

Meander Liffey Resource Management Group  
Submission on the  
*Firearms Amendment (Community Safety) Bill 2023*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed bill.

The Meander Liffey Resource Management Group (MLRMG) was formed in 1994 to give a voice to residents of Meander (and later the Liffey area) that felt that they weren't being heard by Government and bureaucracy.

The group has a diverse membership that includes residents, farmers, hunters, horse riders, tourism operators and recreational users of the wider Meander/Liffey area.

Many of our members are firearm owners (farmers, hunters, sports shooters etc) and therefore the group is well placed to comment on the proposed Firearms Amendment (Community Safety) Bill.

The MLRMG supports the legal use of firearms in Tasmania.

The group also supports a common-sense approach to firearm laws and law changes.

The group is fully supportive of this government's tough stance on criminal activity.

A note on our submission:

While many submissions to the Firearms Amendment Bill will be written by paid and/or professional writers, many, including this one, are written by volunteers who have to find the time to not only read the 22-page draft, pick out all the points that we think need highlighting, double check that something that we think is inaccurate is indeed inaccurate, and take it back to the members of the group for final approval.

Therefore, due to time/work/life constraints, we kept our submission brief and concentrated on commenting on the amendments in the proposed bill that we don't agree with.

### Re-classification of lever-action shotguns.

The MLRMG feels that the re-classification of lever-action shotguns is completely unnecessary.

- Lever-action firearms have been around for over 100 years and are no more “dangerous” than any other firearm and shouldn’t be further restricted by any re-classification.
- If they are taken out of category A, put all lever action shotguns into category B. To put a 5 shot lever action shotgun into category B and a 7 shot lever action shotgun (the next common size) two categories lower into category D, makes the categories system look nonsensical.

### Unlawful possession of digital blueprints.

The MLRMG is concerned about the wording of the amendment to make it unlawful to possess digital blueprints. According to the draft:

***digital blueprint*** means –

1. (a) any type of digital, or electronic, reproduction of a technical drawing of the design of an object;
- Firearm users often share photos via their phones of owner’s manuals, books and instructions that come with very precise technical drawings and schematics of triggers, bolts, barrels etc.
  - Many collectors buy and sell firearm drawings and diagrams on ebay.
  - Many re-loaders use online sites that have precise technical drawings of barrels, bolts, and other firearm parts.

- While the group understands the proposed amendment is to ensure that there is no *unlawful manufacturing* of firearms or firearm parts in Tasmania, many members worry that they will be caught up in this new law by simply having technical drawings of firearms that they own, or have a genuine interest in.

### Possession of shortened firearms.

According to the Consultation information sheet Firearms Amendment (Community Safety) Bill 2023, and the 1<sup>st</sup> of February press release from the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, it is stated that one of the proposed changes is the “automatic loss of all firearms for offences involving possession of shortened firearms - shortened firearms are illegal and highly dangerous” and “Automatically cancel firearms licences for people in possession of shortened firearms such as sawn-off shotguns”

- This is complete nonsense. Shortened firearms are perfectly legal in Tasmania.
- Shortened firearms are no more dangerous than any other firearm of any length.
- There are hundreds of legally registered firearms in Tasmania that have been shortened for various reasons (a damaged barrel repair, lightening a heavy rifle for a youth etc).
- As long as the overall length of the firearm is not less than 65cm (for a rifle or shotgun) then it is perfectly **legal to possess** a firearm with a shortened barrel.
- As long as the work is carried out by a licenced firearm dealer, it is perfectly **legal to shorten a barrel** (or stock) of a firearm,

again so long as the total length of the firearm remains not less than 65cm (for a rifle or shotgun).

- While the information sheet and press release mentioned it, there was nothing in the proposed draft that we could see that mentions anything to do with the “automatic loss of all firearms for offences involving possession of shortened firearms”.
- Clearly this is a case of poor wording by the authors of the information sheet and press release, and they actually mean any illegally shortened firearm (under 65cm)? But why haven’t any proposed changes to the legislation been included in the consultation draft?

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed bill.

Yours faithfully,

James Boxhall.

President, Meander Liffey Resource Management Group.