

FIREARMS AMENDMENT (COMMUNITY SAFETY) BILL 2023 and in accordance to the firearms act 1996

In summary, significant amendments proposed by the draft Bill include:

1. Recategorise lever action shotguns according to the *National Firearms Agreement*
2. Designate participation in an identified organisation (i.e., an outlaw motorcycle gang) as a ground for mandatory refusal for a firearms licence application
3. Clarify offence provisions where an offender displays or carries an imitation firearm that is a toy in the commission of certain offences
4. Provide a regulatory and offence regime around the possession of digital blueprints for the manufacture of firearms, firearm parts and firearm sound suppressors
5. Extend the firearms amnesty to firearm parts and ammunition, and
6. Include a number of minor offences as infringement notice offences.

Feedback and opinion from Kathryn Ritchie: Firearms dealer, recreational hunter, and sporting target shooting club member.

1. Recategorizing a lever action shotgun with magazine capacity of no more than 5 from a category A to a category B firearm is pointless. With a majority of firearms owners having both Cat A and Cat B on their licence what will this prevent? What will then happen to lever action shotguns with a capacity exceeding 5 rounds? Will owners only possessing a category A licence be automatically given a Cat B to comply with this change? Will they be asked to surrender the firearm? Will they be offered a buy back or will they just be fined? Why are you targeting the lever action shotgun? Will the lever action 22lr be next? Or what about the straight pull and the lever release shotguns? There is no logical reason to recategorize this firearm or any variation of it.
2. How do you determine/identify which motorcycle groups are outlawed? There is no section of the firearms licence application process to prove that you are or are not a part of such a club. Will car clubs be next? It seems that innocent until proven guilty is completely out the window in this State now.
3. This should not just apply to imitation firearms. If someone is breaking the law with any type of weapon they should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law regardless of using a toy firearm, a knife, a hammer, or even violent behaviour.
However, It should not be made illegal to own an imitation firearm in general like gel blasters and movie props.
4. Digital blueprints of a firearm can also be known as schematics depending on interpretation. Majority of firearms, purchased new, now have

schematics in the manual, or on a DVD, they are also available to purchase online. Majority of firearms owners will use this to determine how to pull apart their firearm correctly, or identify a broken part that needs to be replaced. How would you determine their “intent” to manufacture? Just by owning a 3D printer as well? That would be like assuming you have intent of drink driving because you have a car in the driveway while having a beer with dinner at home.

4A- the laws surrounding silencers or sound suppressors need to be reassessed altogether. They should be made legal and obtainable by a licenced shooter. There are many reasons why and simple ways to make them obtainable, for example- a permit or prohibited item exemption. Making them illegal to own only prevents the law abiding citizens from using them.

5. Why is this not already a thing? It should also be known to the public that the amnesty applies to firearms dealers and that you don't have to surrender the items to police. This would mean people can comfortably surrender “grandads gun they found in the shed”.

6. These infringement notices only applies to legal firearms owners and firearms dealers. Where are the set offences and infringements to the unlicenced and the real criminals? Are these offences now in place to strip the general public of their licences? To shut down firearms dealers and their businesses? Need stricter, set penalties for the unlicenced public who are breaking firearms laws or in possession of firearms.

Also mentioned in the consultation draft at section six, I question why it is only an offence when you are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs and alcohol? When there really should be a zero tolerance. The average law abiding citizen isn't even allowed to have a drink whilst cleaning their firearm or doing some reloading of ammunition.

Furthermore, to enquire about police exemptions for officers, I ask why they get an exemption in the first place? Police officers already go through several areas of training and assessments before becoming qualified, is it really that hard to include the firearms licence application and course? There are many police officers who are severely unfamiliar with their firearm, or the basics of the firearms act. I've personally witnessed this whilst at sporting clubs, during safe inspections and dealing with on duty police.