While strong rhetoric may resonate in the moment, enduring solutions require careful, evidence-based deliberation rather than reactive law-making.

The safety of our community is paramount. Achieving that goal requires communication, understanding, and targeted enforcement against those who pose genuine risks—not further burdens on citizens who have demonstrated decades of lawful, responsible conduct.

I thank the Assembly for the opportunity to provide these opening comments and urge members to consider balanced, evidence-driven approaches that protect both public safety and the rights of responsible firearm owners.

I am also more than willing to appear at your hearings into this matter, and you can contact me.

Regards

George Wason

20th of February 2026.

References.

Crime and justice: a guide to criminology (Seventh edition.). (2025). Thomson Reuters.