



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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To:

Standing Committee on Legal Affairs -

(Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearm reforms) –

ACT Legislative Assembly

Inquiry into Firearms Reform –

- *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026 –*
- *Firearms (Firearms Prohibition Orders) Amendment Bill 2026*
- *Petition E-PET-002-26 Firearms Reform, - Evidence Based Police & Proper Consultation*

Submissions close 5pm 10 April 2026.

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- *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026 –*

ACT Firearm Owner Submission

The author's name withheld for personal security.

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Intro

Firstly, thank you for this opportunity to provide a submission in relation to this issue which deeply and adversely affects so many of us here in the ACT and Australia.

Allow me to briefly convey my comments and thoughts, to which I hope you will take into consideration. I have kept it as short and brief as I can and I'm more than happy to give evidence directly to the standing committee.

Background

I'm 58 years old this year and having been introduced to shooting at the age of 7 by my father, I have over 50 wonderful, safe years of experience and in the shooting sport as a competitive target shooter across disciplines in rifle, shotgun and pistol shooting and a hunter. I have designed, planned and organized competitions including our Presidents Cup, a 3 Gun competition and been on the winning team and in 2023 won the NSW State Medal for first place and 2nd place at the Australian National Shotgun titles. I'm also a proud hunter and vermin controller and have been both a authorized SSAA Range Officer and Firearms Instructor across A,B & H category firearms. I have also been SSAA ACT Branch Secretary and Chief Firearms Instructor at MPGC (Shotgun). Over the years I have instructed many thousands of people in shooting, so have considerable knowledge and experience on this subject matter.

In addition to the above I would consider myself a very active and constructive contributor to our community, freely giving of my time to help and assist many. I have been active in both private sector and government agencies and been on many advisory boards to both local and federal governments/ministers.

Flawed proposed Legislation changes & Facts

At its heart the proposed legislation is most certainly fundamentally and legally flawed, as are many of the false and highly misleading justification statements being made to support these deplorable changes, which are more impactful to law abiding, lawful and compliant firearms owners (citizens) and not criminals, nor any security threat individuals with ill intent towards others.

For the record we fully support changes that prevent non-Australian citizens from obtaining a license or firearms and increases to security agencies abilities to monitor people of interest and concern. We club's and club officials have been calling for these changes for some time, being mostly ignored. However, the following need to be properly taken into account and considered.

1. The ill-conceived idea that limiting firearm numbers/ownership held by lawfully licensed (fit and proper) owners, will somehow make the streets and public safer, is most certainly a mislead and egregiously falsehood on the public. The fact is if authorities believe someone is a security threat or risk, any number of firearms, even one, is unacceptable and this should not happen under current heavy legislation. Any reasonable person would understand and accept this as fact. The number of firearms a lawful individual holds make absolutely no increased or decreased difference to public safety at all. Further these firearms are not on the streets, so again the suggestion that reducing the number of firearms currently safely held and stored by licensed firearms owners will somehow make the streets safer is completely dishonest and everyone including those claiming so, know it.
2. Claims made that lawful firearms owner's firearms are susceptible to theft by criminals is in part true, but so are firearms of police and others which have been well documented over time. This is largely an organised crime issue that should be getting better dealt with and resources and money being wasted on law abiding citizens should be directed towards fixing this issue. One of the key threats to firearm safety and theft is often reckless and irresponsible publication of firearm ownership numbers and locations, often perpetrated by the Greens Party members or Anti firearms groups via FOI. This private information needs to be fully protected from publication. It's a concern to many of us that a National Data Base of firearm owners and firearms further reduces our security as we know this data can be targeted by organized criminal gangs and networks, as has already happened in other states such as NSW. The fact firearm owners seem to have less rights to privacy then say child sex offenders, as their locations and personal details is protected, is very instructive, and this needs to be changed. Anyone that tells you their data base collection and storage database is 100% safe and secure is either lying or deluded.
3. If the politicians and media who are targeting and attacking lawful firearms owners were honest and serious about their claims in relation to increased public safety concerns and desires, then why are other far more dangerous and deadly areas not being dealt with as well, such as the sale, possession and use of cigarettes, knives, cars and even swimming?
 - a. It's estimated that over 24,000 Australians die from smoking every year or 66 per day. Costing around \$159.7 billion annually with around \$7.9 Billion in direct costs and impact to our hospital system and pharmaceuticals. Yet very clearly deadly activity is allowed to continue with ever increasing underworld criminal trade and massive impacts on our society because government have themselves become addicted to the revenue from this deadly trade.

- b. Knives are the most common weapon used in homicides, accounting for the highest incidents involving a weapon of 45%.
- c. In 2024-25 around 357 people lost their lives to swimming related deaths.
- d. According to the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts there were over 1,300 motor vehicle deaths in 2024, with 11 road related deaths in the ACT. In this same year there was 31-gun related homicide recorded firearm deaths.
- e. In 2019-20 there were roughly 190-210 deaths recorded annually due to firearms with the majority (79%) being suicides. This also includes police and security shootings as well as underworld crime related killings, so very low.

Australian Institute of Criminology

Homicide in Australia 2023–24 data.

Weapon use

In 2023–24, 82 percent of homicide incidents (n=216) involved the use of a weapon (see Table 10). Knives and other sharp instruments were used in one-third of all incidents (34%, n=88), lower than the proportion of incidents in which a knife or other sharp instrument was used in 2022–23 (37%, n=85; see Table A8). Knives have been the most frequently used weapon type every year since the early 1990s, and were the primary weapon in 35 percent (n=3,317) of all homicide incidents since 1989–90.

Fifteen percent (n=38) of homicide incidents in 2023–24 involved the use of hands and/or feet. Hands and feet were the primary weapon in 21 percent (n=2,004) of incidents since 1989–90; however, the proportion of incidents where hands and feet were used has decreased over the last three decades. In 2023–24, hands and feet were the primary weapon in 19 percent (n=33) of homicide incidents where the primary victim was male compared with six percent (n=5) of incidents where the primary victim was female. This is a decrease from the proportion of incidents in 2022–23 where the primary victim was female and hands and feet were used as the primary weapon (22%, n=15).

Firearms have also decreased in frequency of use, comprising 17 percent (n=1,589; see Table A8) of weapons used in homicide incidents since 1989–90. In 2023–24, 12 percent (n=31, see Table 10) of incidents involved a firearm. A firearm was slightly more likely to be used in incidents where the primary victim was male (13%, n=23) compared with incidents where the primary victim was female (9%, n=8).

Australian Institute of Criminology Homicide in Australia 2023–24

Homicide incidents in 2023–24 where the primary offender was male were more likely to involve hands and feet (16%, n=33) compared with incidents involving a female primary offender (4%, n=1). A knife or other sharp instrument was used in a higher proportion of incidents where the primary offender was female (48%, n=12) compared with incidents where the primary offender was male (35%, n=71). A knife or other sharp instrument was the most frequently used weapon type across all incidents regardless of the sex of the primary offender and primary victim. Firearms were more frequently used in incidents where the primary offender was male (12%, n=24) compared with incidents where the primary offender was female (8%, n=2).

Table 10: Homicide incidents by weapon type and jurisdiction, 1 July 2023

Table 10: Homicide incidents by weapon type and jurisdiction, 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 (n)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Firearm	9	9	5	5	3	0	0	0	31
Knife/other sharp instrument	24	22	19	11	7	0	3	2	88
Blunt instrument	1	2	2	3	3	0	0	2	13
Hands and feet	14	6	8	4	2	3	0	1	38
Fire	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Drugs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Poison	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Vehicle	2	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	10
Other	2	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	6
Multiple weapons	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Weapon not stated	6	3	5	2	2	0	0	1	19
<i>Weapon used</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>216</i>
Weapon not used	4	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	9
Not stated/unknown	11	4	0	18	1	3	0	0	37
Total	77	54	47	49	18	7	4	6	262

Source: AIC NHMP 2023–24 [computer file]

Hypocrisy

The hypocrisy of politicians, Anti-Firearm groups and media is outrageous. Many have sowed and fed fear, untrue and misleading stories about firearms and firearm owners. Fact is shooting sports in Australia are one of the most heavily regulated sports and activities anywhere in the world and we are also one of the safest sports.

I would like to point out that this unhealthy fear and smear campaign has served no one well and I point the committee to this following ABC news story first aired in around 1971, where an ABC journalist walked down a main street in Melbourne with a replica rifle and ask people how they felt and were they worried or fearful. Non were, in fact I recall growing up in Sydney seeing schoolboy cadets riding on the train with their 303 rifles, not one person was at all fearful back then, so ask yourself what's changed now?

It seems to many of us, members of the public here in Australia, should be educated and helped to understand firearms and not be fearful, this will do more than ridiculous knee jerk changes to current laws that further seek to target and adversely affect lawful and responsible firearms owners. I have seen first-hand how quickly someone, who has never been near, let alone fired a firearm soon enjoys and loves shooting, after proper training and Instruction is provided.

<https://m.youtube.com/shorts/ApYUj87WSVM>

Proud Australian way of life

The shooting sports enjoyed by many Australians has been a proud and much valued way of life, regardless of if you were raised on a farm, like many of us, or you grew up in the suburbs. Being able to go out hunting or target shooting or both has been something to be valued and protected

Competition

Many of us enjoy competition shooting either at club level or state, national and international levels, with Australian shooters well holding their own against other countries. However, this is being dramatically impacted by already highly adverse and restrictive laws and relentless adverse attacks by politicians, negative agenda based activist groups and some section of the media.

Appreciation of firearms, evolution, design, engineering, skilled trades, craftsmanship and function

What many non-firearm owners, politicians and others don't understand is that many of us also hold a deep appreciation of the history, craftsmanship and rare skills and trades used to design, build and finish different firearms. Much like a car enthusiast or collector of anything, we have a love and appreciation of all that goes into making such things, along with seeking the perfect score. The synchronicity, where so many things need to perfectly come together in order to hit a target accurately and consistently.

Social benefits

The committee and non-shooters also need to understand that shooting clubs are also a great social outlet for both males and females, who can and do compete equally as there are no gender disadvantages in shooting.

People should make an effort to see for themselves and come and try shooting before they ignorantly pass judgement or laws. The fear campaign, often fueled by the media needs to end.

Military recruitment and call-up in times of conflict (Fear of firearms)

A fact that often gets overlooked in relation to Australia's proud sporting shooting sports and abilities of Australian's, especially from farming backgrounds, is our history over many past conflicts for government (our country) to call up and draw on members of the population, who were not only, not fearful of firearms, but already knew how to safely handle and use firearms.

Currently the ADF has record poor recruitment numbers and ability to recruit and the constant negative narrative on anyone that enjoys shooting just does not serve any of us or our country well.

As much as conflict and war is a horrible thing, it's a cold hard reality of such times that unless you are able to call on your defense forces, you are extremely venerable and anyone that thinks otherwise is extremely naive and gullible.

Many ADF new recruits have privately attended our ranges and benefited from our instruction.

Buy back and economic costs

The proposed firearms limits to ownership number in the ACT of 5 for recreational shooters, and an additional 5 for club shooters is just following on from the dishonesty of hasty and ridiculous NSW knee jerk legislation. This is not fair, viable, nor reasonable, as many of us use more than this just for various club shoots, especially if you shoot Rifle, Shotgun and Pistol events.

Imposing a buyback scheme is likely to unjustly impact the ACT Government in ways not fully appreciated. Unfair and unreasonable amounts offered which is being seen in WA and sounds like will likely occur here will lead to firearm owners taking their claims to court to seek proper and fair compensation. This will considerably add to the costs to all parties, especially an already deficit riddled government.

I do not support much if not most of the amendment bill in relation to caps on numbers and further impost of costs on lawful firearms owners.

Political backlash

Governments & politicians including Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, are running a million miles away from this foolishly rushed and extremely misdirected deception on the Australian people. The political backlash from the vast majority of votes has been huge, as everyone can not only see the obvious deception, but knows none of these changes will doing anything to address the claimed problem they falsely claim to be fixing.

Aside from doing nothing but directly impact already heavily regulated law-abiding firearm owners and their families, including here in the ACT, the massive costs involved in the proposed asinine buyback system is completely unnecessary and wasteful. Compounding this will be an avalanche of legal action from lawful firearms owners should any compensation amounts offered not cover the true value of each firearm. We know this as even though the Howard government buy back was generally regarded as fair there were still many undervalued cases that went to court and costs considerably more, founding in favour of the applicant owners.

I have heard of this happening more recently in WA with their buyback system which is generally regarded as completely unfair and offering ridiculously low values. In one case offering just \$400 for a shotgun worth over \$120,000.

Qualification of individual firearm numbers, types and uses

To better understand why firearms owners, require multiple firearms and why the proposed caps are not viable, the Standing Committee needs to better understand the different types of firearms, their sub-types and variations and uses. This is a very detailed subject and one that would take several hours to fully explain; however, I will give the following very brief basic explanation outline. Please remember that much like a golfer needs and uses different clubs to play a game or a fishman different rods and fishing gear, the same applies to firearm owners.

Rifle

Action types - Bolt, Lever, Pump, Cylinder, Semi-Automatic and fully Automatic.

Magazine types - Single shot, internal magazine, detachable magazine, tube feed.

Ammunition type - Muzzle loader, Cap & Ball, Black powder or Nitro, Cartridge (rimfire or centrefire) and Air pellet.

Shotgun

Action types - Break open double or single barrel, Pump action, Lever action, Slide release, single or double trigger, semi-auto.

Magazine type - Breach loaded, Detachable magazine or Tube feed. (No Belt feed shotguns)

Ammunition type - Various calibers & shot sizes depending on target or game.

Pistol

Action types - Muzzle loader, Cap & Ball, Single shot break open, Single Action or Double Action.

Magazine types - Cylinder or Detachable.

Ammunition - Black powder or Nitro, various calibers in either muzzle or cartridge including rimfire or centrefire and air pellet.

ACT Firearms Licence Categories

- **Category A:** Air rifles, rim-fire rifles (not self-loading), shotguns (not pump action or self-loading), and shotgun/rim-fire combinations.
- **Category B:** Muzzle-loading firearms, centrefire rifles (not self-loading), and shotgun/centrefire combinations.
- **Category C:** Restricted to primary producers, employees in primary production, or specific collectors. Includes self-loading rimfire rifles (max 10-round magazine) and self-loading/pump-action shotguns (max 5-round magazine).

- **Category D:** Prohibited firearms, generally for collectors only, with weapons rendered permanently inoperable.
- **Category H:** Pistols, including handguns for sport/target shooting, business/employment, or collectors.

The above very brief and basic list does not cover every type of firearm or variation, and some are simply not accessible already under current laws to everyday firearms owners. However they all have their differences, and these are applied across target, recreational hunting and vermin control purposes. Not just the types of firearms, but the different types or ammunition.

If you're a club member that shoots and enjoys competing in multiple shooting disciplines you could very easily require well in excess of 10 firearms, just for those competitions, even just with rifle shooting. If you also shoot shotgun, you most like have one or in most cases multiple shotguns. If you also shoot pistol, you could easily hold 6 or more pistols just to shoot club events (rimfire revolver & pistol) (centrefire revolver & pistol) over several different classes of firearms and ammunition type and calibres. Not to leave out Air Pistol and Black Powder (muzzle loading) events.

For hunters there are many different situations depending on the type of game or vermin being hunted. In some cases, like rabbits or foxes a low calibre .22 rimfire might be suitable, or a slightly higher caliber centrefire, or a mid-range calibre for longer range. Higher calibres for large game and higher again if longer distances etc.

Another consideration often forgotten about is collectors who full get and appreciate the history, craftsmanship and functionality of firearms. Some of the firearms collected are rare and highly prized examples of fine design and rare highly skilled gunsmithing trades, some of which have been lost.

Suggested alternative legislative amendments

In my extensive view recommendations should be made along the following lines and criteria.

1. *To Improve the firearms legislation in a way that actually increases public safety.*
2. *Limit the adverse impact of any changes to already compliant and lawful firearms owners.*
3. *Limit the considerable financial and social costs to the Territory that any amendments might directly or indirectly cause.*

The following suggested amendments to the Firearm Act could achieve nation leading reforms, without impacting innocent, lawful citizens.

1. Firearm licenses can only be issued to Australian Citizens after full and comprehensive background security checks.

2. New license applications to include validation from at least two personal character referee's that have known the applicant for say 5 or more years. And in the case of club genuine reason, a club official who has had some definable and meaningful interaction with the individual, such as a safety course, club event or interview.
3. Club officials should be given greater authority to report and protection to determine suitability of individuals licensing for club proposes. Protecting them from legal or adverse actions on safety grounds from claims under the Discrimination Act etc.
4. This authority and any legislated protection should extend to shop keepers and the firearms Industry with sound duty of care legislation and protection, allowing rejection and reporting whereby concerns are raised at point of sale.
5. If the government goes ahead with limits, then this should only be applied to new license applications, similar to a probation period process. Maybe first firearm within 6 months, second after a year and subsequent firearms up to 5 for Rec hunting after two years. After 5 years up to 5 more and then after 10, together with active club membership and maybe Firearms Registrar approval, no limit.
6. That current firearm registrations be grandfathered, so that those who have already been a licensed firearms owner and club member for more than say 5 or even 10 years, are not affected and allowed to keep what they already safety and legal own and hold.

Facts and Conclusion

1. Fact - Aside from proposed restriction of licensing to Australian citizens, none of the proposed amendments adopted in NSW or proposed elsewhere including within the ACT will do anything to increase public safety, reduce guns on streets or reduce or mitigate crime.
2. Fact – Gun don't kill people, people kill people. Unless you identify and deal with criminal individual's properly, then none of these proposed laws mean anything and certainly don't fix the purported claims being made to justify changing the already very strict and harsh firearms laws.
3. Fact – Limiting firearm numbers from lawful firearms owners does not take guns of the streets, these guns where never on the streets to start with. (fact)
4. Fact - Current heavy laws are already fully adequate and in the case of Bondi shooting could have and should have prevented this tragedy. Fact is the system and authorities again failed, and no number of laws or legislation will change nor alter that fact.

5. Fact – Lawful firearm owners are not the problem. Other more obvious issues, including fundamentally flawed government policies and failings are to blame, including flawed and unfettered open migration policy.

The ACT has an opportunity and obligation to lead and bring some much need common sense and honesty to this whole knee jerk and unnecessary policy over reaction.

The Prime Minister started this way over the top process, and many feel his was looking for his own John Howard moment and the Premier of NSW Chris Minn's foolishly and blindly jumped onboard rushing through heavily and fundamentally flawed legislation which was stupidly supported by the NSW Liberal Party. Dishonest claims were being made to justify this over reach and over reaction, even claiming there was a need to ban belt fed shotguns, which are not a real thing and never were. Since we have seen the Prime Minister back right away from the mess he created, after an overwhelming voter backlash, hand balling the mess to the States and Territories to sort out.

The ACT Government, Assembly and all parties need to lead the way by not blindly going down the WA/NSW rabbit hole and applying fact, logic, common sense and sound science to this whole issue. Only moderate amendments need be made and they don't need to needlessly cost an already broke ACT.

Very happy to assist further and again thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback and a submission.