



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

Submission number: 036

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Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026

Please find below my submission to the Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026.

My Details:

Richard Maccullagh

I am 77 years old and have been involved in a shooting and hunting family all of my life.

I was shooting on my own from around 12 years old and continue hunting and shooting to this day. I am a member of 3 shooting clubs, still hunt when I can and enjoy reloading my own ammunition.

In my younger days, I had what could be described as an encyclopaedic knowledge of all things firearms but I must admit that things have slipped a bit in recent years, however I still retain a high level of interest in firearms and the physics involved.

I have been subject to the various forms of firearms legislation that prevailed in NSW and the ACT for many decades.

In light of recent events, I feel that I should make submissions to the Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026.

I am particularly concerned with recent firearms legislation in WA, NSW and federally that I feel are defective and grossly unfair to otherwise law abiding citizens

I want to ensure that amendments to the ACT legislation result in a fair and workable framework that is evident based.

I am not legally trained and have based my submission on my interpretation of the proposed amendments.

Regards

Rick Maccullagh.

Submission to the Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026 – Richard Maccullagh

As per the explanatory statement the bill will amend the Firearms Act to:

1. Limit the number of firearms that can be possessed and used;
2. Recategorize the types of firearms that can be possessed and used;
3. Prohibit belt-fed firearms;
4. Introduce an offence to possess digital blueprints for the computer-aided manufacture of firearms and firearm parts.

My submissions are as follows:

Limit the number of firearms that can be possessed and used;

I consider that limiting the number of firearms that a licensee can possess would not provide any benefit to public safety.

Limiting the number of firearms for the reason of large numbers of firearms being diverted through theft from licensed owners to illicit markets means imposing a penalty on the licensed firearm holder for someone else's criminality.

Do we limit the number of vehicles that can be owned by licensed drivers to limit the size of car theft rings?

Shooting and hunting require different tools for different purposes, thus requiring different firearms.

As an example, when I go to a shooting range to shoot targets, I take, at the very minimum, 2 rifles. This is because, when using one, I run into heating problems and have to stop shooting, whereas I can use the second rifle while the first cools down. Different target regimes require different rifles again.

Clay target shooting requires another firearm type, as I have to use a shotgun.

Ethical hunting requires that I have the proper tools for the species being hunted. I would not attempt to hunt deer with the same rifle I use to hunt rabbits. Am I hunting in grassland rather than open country? All these require a different firearm type.

In my case, I hold firearms of high sentimental value to my family and me, one being passed down to me from my late father. This rifle will be passed down from me to my son.

As an analogy, a wedding ring of a beloved grandmother that has great sentimental value, but is only worn occasionally.

I believe that limiting the number of firearms held would not make the community safer. Maybe making the secure storage requirements higher might have a better effect on community safety, as an alternative consideration to setting arbitrary numbers.

Recategorize the types of firearms that can be possessed and used;

Recategorising the types of firearms that can be possessed will have a large effect on existing licensed firearm holders and Australian firearm manufacturers and suppliers.

I do not consider that there are enough evidence-based facts to support that this will improve community safety by very much, if at all.

Recategorising a large number of now-legal firearms into higher, more restrictive licence classes will be a nightmare of expense and complexity for very little community safety gain.

I believe that this amendment should be held over until the investigation and consideration of the Bondi tragedy is complete.

Prohibit belt-fed firearms

I consider that I have more than reasonable knowledge of firearms, and in 77 years, I cannot remember a firearm available for civilian use to have belt-fed ammunition. This amendment, including those in the NSW and Federal legislation, is considered by the firearms industry to be nonsense and laughable.

All legislation, whether you are for or against it, must be considered to be fair, well-researched and suitable for use. This amendment will certainly distract from this and absolutely will not improve community safety.

The mechanism that belt-fed firearms have to use will probably mean that they are prohibited under existing legislation, i.e., automatic firearms.

Introduce an offence to possess digital blueprints for the computer-aided manufacture of firearms and firearm parts.

I support this amendment; however, I have doubts about the protection of licensed firearm owners who might be caught up in the wide-ranging definitions.

As an example, due to a recent injury, I have had to replace the stock on one of my rifles. This required the purchase of a plastic spacer, which is quite expensive for what it is. This is also printable with a 3D printer and would not affect the firearm's legality.

Under this amendment, I am not sure that I would be protected from prosecution if I had 3D printed the spacer. I would recommend that this amendment be investigated further and clarified.

General Comments

The Bondi tragedy was obviously the reason for the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026. This legislation appears to suffer from two major defects in addition to my submissions above, in my opinion.

The first is that the amendments have been drafted without the Bondi tragedy having been thoroughly investigated. Drafting amendments to address problems and causes unknown is not a viable response.

The second defect is that thorough consultation does not appear to have occurred. The only reference in the explanatory statement to consultation indicates that the ACT government has only consulted itself.

If any proposed legislation were to require wide-ranging consultation, this would be a prime example

I thank the inquiry members for their time in considering my submission. I am happy to assist with the inquiry in any way should that be required.

Rick Maccullagh