



# Submission cover sheet

## Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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## **Submission to the Inquiry into Legislation on Proposed Firearms Reforms (Incorporating the Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026 and the Firearms (Firearm Prohibition Orders) Amendment Bill 2026)**

**Submitted by:** Christopher Nipperess

**Date:** 06 Mar 2026

To the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

I am a concerned resident and lawful firearms owner in the Australian Capital Territory. I have been operating firearms both professionally and privately since 2011, when I enlisted in the Australian Army Reserve as a rifleman in the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. I served eight years with The Werriwa Company (formerly Charlie Company, 4th/3rd Battalion, The Royal New South Wales Regiment, now part of the 1st/19th Battalion) and two years as an instructor with the University of New South Wales Regiment at the School of Infantry, Singleton.

During my service I personally operated almost every small arm in the Australian Army inventory, including the F88/EF88 Steyr, M4 Carbine, F89 Minimi, MAG-58, 66 mm recoilless rifle, 84mm Carl Gustav and other high-explosive-based weapon platforms. As an instructor I specifically trained reserve Infantry trainees on the F88/EF88 Steyr, F89 Minimi and MAG-58.

Around seven years ago I obtained my civilian firearms licence to inherit my father's Winchester 1894 lever-action rifle — a priceless family heirloom. Since then, I have competed at club level in rifle shooting and, more recently, obtained a Category H licence and begun competitive pistol shooting.

Australia's firearms laws are already among the strictest in the developed world. Law-abiding licensed owners consistently demonstrate the highest levels of compliance. The changes in this Bill should be judged against whether they deliver genuine public-safety benefits or simply add regulatory burden to responsible citizens.

I wish to address three issues raised in the Bill (or its companion legislation):

### **1. Numerical limits on the number of firearms (new section 52A)**

The Bill imposes a general cap of **5 firearms**, or **10** for those with a "relevant genuine reason" (sport/target shooting, primary production, etc.), with the total across multiple licences limited to the highest single cap.

I currently own four firearms: the inherited Winchester 1894, a Howa 1500 bolt-action in .223, a Southern Cross Small Arms Taipan X straight-pull in .223, and a 9 mm pistol. These meet all my needs, so the limit does not directly affect me. However, it will affect many others in the shooting community for entirely legitimate reasons.

Different disciplines and quarry require different calibres, barrel lengths, actions and optics. A competitor shooting multiple categories may need rifles from .22 LR to .308, plus specialised barrels or sights. Comparing firearms to golf clubs is imperfect but illustrative: you do not play a full round with only a putter. A single user can only operate one firearm at a time; the limit does not enhance safety — it is political theatre.

I urge the Committee to recommend the **complete removal** of section 52A and all related refusal grounds for permits and registrations.



## 2. Recategorisation of straight-pull rifles as Category C

The Bill moves **straight-pull repeating action** firearms (defined as “a repeating action firearm in which the bolt need not be rotated to open or close the action but is reciprocated by a straight backward and forward motion of the user’s hand”) from Category B into the more restrictive Category C.

I own a Southern Cross Small Arms Taipan X, which uses a unique straight-pull/pump hybrid action with a handguard-mounted pump linked to the bolt carrier. I have owned it for approximately two years and compete with it regularly.

In privately conducted testing after the Bill was announced, the difference in rate of fire for well-aimed shots between my Taipan X and my Howa 1500 bolt-action was consistently **less than 0.5 seconds per shot**. It is mechanically closer to a bolt-action or lever-action than to any self-loading firearm.

Yet the Bill explicitly lists “straight pull repeating action firearms (rim-fire rifles, centre-fire rifles and shotguns)” under Category C authority. This reclassification will force thousands of existing owners to upgrade licences or lose their firearms, prevent Category B holders from acquiring them, and is not supported by any evidence that straight-pull rifles are misused at higher rates than bolt-actions.

**Recommendation:** Amend Schedule 3 so that straight-pull repeating action firearms remain authorised under Category B, consistent with bolt-action and lever-action rifles.

## 3. Firearms Prohibition Orders (separate Firearms (Firearm Prohibition Orders) Amendment Bill 2026)

At face value I support targeted prohibition orders for high-risk individuals. However, every firearms licence in Australia already requires an ongoing “fit and proper person” test. Serious criminal convictions, domestic violence, or other disqualifying behaviour already result in licence suspension and firearm seizure.

I question what additional benefit these orders provide that cannot already be achieved under existing law. If the Committee is considering the companion Bill, I ask that it ensure the orders do not duplicate or weaken current safeguards.

### Additional comments – evidence-based reform

Political and media commentary since the tragic Bondi Beach attack has often been misleading. Claims of “getting firearms off our streets” ignore that the vast majority of crime guns are unregistered and held by unlicensed persons. This Bill primarily affects legally owned, securely stored firearms belonging to vetted owners.

Categorisation changes appear to be based on appearance and perception rather than mechanical capability — the same flawed approach as the ACT’s previous “appearance laws”.

I do not oppose sensible reform. If given the opportunity, I would recommend:

1. **Licensing** — Retain existing requirements but model sports/recreational licensing on the current Category H probationary club-endorsement system. Clubs can observe applicants over time, providing better assessment than a single police check and GP sign-off (with some exemptions for primary producers/land owners).

2. **Categorisation** — Base categories purely on mechanical action and capability:
  - Category A: compressed-air/airguns only
  - Category B: all single-shot or repeating manually-operated firearms (bolt, lever, pump, straight-pull), regardless of calibre
  - Category D: self-loading/semi-automatic firearms
  - Category H: handguns (unchanged)
  - Category C could be repurposed for non-firearm items such as airsoft or gel blasters.
3. **Magazines** — Retain capacity limits but amend wording to permit full-size box magazines that are pinned or blocked to the legal limit, rather than banning them on appearance.
4. **3D printing** — I support prohibiting digital blueprints that enable manufacture of functional firearms or critical parts (I have seen such files in my occupation, and I recognise the threat they present). However, the prohibition should not extend to non-functional accessories such as handguards, sight mounts or cosmetic parts that do not affect the action or magazine capacity.
5. **Telescoping stocks** — I support the explicit allowance of telescoping (adjustable) stocks on firearms. A telescoping stock is purely an ergonomic aid that improves fit for shooters of different statures, thereby enhancing control, stability and safe operation of the firearm. When set to its shortest limit, the rifle must still meet all existing minimum overall length requirements under current legislation. Prohibiting or restricting such stocks provides no public-safety benefit and penalises responsible owners.

## **Conclusion**

Lawful firearms ownership in Australia is a privilege and a serious responsibility. Licensed owners take that responsibility seriously. I strongly urge the Committee to reject measures that are not evidence-based and to engage directly with the shooting community before finalising changes that will unfairly penalise thousands of citizens who have done nothing wrong.

I am available to appear before the Committee at a public hearing and would welcome the opportunity to elaborate on any of the above points.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Christopher Thomas Nipperess

ACT Firearms Licence Holder