



# Submission cover sheet

## Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

Submission : 072.1

Submitter: Ian Coombes

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## Submission to the Inquiry on the Firearms (Public Safety) Bill 2026

### Recommendations

1. That further loss of public confidence in the political parties, and their parliamentary members, be avoided by not sinking to the corruption inherent in the ACT government punishing law abiding people rather than admit that the disaster of the Bondi massacre was the result of government administrative failure; not law-abiding recreational firearms owners, or the current legislation.
2. Recognise the mis-direction of Premier Minns and Prime Minister Albanese in seeking to categorise recreational firearms owners with criminals and terrorists; and 'grandfather' current numbers and types of firearms held.
3. Establish a clearance process with ASIO and ACIC so as to enable holdings above 10 by security clearance of the applicant on the 11<sup>th</sup> application, in a similar manner to clearance processes within official circles from the bottom up through Secret and beyond. This can be done by amendment to the new Clause 52A (1)(a) ii to the effect that the registrar would readily extend subject to a security review of the applicant. There is no rational benefit in nominating any particular number of firearms a recreational firearms owner may have. Such a person has already been security cleared by the police, who issue the gun licence, and should be by ASIO and ACIC. The ACT should join with Queensland, Tasmania and Northern Territory to not limit the number of firearms a licensee may hold, but perhaps review security clearance in regard to numbers above 10. As well as the breadth of interest of a licensee, where a family is involved, the juniors cannot own a firearm, so their firearms have to be held under the name of a parent. As can be seen from the tables in the text below, people with an interest in several forms of hunting and target shooting will have a good reason to hold 20 or more firearms, which is common amongst the people keenly interested in recreational firearms activities. Focusing on the number 10 does not make sense but may meet perceived obligations to the National Cabinet agreement and allay fears in regard to possible criminal or terrorist connections. NSW and WA are not in any sense model jurisdictions.
4. Neither is there any merit in amendment to the Act in regard to ammunition holdings.
5. Nominated magazine capacity of firearms is sensible for the future, but holdings that include tubular magazines should be grandfathered. Tubular magazines are a fixed component of the firearm, and are not quick to reload. They mostly include .22 rimfire rifles (Marlin 1897, Marlin 39a 1939, Browning BL22 1969, Winchester 9422 1972). Some centrefire lever action rifles with tubular

magazines of greater capacity than 10 may also be in current holdings. Pump action .22 rimfire rifles are mostly also old designs.

6. Neither is there any merit in increasing the requirement for number of activities licence holders must participate in annually. A man whose family is not interested in hunting or target shooting, needs to support his exhausted wife and their young children, so he will barely be able to leave the family at all for years, but his ability to get out hunting or target shooting when he can will be a very important mental health factor.
7. The 1992 ACT firearms Act, used to develop the current national legislation, set aside the participation in any specific number of shooting activities for office bearers in the shooting associations, in recognition that office bearers tend to have a heavy workload for shooting, and are demonstrating their genuine interest. This should be included in the current legislation.
8. Establish an automated search function of other jurisdiction firearm registries, by a highly secure process, so that the names and addresses of gun licence holders cannot be leaked to thieves or organised criminals. This is to enable the National Firearms Register function agreed 30 years ago, while minimising cost and risk of the whole scheme.
9. Cyber attack has been minimised in the ACT by keeping records separate from the internet. This should continue, and indeed be established in other jurisdictions, with a highly secure automated function established for searches on particular individuals as required, and a search of the police data base on people known in relation to crime or terrorism, or people considered medically unfit to hold a driver's licence, relevant to safe use of a firearm, to avoid issuing them a gun licence, subject to organised assistance.
10. A gun licence not be issued to a person (including a family member) who is living in the same premises as a person known to police in regard to terrorism or crime.
11. A high level of security clearance should be required of all staff who work in the firearms registry. The need for this is highlighted by recent media information on the corruption that is rife in the ACT jail. It was concerning to read in the press recently of specific numbers of firearms held by individuals in specified suburbs of Sydney. This raises questions about security of the data in NSW.
12. Gun clubs be required to affiliate with one of the national recreational shooting organisations to minimise the risk of 'special interest' clubs that could be, or become, a risk in relation to criminal or terrorist activities. A branch liaison officer would be appointed in the national organisation, preferably a person with a security background, of whom there are a number in shooting organisations in the ACT.
13. Requirement that Ministries consult with recreational firearms owner organisations on any proposed relevant legislation or regulation changes, be enshrined in the amendments. As Australians, including parliamentarians,

police and public servants, increasingly get their news and opinions on their mobile telephones, the depth of their knowledge will decrease. It is critical to our democracy, and indeed our political stability as we have seen in dealing with the aftermath of the Bondi massacre, that governments are well advised with in-depth current information. This is best done by openly consulting with expert groups in the community, rather than relying on increased numbers of staff in Ministerial offices, and in Departments, who are expected to quickly appear to be experts on everything.

14. Any 'straight pull' or pump action specific legislation or regulations not apply to air guns or .22 rimfire rifles. The power of these products is so low as to not be a serious risk in criminal or terrorist activities. If they have a straight pull mechanism it will make no measurable difference to their lethality. For example, the rifles used in Olympic Biathlon events include straight pull actions and the Browning T Bolt .22 rimfire rifle is a high-quality rifle that has been on the market for over 50 years and is not a realistic risk greater than any other bolt action .22 rimfire rifle. Delete from the Bill straight pull exception to rimfire rifles in Category A, and delete its addition to Category C. Centrefire straight pull action rifles manufactured before 1946 should be grandfathered. They are rare and held by few enthusiasts. They include the 1903 Ross Rifle and 1891 Swiss Schmidt Rubin).
15. Centrefire straight pull rifles and shotguns be raised to category C licence agreed. Category C should be changed to refer to a person of a higher security clearance, whether the firearm is to be used for hunting or target purposes. Current holdings be grandfathered. The difference in lethality of these actions compared to standard turn bolt actions is mostly a matter of perception. This perception may be significant in the mind of criminal or terrorist minded people. Such people should not have a gun licence currently. If ACIC or ASIO is concerned about a licence holder, the licence should be withdrawn. Audi alteram partem related issues can perhaps be settled by legislating that a Registrar's action be referred to the Commonwealth Ombudsman for determination binding on all parties, without giving reasons.
16. "Poachers guns" with easily removed and re-attached or folding butt stocks be left restricted as is in the current legislation.
17. Prohibition of automatic cocking and release by a button is supported.
18. Removal of semi-automatic air guns from Category A, is questionable given the low lethality of them, but if that is persisted with, then they should be included in Category C, and allow target shooting as a reason within Category C (for example, would CO2 powered airguns be defined as "semi-automatic"?).
19. An appeal process needs to remain at a tribunal level, because these matters are initially beneath the justification for expense of the full Supreme Court, and the NSW limitation to the police reviewing themselves is a non-sequitur. The

Victorian appeal process is a guide to good governance wherein procedural fairness is exercised.

20. Given the multi-cultural tensions, and organised crime, we have, there may be a situation at the appeal level where police or other agencies hold information that they do not want to alert an applicant to, or of its existence. That appears to be currently well dealt with. However, given that security issues in relation to the licence holder at Bondi appear to have involved a judgement element, perhaps the way to deal with this is to involve the Commonwealth Ombudsman to determine if the registrar's proposed action is reasonable and proportionate to overcome the application of audi alteram partum.
21. Firearms registries to organise access to high level mental health skills to enable empathetic but sound decisions in regard to gun licence issues.
22. The intention of the Amendment to not vary the licence renewal period from 5 years be maintained.
23. Internet content providers and carriers be banned from promulgating and carrying information on bomb making and three-dimensional printing of firearms and their parts, except among gunsmiths and educational bodies. The amendment appears to not address the responsibility of the carriers in regard to denying public presentation of the information, only the holding by a person. Inclusion here will bring pressure on the federal government to act on it. If that is not done, then the ACT Chief Minister should write to the Prime Minister seeking action on it.
24. Citizenship be a requirement to apply for a gun licence, with the exception of New Zealanders. New Zealand readily licenses Australians while they are in New Zealand.
25. Migrants who are known to police in regard to hate speech, or a terrorist or criminal offence with an incarceration period over 12 months, be reported to the Commonwealth for deportation after revoking their visa or citizenship. This will require that Australia readily accept back any of our own citizens from foreign countries, in the tradition of rules based and equitable, dignified government.
26. Adequate policing of migrant enclaves be expedited. We should learn from the experience of crime growing above acceptability in the Chinese, Italian and Vietnamese migrant enclaves in the past, to the point where two NSW parliamentarians were murdered. European countries have suffered such stress from excessive migration and inadequate policing of Middle Eastern migrants in recent years that riots have occurred. We surely must act now to avoid our society sinking to this level of stress and disharmony. Similarly organised crime must be more effectively policed to avoid the levels of death and injury in Canberra and close surrounds in recent years caused by organised criminal activities. These activities have nothing to do with law abiding recreational firearms owners, or the number of firearms they hold.

27. Storage and carriage requirements are adequate so they should not be varied in amendments. Recreational firearms are never “on the street” under the current Act.
28. As an associated action with this Public Safety Bill, the Chief Minister write to the Prime Minister requesting that Customs more thoroughly inspect containers importing goods (currently only 7%?) to reduce the quantities of illicit firearms being imported as well as illicit drugs and tobacco, and thereby increase public safety in the Australian Capital Territory.
29. Care should be taken in any amendments to ensure that unlicensed people continue to be allowed to receive training in preparation for licence application.
30. Provision needs to be maintained in the legislation for an executor of an estate to lawfully dispose of the firearms. A shorter time scale is accepted.

### **Basic principles**

We start from a position of seeking to maximise personal and community safety. Consideration of the interests of others, the basis of ‘human rights’ concepts, is essential in good government. That consideration must be taken into account in the legislative response to the Bondi massacre in relation to all parties, including recreational firearms owners, as a step to improve the dignity of legislators and their standing with thinking electors.

At the same time, it is similarly important to recognise that we are all in a minority in some aspect of our lives. Consideration of others is an axiom in avoiding the risk that democracy, the will of the majority, can be the greatest tyranny of all, because there is no other authority to appeal to.

The Bill is a commendable advance on the rushed NSW and federal legislation that has been enacted since the Bondi massacre. The decisions made at the foolishly rushed National Cabinet meeting after the Bondi massacre were poorly informed, not even relying on the WA recently enacted changes. These decisions taken off the top of the head set out to vilify and penalise the people most interested in recreational firearms ownership. Such people are, on reasonable, measured consideration, the people most unlikely to offend and lose access to this important facet of their lives.

The first priority in human endeavour is to do no harm. Much of the tenor NSW legislative response to the Bondi massacre aims to harm law abiding recreational firearms owners, for no benefit.

The ACT Bill largely takes that axiom into account, and has been moderated in comparison with NSW.

It is disappointing, however, that it has apparently been considered appropriate, or politically expedient, to accept the lead of Premier Minns in his inexperienced, off the top of his head reaction, to blame Australian recreational firearms owners for a Middle Eastern terrorist act on Australian soil; and to seek to treat Australian law-abiding recreational firearms owners as the problem and future risk in terrorism. A reasonable person is unlikely to concur with this.

**NSW and Federal legislation fails to achieve intended objective and appears likely to have a perverse outcome**

Even more disappointing was the Prime Minister weighing into public discourse in support, and limiting his legislative action to the risk of Muslims and Jews in damaging social cohesion in Australia, and specifically seeking to vilify Australian recreational firearms owners as essentially the clear risk to our community. A growing number of people appear to be showing in political polls that they disagree with this.

The British parliament is currently considering reduction of the influence of Lords in the parliament. It is surprising that at the same time the Australian government sees landholders as having a greater likely use of firearms than hunters and target shooters. Surely we have moved on from baronial times when landholders were above all others in society? It is to the credit of the Nationals that Members, including the new leader, spoke to question the benefit of targeting recreational firearms owners in the legislation rushed through parliament.

The Prime Minister followed this with inviting the Israeli President to Australia, knowing that a high proportion of the migrant, and broader Australian population, consider him a war criminal. I am thankful that he got out of the country alive and without injury, so we are not subject to even worse division and trauma than that visit has caused.

The NSW police have disgraced themselves in bashing demonstrators with the clear vision broadcast into every TV screen. That loss of confidence in our police cannot be retrieved.

Bullying legislation through both Houses of our federal parliament in one day with inadequate time for our parliamentarians to examine and weigh the elements of it, has led to the most serious dissension in parliament in living history. It has not in any sense improved cohesion, or reduced discord.

It has done nothing to improve the safety of the community in the firearms related debate, and has enacted a Clayton's hate speech element.

The preachers who have been the core culprits have not been legally barred from referring to murderous, brutal, derogatory, racist, misogynous tracts in their religious texts. Australian values stated in regard to visa applications, should have been clearly enacted in the NSW and federal Bondi legislative response, and should be used in any

ACT “hate speech” legislation. As it is, the focus of the legislation will be on ordinary citizens possibly considered to have spoken too frankly about people damaging cohesion in our community. This is the opposite of what the legislation should be achieving. It is a simplistic, rushed solution which broadly fails to achieve its intended impact, and appears likely to have a perverse outcome.

### **Appropriate ACT legislative response**

The Muslim religion has been the base problem and cause of terrorism that we are aiming to deal with. Religions need to be put back in their place in Australia, as a personal, private matter, not to be imposed on others, and not bring harm to others. Long ago leading political observers and thinkers agreed, in the light of terrorist acts by the public, and governments (Spanish Inquisition, Henry VIII, and such), that religion and state matters need to be kept quite separate.

Any reference to any religious text that supports disruption of harmony in society, or harm to others must be banned under ACT hate speech legislation. A migrant found guilty of such reference to be stripped of his/her visa or citizenship and be deported. Australian born perpetrators to be incarcerated.

Cease all reference to migrant “communities” in Australia, before we face the social disharmony migrants are perpetrating in the UK. Return to referring to migrants as “New Australians”, with the German style legislation requiring integration within one year, as defined by passing a spoken and written test in English language, and being able to demonstrate employment sufficient to maintain the person.

### **ACT legislative response in regard to recreational firearms ownership**

The NSW and federal actions obviously bring pressure onto the ACT jurisdiction.

However, Queensland, Tasmanian and Northern Territory governments have already declared that they do not intend to take any action on the number of firearms a law-abiding recreational firearms owner may have. The WA legislation at least explicitly appreciates that a primary producer who also has an interest in target shooting may have good reason to have 20 firearms. The decision by those jurisdictions not to follow lock-step with Premier Minns recognises that the recreational firearms legislation has worked very well for 30 years, and would, on the face of it, have continued to safeguard us if the National Firearms Registry had been established as was agreed. If it had functioned in effectively storing ASIO advice and presenting it to staff when the family applied for a gun licence, the massacre may have been avoided.

If issues of judgement were involved then a potential second measure of the safety of a decision would be to seek an assessment from the Commonwealth Ombudsman to determine if the registrar’s proposed action is reasonable and proportionate to overcome the application of audi alteram partem. The Queensland Premier has made

quite clear that the focus in Queensland will be on ensuring the terrorists, criminals and the mentally dangerous do not get access to any firearms. Other states have indicated a lack of enthusiasm for key elements of the Minns/Albanese response, and so far, reserved their position.

This puts the ACT in a key position to lead the country on a sound, measured response to the terrorist act.

This Bill is the least important action in safeguarding the Australian community that is needed in the light of the Bondi massacre. The risk is that it will do significant damage to the interests of law-abiding recreational firearms owners and the small businesses that support them, for no benefit; and delude the broader public into thinking that something useful has been done about terrorism, criminal and mental health dangers.

Other issues do need to be carefully considered and addressed to achieve the intended impact of actually increasing public safety.

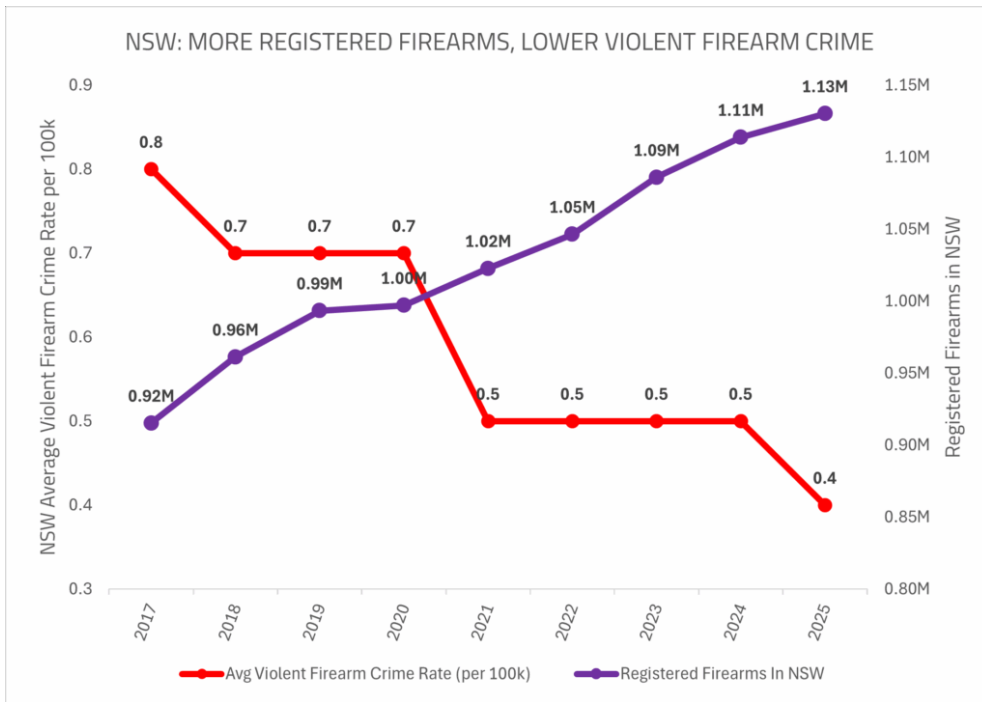
### **Avoid harm**

A fundamental requirement is that legislation and action must not interfere with free speech and the acceptance of critical thinking and expression in our democracy.

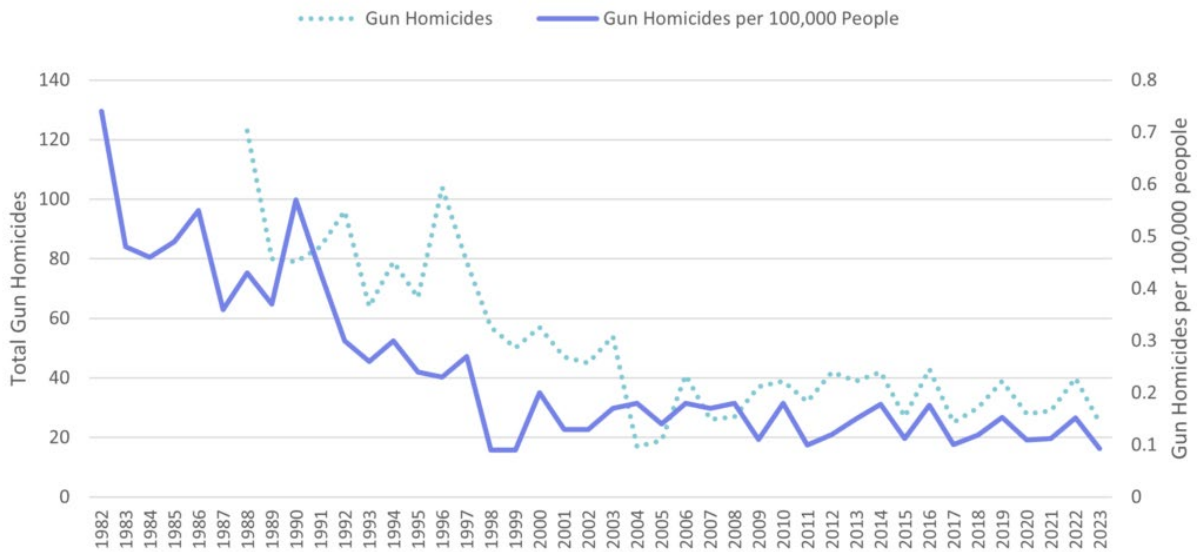
Governments must also avoid bringing harm on recreational firearms owners and misleading the public about the benefit of bringing further harsh restrictions on them. They have already been cleared by police before being issued a gun licence. They should also be cleared by ASIO and ACIC, if that has not already been done. While these clearances are proceeding an applicant for a gun licence is already going through an education and examination process on safe handling, the law in relation to handling firearms and basic competence in their use, before police issue a licence. This process generally takes a number of months. The casually interested tend to drop out/be weeded out.

**Our legislation has a European base, not American, and has been successful**

The current Australian legislation is based on the approach taken in Sweden and similar European countries where recreational firearms ownership has worked well. Indeed, military firearms are held in virtually all households in Switzerland, after the person responsible for them has had the required military training and remains responsible for defence of the country. Crime with those firearms is so low that it is not recorded as a separate category. Crime with firearms continues to fall in Australia.



**Gun Homicides in Australia**



### **Numbers of firearms a gun licensee may hold**

Nominating specific numbers of firearms that recreational firearms owners may own and use significantly damages the recreational benefit of a great many people who have this interest, but does not advance public safety. A terrorist, criminal or mentally deranged person only needs one weapon, of any kind, to cause harm – whether a car as we have seen in Melbourne, a home-made bomb, knives and machetes as we see every week, a blunt instrument, and more commonly according to statistics bare hands or some other means; or on rare occasions (murder twice in the last 30 years in the ACT), one firearm. About two women a week are murdered in Australia in domestic circumstances.

In regard to hunting, where NSW has limited ownership to four/five firearms the impact on a person with a wide interest in hunting is heavy, unreasonable, impractical and probably deleterious to their ability to hunt humanely. For example, a .22 rimfire will be needed for rabbits, and a shotgun suitable for shooting rabbits in tussocky country, such as the southern tablelands surrounding Canberra; the shotgun preferred for ducks may be different to the one preferred for rabbits; a flat shooting .17 calibre centre or rimfire cartridge may be needed for foxes specifically to avoid skin damage so garments or bed covers may be made out of the skins; then perhaps a .222 or .223 centrefire rifle for flat shooting, longer distance but still very accurate shooting of larger pests, including kangaroos where a permit to reduce over-population has been issued; a larger, higher powered cartridge is generally appropriate for goats and pigs, such as .243 (6mm), or larger, which does not have so much recoil as to be a problem for the hunter but is adequately effective on these medium sized animals; whereas larger animals such as deer justify a more powerful cartridge (legal minimum for sambar deer in Victoria is .270 for humane reasons) and many people feel better equipped for humane reasons and so as to be more sure of finding the animal in the dense bush by using a more powerful cartridge in the .30 calibre or above; and to hunt water buffalo or camels a more powerful rifle again above .40 calibre will often be preferred.

People have varying capacity to absorb recoil and noise from firearms so this will be significant in their selection of hunting firearms, as well as weight. In particular circumstances, such as hunting feral pigs in lignum or other remote circumstances a rifle with a 10 shot magazine and open/peep sights rather than telescopic sights may be preferred, and such a rifle may be preferable in close bush shooting such as sambar hunting. This would be a preferred addition to another rifle which may be used for the same animals in different circumstances, particularly where longer, more accurate shots are likely to be needed.

The people who have this broader interest are the most dedicated, and least likely to have criminal or terrorist intent. Many of them will also take vacations by hunting overseas. These people, deeply interested in this recreation, will probably have very

expensive firearms, including the highest quality timber in stocks in some of their firearms. They will not want to use those firearms in bad weather or where the appearance may be damaged so they may want to duplicate various rifles with stainless steel metal work and fibre glass stocks.

It is not legal to borrow firearms under current legislation, so a person wanting to test the suitability of a firearm or its functional quality for his/her interest has to buy it, and register it. Until the person has made a decision on whether to continue use of that firearm, there will in many cases, be duplication of the firearm in his/her holding. Some people will want to keep one or more firearms for sentimental reasons, either through heritage or earlier memories. This may involve duplication. It will have no bearing on risk to the community.

Such people will very likely also shoot one or more forms of target shooting to keep their co-ordination up, and keep in practise, as well as enjoy the sociability of range shooting. These people are more likely to have around 20 or more firearms than a lesser number. This is a major life interest for them. They are not any more risk to the community than any other normal law-abiding person.

This will similarly be the case for keen rifle and shotgun target shooters. There is significant cross-over between rifle and shotgun shooters, so again the dedicated, keen people in these fields will have in the order of 20 or more firearms.

Punishing these people by fiat declaring they are not allowed to go on enjoying the range of their recreational activities in a peaceful, lawful manner will yield no benefit. It would reduce their faith in our political system, and the political affiliations of the people responsible for such a fiat. In a high proportion of cases these people are capable, successful people, which has enabled them to afford the range of their interests. They are amongst our best, most productive citizens. Putting so much effort into punishing them is a gross misplacement of political priorities.

### **Target shooting**

Target shooting is more an intellectual recreation than a physical one. People have to be reasonably fit to hold up the firearm, but the greater part of the competition is in measuring performance against one's own previous performance, and the level one aspires to. After the mastery of the basic techniques, the greater part of the performance, and what makes a champion, is in psychological strength, precision and endurance

Australian women shooters have performed particularly well in the Olympic and Commonwealth Games, and World Championships. We have an Olympic Gold Medallist in the Canberra/Queanbeyan area who would have developed her skills partly in Canberra, as her father was a stalwart of a Canberra club.

Some of our dedicated pistol shooters have in the order of 20 pistols because of the breadth of their interest in pistol events, and the wish to have duplicates in order to avoid being put out of a competition through mechanical breakdown.

There are few other fields of sport, perhaps apart from fishing, where three generations of a family can compete, shoulder to shoulder on fairly even terms, no matter the gender.

Closer attention to the reality of recreational firearms ownership and use, as outlined above, indicates that attack on recreational shooters will have a negative impact on Australian society. Target shooting is the most important, or only, social contact many people have. Limiting participation, and that social contact, by nominating the number of firearms a person can have through random numerical specification heaps significant stress on people with a deep interest in recreational firearms activities. Reducing social contact is well known as a serious factor in deteriorating mental health in our society.

The unfairness and silliness of the political attack have brought about a notable increase in the applications for a gun licence since December 2025. The following list of competitions (not comprehensive), and firearms appropriate to these activities, indicates how foolish the knee jerk reactions of some politicians and inner-city interferers has been.

<b>SSAA Discipline</b>	<b>Firearms Required</b>
Air Rifle	2
Air Rifle Field Target	8
Benchrest	12
Big Game Rifle	22
Combined Service Discipline	21
Fly Shoot	3
Gallery Rifle	5 *
Handgun Silhouette	16
Lever Action	3 *
Muzzle Loading	24
Rifle Metallic Silhouette	13 *
Shotgun	4
*Denotes a discipline that loses access to matches due to law change in NSW, while others will require a more informed consideration in administration of the Act.	

Match	Firearm Required	Sights Required
<b>Air Rifle</b>		
10m Indoor	Any .177 Air Rifle	Any Sight
10m International	Any .177 Air Rifle	Peep Sights
<b>Air Rifle Field Target</b>		
International	Any Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 12FPE (16.27J)	Scoped
International Springer	Manual Spring Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 12FPE (16.27J)	Scoped
Field Target Open	Any Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped
Field Target Open Springer	Manual Spring Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped
Field Target Open HP	Any Air rifle, muzzle energy can exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped
Field Target Springer HP	Manual Spring Air rifle, muzzle energy can exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped
<b>Benchrest</b>		
Experimental/Unlimited Benchrest	Centrefire Rifle-No weight restrictions barrel must be at least 18 inches long	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Light Benchrest Centrefire Class	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 4.763kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Sporter Benchrest Centrefire Class	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 4.082kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Heavy Benchrest Centrefire Class	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 6.123kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Light Benchrest Rimfire	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle-Weight must not exceed 3.515kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Heavy Benchrest Rimfire	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle-Weight must not exceed 6.350kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Centrefire Light Hunter Class	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 4.763kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Centrefire Heavy Hunter Class	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 6.123kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Light Rimfire Hunter Class	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle-Weight must not exceed 3.515kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Heavy Rimfire Hunter Class	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle-Weight must not exceed 6.350kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Sub Class-International Rimfire Benchrest (IRB)	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle-Weight must not exceed 6.350kg	Telescopic sights-power unrestricted
Air Rifle Benchrest	Any Air Rifle .177/.22 cal <i>Competition pellets only maximum .22 calibre.</i>	Scoped

<b>Big Game Rifle</b>		
Pistol	Howdah Pistol – smooth or ball rifling, min calibre.375.	Factory
<b>Rifles</b>		
Group One	Min Calibre .330, Min Energy 2,900 ft/lbs.	Any Sight
Group Two	Min Calibre .400, Min Energy 3,900 ft/lbs.	Any Sight
Group Three	Min Calibre .500, Min Energy 5,300 ft/lbs.	Any Sight
Black Powder Express	Min Calibre .400.	Factory Open Sight
Stalking Double Rifle	Min Calibre .228	Any Sight
Stopping Double Rifle	Min Calibre .400. (Group Two)	Any Sight
Bore Guns and Rifles	Min 16 Bore.	Factory Open Sight
African Plains	Min 6.5 mm to 8mm Magnums	Any Sight
Light Black Powder (1)	Min 360 calibre. (Categories Military and Sporting).	Any Sight
Light Black Powder (2)	Min 450 to 577 calibre. (Categories Military and Sporting).	Any Sight
Classic Cartridge Pre 1939	Cartridge introduced Pre 1939, min .228 calibre.	Any Sight
Classic Light Nitro	Cartridge and Rifle Pre 1939, min .228 calibre.	Any Sight
Light Nitro	Min .224 Centrefire.	Any Sight
Rook and Rabbit Rifle (1)	Cartridge Introduced pre-1905.	Any Sight
Rook and Rabbit Rifle (2)	Cartridge Introduced pre-1905, Rifle pre-1940.	Any Sight
Pot Rifle	.22 Rimfire and .22 Magnum.	Any Sight
Kangaroo Rifle	Min .40 calibre, max case 1.45 long	Any Sight
Slug Gun	Min 20 Gauge.	Any Sight
Lever action	Any Lever action without a removable magazine.	Any Sight
Mannlicher	Any Mannlicher made Rifle.	Any Sight
Single Shot	Any Single shot Rifle.	Any Sight
<b>Combined Service Discipline</b>		
<b>Pistol</b>		
Class 1	Defence	As Issued
Class 2	Law Enforcement	As Issued
Class 3	Modified/Open	Factory/Modified
Class 4	Rimfire (.22LR)	Factory
Class 5	Black Powder	Factory
Class 6	Tactical Pistol (Issued with optics)	Issued Optics
Pre 46	Older WW2 and earlier	As issued

<b>Rifles</b>		
Class A	Close Range / barrel less than 21 inches / carbines. (100m typical usage)	Open Sights
Class B	Medium Range (200-300m) usage rifles. May be bolt or lever action.	Open Sights
Class C	Long Range (500m) typical usage, long barrelled, antique rifles.	Open Sights
Class D	Breech loading, single shot rifles.	Open Sights
Class E	Muzzle loading single shot rifles.	As Issued
Class F1	Vintage Sniper Rifles pre-1 Jan 1946.	As Issued
Class F2	Historical Sniper Rifles after 2 Jan 1946 to 1 Jan 1991.	As Issued
Class T	Precision Service Rifles with Optics from 2 Jan 1991 to Present Day.	Optics Permitted
Class H	Modified / accurised Rifles (Standard Service Rifles with heavy barrels and target sights).	Peep Sights
Class J	Modified/ accurised rifles fitted with telescopic sights.	Optics permitted
Class IO	International Optic Class rifles – service calibre firearms to facilitate international competition with New Zealand primarily.	up to 4 power optics
Class OS	Optical Standard Class – any A, B, C, D, E Class rifle	max 4.5 power telescopic
Class TR	Historical Training Rifles such as .22 trainers and .310 Cadet Rifles.	As Issued
Class TR2	Training Rifles approved after 1 Jan 1970.	Factory
<b>Fly Shoot</b>		
Heavy Centrefire	Unlimited Weight for 1 person	All optics
Light Centrefire	7.7Kg Weight limit	All Optics
Rimfire	.22LR and 7.7kg weight limit	All Optics
<b>Gallery Rifle/Shotgun</b>		
Gallery Rifle Centrefire Standard	Pistol Calibre Lever action with a tube magazine	Scoped/Red Dot
Gallery Rifle Centrefire Classic	Pistol Calibre Lever action with a tube magazine, iron sights and factory style stocks.	Iron sights
Gallery Rifle Centrefire Open	Pistol calibre firearms that do not meet GRCF standard rules. Eg Lever action with detachable magazines	Any sighting system
Manually operated Rimfire	Any Manually operated Rimfire rifle in .22LR	Any sighting system
Manually operated Shotgun	Any manually operated shotgun e.g. Straight pull, lever action or button release firearms	Any Sighting system

<b>International Handgun Metallic Silhouette</b>		
Big Bore Production	Any Production handgun	Factory
Big Bore Revolver	Any Production Revolver	Factory
Big Bore Standing	Any Production Handgun	Peep Sights
Big Bore Unlimited	Any Handgun	Peep Sights
Big Bore Standing	Any Handgun	Peep Sights
Big Bore Unlimited Any Sights	Any Handgun	Any Sight
Smallbore Production	Any Smallbore Production handgun	Factory
Smallbore Revolver	Any Smallbore Production Revolver	Factory
Smallbore Standing	Any Smallbore Production Handgun	Peep Sights
Smallbore Unlimited	Any Smallbore Handgun	Peep Sights
Smallbore Unlimited Standing	Any Smallbore Handgun	Peep Sights
Smallbore Unlimited Any Sights	Any Smallbore Handgun	Any Sight
Field Pistol Production	Any Handgun	Factory
Field Pistol Any Sights	Any Handgun	Any Sight
Unlimited Half Scale	Any Handgun	Peep Sights
Unlimited Half Scale Any Sights	Any Handgun	Any Sight
All the Olympic fields of handgun competition are in addition to these, and are generally also shot on SSAA ranges in the ACT, as well as Pistol Australia ranges. Other international handgun events are also shot on the SSAA ranges in the ACT.		
<b>Lever Action</b>		
Rimfire	Any Rimfire Lever Action Rifle	Peep Sights
Centrefire	Any Centrefire Lever Action Rifle	Peep Sights
Classic Calibre	Any Traditional Calibre Lever Action Rifle	Factory Sights
<b>Muzzle Loading</b>		
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 1	Revolver Cap & Ball Class 1	As original design for type of revolver

Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 3	Revolver Cap & Ball Class 3	Any adjustable iron sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 2	Pistol single shot, patch & Ball. Class 2	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 3	Pistol single shot, patch & Ball. Class 3	Any adjustable iron sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol Firelock	Flintlock pistol single shot, patch & Ball, smooth bore	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol Firelock	Flintlock pistol single shot, patch & Ball, rifled bore	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol Firelock	Flintlock pistol single shot, patch & Ball, rifled or smooth bore	Any adjustable iron sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol Firelock	Wheellock pistol single shot, patch & Ball, smooth bore	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol Firelock	Wheellock pistol single shot, patch & Ball, rifled bore	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol Matchlock	Matchlock pistol single shot, patch & Ball, smooth bore	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Tanagashima	Matchlock Musket Standing unsupported	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Hizadai	Matchlock Musket Kneeling	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Musket	Flintlock/Percussion Musket Standing Unsupported	No rear sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Musket Open	Flintlock/Percussion Musket Standing Unsupported	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Military Rifle	As issued Minie type Rifle, 54 – 58 cal. Class 1, bench rest, prone, Standing Unsupported	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Traditional Rifle	Civilian type rifle patch & Ball, any cal. Class 2, Benchrest, Xsticks, Standing Unsupported	Any adjustable iron sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Flintlock Rifle	Civilian type rifle patch & Ball, any cal. class 4 Prone, Xsticks, Standing Unsupported	As original design for type of firearm

Black Powder Muzzle Loading Vetterli Rifle	Any Muzzle Loading Rifle, any cal. class 3 Standing Unsupported	Any sight not click adjustable.
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Benchrest	Any Muzzle Loading Rifle, any cal. Benchrest class 3	Any sight not click adjustable.
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Whitworth Rifle	Any Muzzle Loading Rifle, any cal. Prone Unsupported class 3	Any sight not click adjustable.
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Shotgun	Cartridge shotgun with exposed hammers, either single or double barrel 11 to 14g	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Shotgun	Muzzle Loading, percussion shotgun, either single or double barrel 11 to 14g	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Shotgun	Muzzle Loading, Flintlock shotgun, either single or double barrel 11 to 14g	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Cartridge	Any Single shot cartridge Rifle, any cal. Cartridge loaded with black powder Prone, benchrest, Xsticks, Standing Unsupported	Any sight adjustable.
<b>Rifle Metallic Silhouette</b>		
Air Rifle Silhouette	An Air Rifle, of any calibre less than 6.5 mm (.264), with a maximum weight of 7 kg (15 pound 6.9 ounces) including sights	Scoped
Rimfire Silhouette Rifle	22LR Rimfire, weight 4.6kg max	Scoped
Rimfire Hunting Rifle Silhouette	22LR Rimfire, weight 3.86kg max, Trigger pull is not to be less than 907 grams (2 pounds).	Scoped
Centrefire Silhouette Rifle	Centrefire rifles, weight 4.6kg Minimum 6mm calibre	Scoped
Centrefire Hunting Rifle	Centrefire rifles, weight 4.2kg max, minimum 6mm calibre, Trigger pull is not to be less than 907 grams (2 pounds).	Scoped
Lever Action Silhouette	Any Lever Action Centrefire Rifle .25 calibre or larger with a tubular magazine of original manufacture or replica thereof. A rimmed case loaded with a round or flat nosed bullet must be used. Exception: .30 Remington and 35 Remington are allowed.	Rear sights: These may be open sights, receiver or tang sights mounted as originally intended. No Olympic type sights or extended mounts are permitted. No lenses are

		permitted in rear sights Front sights: These must be a post or bead, may be hooded or if interchangeable may use post or bead inserts only.
Pistol Cartridge Lever Action Silhouette	Any Lever Action rifle with a tubular magazine. A rimmed pistol cartridge with an overall cartridge length no greater than 42mm (1.65 Inches) loaded with a round or flat nosed bullet must be used, i.e. 25-20, 32-20, 38's, 357 Magnum, 38-40, 44's, 44-40, 45 Colt, 45 Long Colt, .22 Magnum, .22 long rifle.	Rear sights: These may be open sights, receiver or tang sights mounted as originally intended. No Olympic type sights or extended mounts are permitted. No lenses are permitted in rear sights Front sights: These must be a post or bead, may be hooded or if interchangeable may use post or bead inserts only.
Smallbore Rifle Silhouette	Any Lever Action, Pump action Rimfire rifle with a tubular magazine - the rifle shall be chambered for only the .22 calibre short, long, or long rifle cartridge.	Rear sights: These may be open sights, receiver or tang sights mounted as originally intended. No Olympic type sights or extended mounts are permitted. No lenses are permitted in rear sights Front sights: These must be a post or bead, may be hooded or if interchangeable

		may use post or bead inserts only.
Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette	Single Shot rifle, cartridge and rifle designed prior to 1896 and shot with black powder or replicas thereof.	Iron Sights, any original manufactured prior to and including 1896 (or repro thereof)
Scoped Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette	Single Shot rifle, cartridge and rifle designed prior to 1896 and shot with black powder or replicas thereof.	Period correct scopes, 19.05mm (3/4") maximum body diameter no internal adjustments
Smallbore Black Powder Cartridge Rifle	Single Shot Rifles, 22LR only	Iron Sights, any original manufactured prior to and including 1896 (or repro thereof)
Scoped Smallbore Black Powder Cartridge Rifle	Single Shot Rifles, 22LR only	Period correct scopes, 19.05mm (3/4") maximum body diameter no internal adjustments
Service Rifle Silhouette	Any Centrefire Service Rifle of greater than 6mm (.243) may be used if it is "as issued" for general service by the armed forces of any nation.	Must be of original design
<b>Shotgun</b>		
Trap	Trap Configured Shotgun	Open Sight
Down the Line	DTL Configured Shotgun	Open Sight
Skeet	Skeet Configured Shotgun	Open Sight
Sporting Clays	Sporting Clays Configured Shotgun	Open Sight

### **Our current firearms legislation**

The legislation that we have in regard to recreational firearms ownership and use enacted as Firearms Acts in each state and territory after the National Firearms Agreement in 1996 is based on the legislation enacted in the ACT in 1992. That was carefully developed over 16 years with police, Attorney-General's Department and recreational firearms users contributing. It should be known as the Keith Simpson

legislation because he was the very decent and capable ACT public servant who developed it. I led the contributions from recreational firearms owners. It responded to the world as it is. It was designed to safeguard the community by bringing a range of strict disciplines on firearms owners which had proven effective over many years in Sweden.

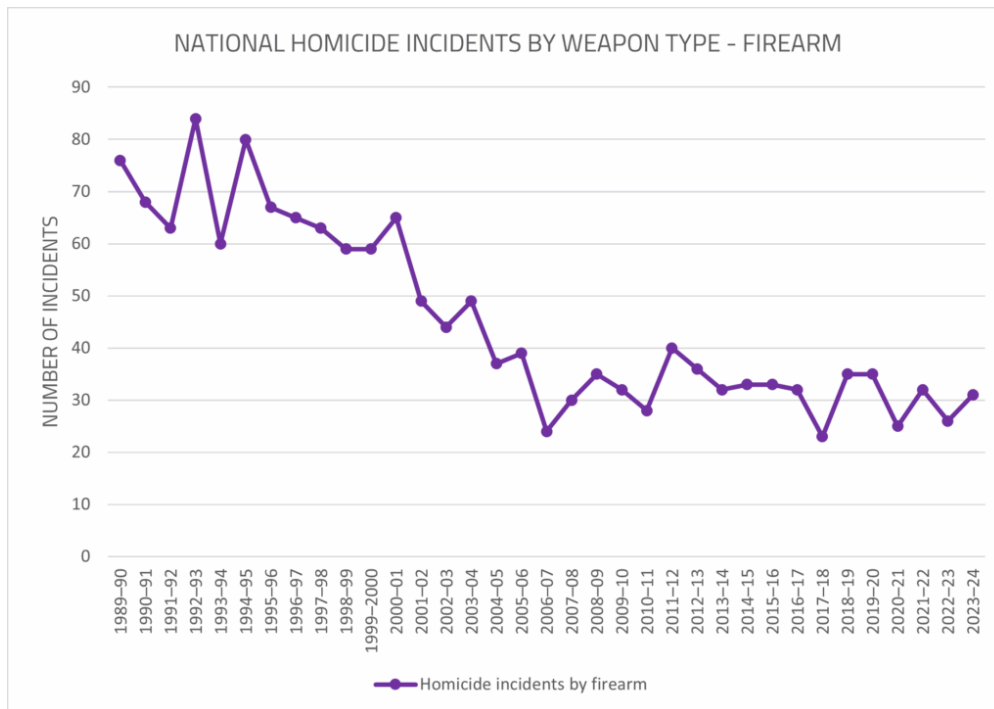
The recreational firearms owners in Sweden work closely with government in regard to all matters, and the government would not think of legislating in this field without the input and agreement of the recreational firearms owners' organisation.

The Australian legislation is deliberately very different to the American, and generally also in regard to the British, although some British elements have been dropped in by the Howard and subsequent amendments.

For 30 years this legislation has worked well in Australia. The failure in regard to the Bondi massacre was at the government administrative level.

Gun licence holders have complied with the legislation in informing themselves on safety, the law and competent use of firearms, and established strict security of firearms in approved safes. They are required to demonstrate ongoing active involvement to keep their licence. Recreational firearms owners are one of the largest groups of recorded active sporting participants in Australia.

Criminal behaviour with firearms has continued to fall, as it has for over 50 years. Even though drug based organised crime has risen alarmingly over this last 30 years. As the media regularly informs us, drive-by shooting of homes, and shooting of participants (or in a recent case allegedly the father of a young male known to police in relation to drug related crime) now occurs regularly in Australia. This failure in our dealing with organised criminals being enriched by dealing in physical and mental health damaging drugs, has not caused the flat lining or increased use of firearms in crime. Criminal use of firearms has continued to decline under current legislation, even as illicit drug related criminal use of illicit firearms appears to have risen.



### **Unity and stability of Australian society**

Up until 30 years ago Australia was sufficiently unified as a society that few restrictions were considered necessary in regard to ownership and use of firearms. The increased focus on 'multi-culturalism' has shifted migrant thinking away from immediate effort to integrate and become 'New Australians', to feeling they have rights to maintain their cultural habits and historic antagonisms in Australia. This needs to be reversed to make clear to migrants that we expect them to integrate in all respects, particularly in achieving a functional standard of written and oral English language and gaining full-time equivalent employment. Appearances and forms of speech do matter. We need to abandon 'multi-culturalism' and return to 'New Australians' as the way we think of and refer to migrants, and the expectations we have of them.

If migrants feel they have made a mistake, and that Australian culture and behaviours do not suit them, or worse, they think they have a right to try to change Australian behaviours towards the culture they came from, then we should immediately revoke their visa or citizenship, pay for their removal back to their home country, and mark their records so they are never issued a visa again.

Further reduction in tensions in Australia is needed in regard to all discord and denigration, whether among migrants or citizens, by 'hate speech' legislative action addressing all people and all matters, well beyond the Jew/Muslim issues.

### **Mental illnesses**

Until about 35 years ago people with mental illness or sub-normal mental development that indicated they may not be able to cope on their own, or they may be a danger to

themselves or to others in the community, were housed in secure government run establishments, and cared for as needed.

Then these institutions were closed, supposedly in the best interests of the inmates. They were put out on the streets. Many died, many went to jail for various reasons, many had to be cared for by family, and many were cared for by charities. Then in 1996 one of these people, who had been left in the community in Tasmania, stole a military style self-loading firearm and randomly murdered people in a restaurant.

Rather than address the issue of caring for and as necessary restraining people with mental illness or inadequate mental development, governments chose to vilify recreational firearms owners.

Mental illness is difficult to deal with in firearms ownership and use as it is not always a predictor of violence. Many people who are mentally ill benefit from the comradeship of shooting. People with PTSD from military or police service for example will likely benefit from their support group in recreational firearms activities, so excluding them may make self-harm or dangerous behaviour more likely.

High level skills are needed in making decisions in this field. Registries need to organise access to these skills.

The laws in this field as written actively discourage people from seeking help for mental health problems, possibly making the problem far worse.

Mental illness is a growing problem in our society, with grossly inadequate funding and infrastructure provided to help people and control risk to others. Significant government investment is needed, urgently.

### **Urbanisation skewing information and judgement**

Australia has for many decades been the most urban country in the world. This has skewed cultural presentation in our media towards the culture of central city areas of our capital cities.

UN data indicates that there are only about 81-83 cities in the world with a population equal to or greater than Sydney and Melbourne. These two cities are Australia's central news developers and opinion setters in our media. The academics in the centre of those two cities see themselves as Australia's social engineers. They are as far as it is possible to get from the range of life experiences across this large country, and the various environments it encompasses. The importance, value and urgency of their views are consequently greatly over-rated, and in many cases, mis-directed. This is particularly the case in relation to interaction with the natural environment and activities and life interest of people outside central city areas, including recreational firearms ownership and use.

**Decision making potential biases/need for expert input**

Our members of parliament, representing population numbers, are therefore also heavily skewed to city and central city bases. It behoves those MPs to take great care to consider their biases, rather than jump to conclusions that they automatically know best for all members of our society.

It behoves our public servants to also take great care in the advice that they give, and in the drafting of policies and legislative drafting instructions, that they consider all of the members of the community that their thinking and actions will affect.

A democracy depends heavily on all people being well informed to enable the best decisions to be made.

The central city politicians and leaders who met quickly as the National Cabinet, did not take the time, or make the effort, to consult with expert parties, aside apparently from the head of ASIO, before making statements, and decisions, post the Bondi massacre. Consequently, their statements and some of their decisions, and the direction they took in looking for people to blame (not themselves of course) were inadequately informed, and to put it in a kindly manner, inadequately balanced and directed.

We now have the time to consult and to carefully consider a balanced, and comprehensive, well directed forward view of how best to safeguard the Australian community against terrorism and crime, and to improve mental health and its management. In doing this we can avoid bringing over-bearing authoritarian legislation on any sector or field of activity of law-abiding reasonable people, in our state and territory legislative action.

**Rushed political action has failed us**

Law-abiding firearms owners throughout Australia condemn the tragedy that took place at Bondi on 14 December 2025. Under current legislation and administrative arrangements, the police should not have issued a gun licence to the perpetrators.

The immediate political reaction by Premier Minns and Prime Minister Albanese was to infer that all law-abiding recreational firearms owners are potentially as monstrous as the Muslim migrant father and Australian born son radicalised in a Middle Eastern religious fervour who carried out this atrocity.

In an emotional state Prime Minister Albanese rushed a meeting of all state and territory leaders together and pushed through agreements on actions which were not well informed, and were not carefully considered and weighed, as would have been possible with more time.

This is as irrational as bringing down punishing legislation on all motor vehicle owners in Australia after the atrocity in Melbourne where a car was driven into pedestrians.

A report by the independent integrity watchdog, the Centre for Public Integrity, has stated “Rushed, opaque or selective law-making processes risk poorer-quality laws, increase the likely influence of vested interests and further erode already fragile public trust in political institutions.” “Unfortunately, 2025 exemplified the problems of poor legislative process.”

Executive Director Catherine Williams told AAP “Most recently, the passage of the hate speech laws exemplified what we are most concerned about, with consultation and scrutiny that was grossly inadequate for such significant changes.”

Public servants were pressed to rush together hate speech laws over Christmas/New Year, which were then forced through both houses of parliament on the one day with too little time for Members to properly consider and analyse their structure, direction and completeness, and test the analysis through an appropriately broad opportunity for debate.

The Bill was so foolish in some clauses in relation to recreational firearms ownership and use, that they were withdrawn from the Bill after Members saw them. Some Members, in the limited debate, noted that punishing law-abiding recreational firearms owners was misdirected. As an indication of how corrupted our system of representative government has become, by the power of party leaders, not a single Labor or Liberal MP questioned any aspect of the rushed Bill on the floor of parliament.

Premier Minns’ top of the head response to a leading question by a young journalist that four firearms are adequate for anyone to own would not allow a common level of interest in hunting to be carried out, taking account of animal welfare, or full competition in even one discipline of target shooting for a wide variety of the fields of target shooting.

As stated above, people with a deep interest in this personally challenging form of recreation need many more firearms to enable participation in more than one small area of target shooting. In discussion among such people with a life-long interest, a more usual number of firearms owned is up around 20, or even more. The last thing these people would want is the loss of their expensive firearms through mis-use or theft. They are not a risk to the Australian community.

### **The reality of hunters in our community**

James A. Swan wrote *In Defense of Hunting*, Harper, 1995, based on degrees in conservation education, resource planning and conservation, and environmental psychology, 10 years working as a psychotherapist and another 10 years as a teacher of therapists.

He noted that Dr Stephen Kellet of Yale University identified three categories of hunters in the USA:

1. Meat hunters (45.5%)
2. Recreational hunters (38.5%), who enjoy spending time out in the natural environment, the skill of stalking the animal, and sociability with other hunters.
3. Nature hunters (17%) enjoy being outside and have a deep affection, respect and reverence for nature. Hunting is a sacred act equal to or above religion.

Hunters were the original conservators, and continue to have a deep interest in the health and balance of our natural environments. Apart from governments, they contribute the most money to the maintenance of natural environments, and the most time.

Rather than being a risk to society, recreational firearms ownership is in fact an important field of mental health and social cohesion. It is the cheapest, most humane and least environmentally damaging means of controlling feral animal populations. Some Australian inner-city academics persist in referencing one another to claim that recreational hunters are useless in feral animal control, while every other developed country recognises their importance. Statistics are now being collected in some states that demonstrate a higher success than expensive government aerial shooting activities. For example, in Victoria the Game Management Authority estimated from survey results that 167,600 deer were harvested in 2024 by licensed recreational deer hunters, a 22% increase on 2023 (137,100) and 83% rise on the long term average from 2009 (91,100). More female sambar and fallow deer (the main species) were harvested than male. Inner city self-styled social engineers claim recreational hunters only target trophies and therefore make no useful impact on population numbers. While hunting has traditionally been a male field of interest, it is increasingly attracting women and families.

This increasing family interest will have been an element in the increased ownership of firearms over the last 30 years. Other causes are the approximately 53% increase in population since 1996 (18.3m to 28m) and the increase in target ranges and quality of their facilities. Public land has also been opened to hunting to enable reduction and control of feral pests and big game hunting of deer (regarded by many as feral pests).

The government poisoning of feral animals that occurs is far more inhumane than shooting, or even trapping. The secondary effects of 1080 poisoning of rabbits has wiped out the populations of other ungulates and their predators (eagles and other birds of prey particularly). Australia and New Zealand are the only developed countries to my knowledge that still allow the use of 1080. It is monofluoroacetate, commonly named 1080 because one part in 1080 parts of water will kill an adult human, and is dreadfully inhumane. It was developed for military purposes. These inner-city academics and well-meaning followers apparently have no conscience about what they do not see.

A Canberra Times telephone poll reported on 20 April 2024 found that 38% of respondents favoured opening national parks to recreational hunters for feral animal control in the ACT, while 50% opposed and 12% were unsure. It is a fair expectation that if the public is properly informed of the conditions under which this hunting would occur, including qualifying similarly to the R licence in NSW and membership of a national recreational shooting organisation, and that similar access has been available in Victoria for decades with excellent results of feral animals removed at no cost to tax payers, it is likely that majority support would be reported. Particularly if they are informed of the dreadful death that the 1080 alternative causes.

Mental health and social cohesion are enhanced by the code of ethics, guidance and monitoring of the Australian national recreational firearms associations. These associations monitor their members, and guard their standing in the community very carefully. Almost all recreational firearms owners are a member of at least one of these associations.

“Carl Jung concluded that the healthy, primal symbols of the unconscious are the symbols of nature. He said that “he who is rooted in the soil endures”. Freud in his *Civilisation and its Discontents* concluded that in modern society there is a tendency to pave over the inner world as much as the outer world and to deny our unconscious. The relationship between the denial of unconscious energies and the symbols of illness has now been well documented.”

“Abraham Maslow found that a common quality of self-actualised people was a love for nature.” (Swan)

Psychologically you are happiest when you eat a diet that is best for your health. For most people this is a meat-based diet.

Hunting is quite different to bushwalking. Bushwalking tends to be a social outing. They get up casually and begin walking well after sunrise, walk through the middle of the day and make camp well before dark. They see very few animals. Hunters position themselves very quietly in the dark to see their quarry as dawn breaks before the animals bed down for the day. To the extent that hunters move at the same time as bushwalkers, they tend to examine the environment for sign of animal movements. Hunters are then most active in the closing period of the day as animals become active, until dark.

Swan notes that in learning to work with nature, the hunter must develop a good deal of knowledge about the animals, and an acute empathy with them; he must develop a feeling for them, which is a reflection of how he views himself. That leads to respect, awe, humility, and even love for the animals hunted. Experienced hunters become strong advocates for conservation, maintenance and as necessary redevelopment of nature.

The political and media inferences that demeaning, blaming and punishing recreational firearms owners will increase safety, misleads the Australian community into a false sense of security. There is no historical indication that it will have any useful effect at all. Current legislation, over the last 30 years, has been a carefully developed, practical and effective means of providing that safety.

### **Polarisation and discord reduction**

Swan notes that creating quick stereo-types about one another leads to polarisation, violence, even murder. Because the NSW Premier and our Prime Minister were so poorly informed on this field of interest, that they increased polarisation; while claiming that they were intending to increase harmony and safety in our society.

As a researcher of both human and animal behaviour, Swan believes that “if people can fully grasp the issues raised by hunting and apply this information to their lives, the world will be a much more sane and peaceful place.”

Finland has been identified as the happiest country for the ninth year in a row. Finish people and their government place a high value on interaction with nature.

Swan discussed in another of his books *Nature as Teacher and Healer*, that when drug addicts are led into high-risk outdoor sports, they become cured of their addiction at a rate higher than nearly all other treatment modalities. Risk taking builds self-esteem, which seems the best medicine for addicts.

Much hunting involves risk taking in dealing with the wilder, more remote areas where game is often located. In Australia this includes wild river crossings, mountain climbing, heat exhaustion, severe cold and wet, and isolation from help in case of an injury or illness.

### **Hate speech and action**

A recent ABC investigation has brought to light horrifying vision of gay and bisexual teenagers being beaten unconscious in Sydney. The teenage perpetrators are reported to be supporters of Islamic State (IS). (Ass. Prof. Josh Roose, Deakin University)

Victoria is holding a parliamentary inquiry into such attacks. Roose’s research indicates that such attacks foreshadow more severe violence unless something is done to curb it. The pre-meditated strategies involved are believed to include giving the appearance of suicide.

Among Western countries, Australia contributed one of the highest proportions per capita of fighters and sympathisers to the IS cause during the recent conflicts overseas. They were involved in some of the worst atrocities. The alleged Bondi attackers had an IS flag in their car. It is urgent that our security agencies are given the funding to train staff and take action to disrupt these cultural cancers among migrant communities in

Australia. This is the urgent requirement for funding, not confiscating firearms from law-abiding recreational firearms owners.

Roose notes that IS takes the position that homosexuality is punishable by death, and IS adherents have a track record of throwing men off roofs as a means of murder.

Hate preachers are known to be key recruiters and advisors to this form of behaviour, both in public addresses, and in a stronger manner in private consultation. It is particularly urgent that visas be withdrawn, and citizenship of such migrants be revoked, and they be deported. Extreme-right groups preaching and enacting hate are similarly dangerous, and should be jailed if born in Australia, or similarly deported if they are migrants.

### **The way forward**

In an information paper I provided to political leaders and independents about 10 days before these matters were debated in federal parliament, I said this is a defining moment, a tipping point, for our political leaders. It is proving so, as the coalition parted, then reformed, and two political leaders have fallen so far. I stated that the only winners from the approach taken would be the One Nation party.

The Australian community now appears to be quite clear headed about the unfair actions on firearms and the useless Clayton's hate speech legislation. The political shift away from the established parties to One Nation and independents is highly significant and widespread, well beyond the number of recreational firearms owners in Australia.

I was also concerned to see whether public servants advising ministers, state and territory leaders and the Prime Minister would recognise the administrative failures that had occurred and focus on strengthening those weak points, particularly the firearms registry function and inter-operability. Or whether they are so 'hollowed out' that they would simply join the small noisy, inadequately informed inner-city influencers to punish law-abiding recreational firearms owners.

The outcome appears patchy. Queensland, Tasmania and Northern Territory have chosen to leave recreational firearms owners alone in regard to the number of firearms they hold, and to focus on the criminals, terrorists and the mental health issues. This leaves the way open, in regard to the rushed National Cabinet agreements, for the ACT to adjust the Bill to enable law abiding, fully cleared recreational firearms owners to get on with their interests, rather than be lumped in as risks equal to the worst elements in our communities; and that random numbers of firearms they can own be abandoned.

Any reliance on 'research' carried out in WA as a basis for their recent heavy-handed legislative attack on law abiding firearms owners is likely to be misplaced. WA police have for at least 50 years had a tendency to over-reach the law in regard to recreational firearms owners. The police have constantly agitated against them. Fifty years ago, after

being taken to court for over-reaching the law, they carried out middle of the night raids through family homes as a means of intimidation. The police have eventually found a government that has complied with their wishes.

Any of their 'research' should be examined very critically. The WA police are currently raiding the homes of firearms owners and if they have not disposed of their firearms down to the limit of 10, the police are confiscating all of the person's firearms.

Fair value has not been offered by the WA government, so it has been difficult for firearms owners to sensibly sell their firearms at a reasonable price, under the pressure put on them.

This is un-Australian authoritarian jackboot policing/government. Hopefully we will see a change of government at the next election there, and the winding back of this legislation. We are looking to the ACT government, and its departmental advisors, to recognise the pointless harassment of recreational firearms owners in that light, and not damage political credibility here.

The level of disenchantment with the Minns and Albanese handling of legislative matters after the Bondi massacre has proved far more widespread than recreational firearms owners, as reflected in the polls showing One Nation gaining more followers than either Labor or the coalition in at least one Victorian poll. They have surpassed the coalition in all recent polls as I recall, and in the SA state elections.

There is no merit in having that loss of respect for the major parties spread throughout the ACT by public presentation of the concept that recreational ownership of firearms needs to be further limited, and punished, for fantasy safety purposes.

We must expect terrorist action in Australia now, after the Iran debacle. This should be planned for with more people recruited in anti-terrorist work, and an urgent start made on deportations of known extremists. This will get rid of some of the worst influencers, and also importantly send a message to others that if they want to go on living in Australia, they should think about their values, and integrate into Australian society.

The Prime Minister and state and territory leaders need to speak to the community about firm intentions to take action on crime of all kinds. Stripping migrants of visas and citizenship, and their deportation, should be particularly mentioned. This means our police need to be appointed in adequate numbers and supported. Any attack on a law abiding part of the community is now being shown to be recognised for what it is by the swing to One Nation, away from the two major parties, since the Bondi massacre.

Inner city self-appointed social engineers, inadequately informed on matters, including firearms ownership, have taken inadequate care about how their good intentions may do more harm than good. The risk of this in Canberra is indistinguishably different to this

risk in Sydney and Melbourne. In Australian plain language such people used to be derided as busy-bodies.

We want to re-build our democracy here, and show leadership in rational consideration of all members of the community. We seek to strengthen cohesion amongst decent people, rather than waste time and energy on discord, so as to spend time focusing on the serious crime occurring in the ACT; and the increasing risk of terrorism identified by ASIO, and being reported regularly in the media since the Bondi massacre. Pipe bombs distributed in Belconnen and bomb threats to the Prime Minister, causing evacuation of the Lodge, are surely warning enough.

Ian Coombes

Past National President, Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (Inc) (SSAA)

Past President, SSAA (ACT) Inc

Vice- President and President of the ACT Shooting Association Inc (umbrella body for all recreational firearms organisations in the ACT) and leader of contributions by recreational shooters during the development of the ACT Firearms Act 1992, which Prime Minister Howard used as the base for the current federal legislation.