



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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**ACT
Policing**

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Standing Committee on Legal Affairs
Via email: LACommitteeLegal@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Our reference: EC26-000794

ACT Policing welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs regarding the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026* (the Bill). With the Committee's decision to combine this inquiry with the *Firearms (Firearm Prohibition Orders) Amendment Bill 2026*, ACT Policing will provide a separate submission to this inquiry.

The misuse, unlawful possession and unauthorised manufacture of firearms present significant risks to community safety. Firearms are inherently dangerous weapons and require strict regulatory oversight to ensure that access is limited, accountable and proportionate. Advancements in firearms technology, including increased magazine capacities and the accessibility of digital manufacturing tools, continue to challenge traditional regulatory frameworks. Like other jurisdictions in Australia, ACT Policing is witnessing the evolving risk environment associated with both physical firearms and digital proliferation of manufacturing materials.

The Bill seeks to strengthen the ACT's firearms legislative framework in response to these risks and forms part of broader nationally coordinated firearms reform discussions. ACT Policing is responsible for the administration and enforcement of firearms legislation in the ACT, including licensing, registration, compliance and investigative functions under the *Firearms Act 1996* (ACT). ACT Policing has been closely consulted during the rapid development of the Bill to ensure it is operationally fit for purpose and aligned with contemporary risk management practices.

The introduction of a limit on the number of firearms that may be possessed and used by an individual licence holder is a proportionate measure to reduce aggregate risk and reinforces the principle that firearm possession in the ACT is tightly controlled. ACT Policing considers that a limit of five firearms per individual is appropriate to balance lawful use with community safety considerations and aligns with emerging national reform directions.

The recategorisation of firearm types and the insertion of updated statutory definitions will enhance clarity within the licensing framework and ensure that regulatory settings remain responsive to technological developments. Limitations on magazine capacity reduce the potential lethality of firearms and enhance the safety of police to respond in high-risk situations. The prohibition of belt-fed firearms appropriately reflects their elevated risk profile, including their sustained firing capability and capacity for continuous ammunition feed.

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The Bill also introduces a new offence relating to the possession of digital blueprints for the unauthorised manufacture of firearms and firearm components. The increasing availability of additive manufacturing technology enables the rapid production of firearm components outside traditional regulatory controls. Criminalising possession of digital blueprints enables earlier intervention in the unlawful manufacturing process and strengthens the ACT's preventative enforcement capability.

While ACT Policing recognises the necessity for transitional amendments, ACT Policing supports a timelier commencement of the 3D blueprint offence to ensure that enforcement capability aligns with the pace of technological development and associated risk. Extended commencement periods may create a regulatory gap whereby unlawful conduct could continue to occur without clear legislative consequence. Earlier commencement, alongside the necessary community education, would provide operational certainty and strengthen community safety in the ACT.

ACT Policing also supports the inclusion of a dissemination of digital firearm blueprints offence. The distribution of such material can facilitate unlawful manufacture and enables rapid and anonymous proliferation across jurisdictions. Addressing both possession and dissemination ensures the legislative framework responds comprehensively to the risks posed by digital technologies in the firearms context.

Clear and robust legislative settings are essential to effective firearms regulation. The proposed amendments reduce ambiguity, support consistent decision-making and ensure that compliance obligations are clearly articulated. This assists ACT Policing to administer the framework transparently and in a manner that maintains community confidence.

The measures contained in the Bill recognise the inherent risk associated with firearms and appropriately prioritise community protection. The amendments strengthen the capacity of ACT Policing to respond to emerging risks and to take action where continued possession or access to firearms may present a threat to safety. In this respect, the Bill supports a preventative and risk-based regulatory approach.

ACT Policing acknowledges that firearms regulation engages rights under the *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT). In ACT Policing's assessment, the measures proposed in the Bill pursue the legitimate objective of protecting the community and are reasonable and proportionate to the risks posed by firearms misuse and unlawful possession.

ACT Policing supports the passage of the Bill and considers that it will enhance public safety and the effectiveness of the ACT's firearms regulatory regime.

ACT Policing remains available to assist the Committee should further information be required and will engage separately on the Firearm Prohibition Order Bill.

Yours sincerely,

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