



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026

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From:
To: [LA Committee - Legal](#)
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Hello,

I wish to provide a submission in respect of the Firearms (Public Safety) amendment bill.

For the avoidance of doubt, my high level feedback is that the bill is being used to punish law abiding firearm owners and is being reactively pushed through parliament without any evidence to suggest an increase of risk to public safety. Instead, the ACT is only implementing these measures because another state has reactively, and without evidence, pushed through similar laws.

I am an ACT resident who engages in the use of firearms recreationally. I would be indebted if you would seriously consider a law-abiding firearm owner's perspective of these changes.

Firearm Limits: Capped at 5 firearms for most, with exemptions up to 10 for primary producers.

Limiting firearms serves little purpose to prevent or reduce the scale of an attack using firearms, however impacts law-abiding firearm owners to ethically harvest/hunt/eradicate pests and/or engage in target shooting. With the current restrictions on firearms types in Australia, an individual would only be able to effectively operate 1 firearm at a time. As seen in the recent tragedy, it wouldn't be unforeseen for a perpetrator to have an additional firearm as a backup, however if they were to be seeking maximum effectiveness, they would be far better off having a large cache of loaded magazines ready to swap out. Limiting firearm numbers would however limit the number of firearms a law abiding individual could use to enjoy their hobby, whether that be target shooting (for which you could reasonably engage in a number of different classes, which would require different firearm calibres and types for (i.e. rimfire, centrefire, pistol shooting, clay target (shotgun), spare rifles)), or for hunting (again, different calibres and types for different purposes such as .22LR for rabbits and close-range foxes, .223 for kangaroos/foxes/wild dogs, .308 for deer, 12G for ducks and birds, .300WM for feral pigs, and additional rifles for different setups such as shooting at night) or, like me, a mixture of both activities, and unfortunately target shooting rifles are not always cross-compatible with hunting due to needing specific setups for each. I would expect that with a cap of 4 firearms per person, you are likely to see a higher proportion of high-calibre firearms owned, which would not necessarily be the aim of this.

Restricted Firearms: Straight-pull, pump-action, and button/lever-release firearms now limited to primary producers.

While acknowledging that these firearms sound like they would be faster to operate, my experience is that these often have internal magazines (not removable, which are far slower to reload), are more prone to unsuccessful chambering/misfiring, serve a reasonable purpose for legitimate use, and that bolt/lever actions can also be operated at a similar rate for someone who has spent 15 minutes at a range. I do understand the misconception by the public that these sound more dangerous than other firearm types, and unfortunately were used in the recent attack.

Magazine Capacity: Reduced for Category A & B firearms.

I would urge reconsideration of the restrictions to magazines, particularly where it comes to rimfire rifles, which are low powered firearms and certainly not useful to commit an atrocity. I personally don't have a purpose for more than 10 rounds for centrefire rifles and shotguns, however a large number of rimfire rifles in circulation have 15 round internal magazine capacities and are useful for the low-powered activities for which you would select a rimfire rifle. Unless the government agreed to permitting the modification of firearms to reduce the internal magazine capacity to 10 rounds by a qualified armourer, which wouldn't be ideal, cost-effective, or simple to do, this would require the destruction of all these firearms which I would suggest would use up a significant amount of the buyback budget. Again, 15 round rimfire rifles would definitely not be the weapon of choice for an atrocity.

Bans: Belt-fed magazines are prohibited.

I'm sure you have seen the commentary on media reporting from the recent attack already, but if not, there are no firearms operated by belt-fed magazines that meet Cat A or B firearm types. This is a point of embarrassment in the proposed laws as it is not applicable, but I don't have any objection to this.

Licence Eligibility: Generally restricted to Australian citizens, with carve-outs for certain NZ residents.

Again, no objection and I believe citizenship should certainly be a requirement. Many owners are shocked to hear this wasn't already implemented.

Police Powers: Increased ability to refuse licenses based on intelligence.

I would like to flag that this could jeopardise intelligence/investigations if an individual was refused a license, however can understand that this would often be preferable to the alternative of if they receive a license. I would urge that there be a clear definition of what would meet the threshold, so that we don't have instances of unwarranted license refusals due to uncertainty. For example of how this could not achieve your aim, a tradesman could be within the contact list of a drug dealer for professional services as opposed to being a customer or affiliate, which could be considered as 'based on intelligence' as they were identified in intelligence-gathering.

Appeal Process: Removal of appeals to ACAT for licence decisions.

I do see this being a dangerous slope of no external accountability, although acknowledging the reasoning, and would like to see a meaningful solution implemented to ensure an honest, incorrect determination wasn't made. I understand the NSW proposal may not afford someone a second-chance to review and I believe only reviews the process?

Storage/Safety: Stricter requirements and inspections before permits are issued.

Again, I don't see an issue with inspections of premises before issuing the first PTA, however this would need to be resources appropriately. While I'm certain the Police would be interested in attending premises more often to undertake inspections, I believe they are under-resourced to even meet existing needs, let alone having to visit every single premises.

Firearms Courses: Exemption for unlicensed persons shooting on approved ranges and for persons undertaking firearms safety training courses

This would be a very dangerous thing to implement as this would reduce the number of licensed firearm owners who do not actually know how to shoot a firearm. This could very easily turn into a serious incident at a gun range, and would make me personally worried about attending a gun range.

While I acknowledge the likely reluctance to loosen any restrictions when it comes to gun laws, I would urge consideration of the following:

- In line with NSW, removal of PTA wait times for firearms when the person already holds a firearm (not including the first firearm, which I believe having the current mandatory wait time on is sensible). This suggestion comes from the fact that this does not minimise any risk to the public, as the individual already has access to firearm/s. If someone is approved to have access to 1 firearm, the risk to the public should not increase with them having more (otherwise there is a failure of the decision to grant a license). There are only 2 licensed dealers in the ACT, and for recent purchases they have not been able to store the firearm for me during the PTA wait time.
- In line with NSW, allow other firearm users to temporarily use another licensed firearm owner's firearms without submitting an application to become a registered user. I suggest this as the current process is ineffective, particularly where I am seeking to borrow a firearm from a NSW-licensed individual and we have to go through the rigmarole of the process, which they do not understand, for me to become a 'registered user' and pay the prescribed fee. Again, I don't see this increasing the risk to public safety by allowing this. This would also decrease the unnecessary expense and burden of needing to have another resident submit an application to become a registered user in order to compliantly share the same gun safe or transport a firearm.
- In line with NSW, consideration to implement a digital platform to enable the processing of firearm applications/forms/requests without needing to attend the Registry. This would minimise the workload and pressure on the Registry to deal with all other activities.

Best,

Liam