

August 4, 2014

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

**SUBMISSION: THE ABILITY OF AUSTRALIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT
AUTHORITIES TO ELIMINATE GUN-RELATED VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY.
PATRICK LEONCE KEALY**

Dear Sirs,

I have been both a target and recreational shooter since I was about nine years of age. I started hunting rabbits on my grandfather's sheep station North of Quorn, South Australia, at about nine years of age. I grew up around guns and knew how to handle them and was taught safety of guns.

In later years at school I joined the Army Cadets and became a Sergeant during my High School Years. I won Australia's Jake Rudell shooting competition when I was 15 years of age, but was too young to go to Bisley in England to follow up on that win. That was with rifle and machine guns. How I wish that program was still in place for our youth of today. It made men out of boys and so did National Service.

If the politicians were serious about getting rid of crime, they should once again introduce National Service and instill discipline into today's unruly youth who have no respect for anyone or anything. That blame can be laid squarely on the shoulders of past and present politicians because of the 'politically correct' nature of current laws.

I am 74 years of age as I write this, and am still a keen and avid shooter and it is my only enjoyment, even though so many restrictions are placed on me and my counterparts in taking part of the shooting sports. Current laws only affect the honest gun owner, not the criminals.

(a) Guns are illegal only because politicians made it so. Politicians keep introducing laws which they think will prevent crime, but all it does is create more crime, because criminals do not care about laws. It traps the unwary honest shooter who might lose his guns on the most simplest of stupid laws like finding an empty cartridge case in his car, but has a live primer in it.

That has happened here in Queensland, so we now believe that we are the enemy, not the criminals.

Not that long ago we could have our rifles handy to prevent home invasions and to protect ourselves, but not today. We are supposed to give in to home invaders and to be bashed, raped or murdered by them, but not to try and defend ourselves. That is supposed to be the job of the police they say. Well, heaven help us if more draconian laws are put in place which put our lives in danger.

(b) In dealing with the so called illicit trade in guns is concerned, honest gun owners have no clue as to how this operates since we deal only within the legal trade in firearms. I doubt that the Senate Committee would know this either. If the police know, then why has it not been stopped? Are the diplomatic pouches some Foreign Nationals bring into the Country scrutinized for illegal firearms? How else do we see scenes like the robbery in Sydney and the resulting shootout a few years ago with men wielding AK47s? Not something you can buy in the local gun shop these days.

(c) It is already illegal to make a firearm without a permit. There are enough laws to enforce this and always has been, so there is no further need to introduce further laws. The cost of enforcing this may be far too high in any case.

(d) The community is not so much at risk from stolen guns. Police may be by the very work that they do in enforcing crime. It always seems to be drug related or maybe from domestic violence cases. Bank robberies and service stations are mostly the targets of these crimes in any case, and maybe they should be armed, and taught how to properly use a firearm.

(e) Banning semi automatic firearms does not in itself prevent the criminal use of same as statistics prove. Stolen guns have been from police stations in some instances, or from home invasions, mainly because you might not have any other choice than to hand over the keys to the gun safe. Faced with someone with a gun pointing at you, and your inability to get to your gun because you have to have the gun in a safe, the ammunition in another safe, so in effect, current legislation has put us all at risk. Think about it. I have been to the city of Kennesaw in Georgia United States and visited the Chief of Police there to see how things were going in that city since the Mayor made it law that EVERY home owner who has not had a criminal record, own a gun of some kind, and ammunition for same. **I asked the Police Chief when it was introduced and what effect did it have on crime in that city. He looked at me and simply said, "Well, it was introduced in 1986, and funnily enough, there has been NO CRIME committed in robberies since then. Who would commit a crime or intend to commit a crime when you know for sure that there is a gun in that house or that shop or bank? This proves a point that no lawmaker here has even considered.**

(f) Introducing electronic alarms is only going to further increase the burden on honest gun owners. We have enough costs and restrictions as it is now. Furthermore, if the Government wants to introduce those restrictions, let the Government pay for it. It won't do a thing to help prevent crime, except to put honest gun owners at risk of being trapped in this stupid idea like

most of the current restrictions like having safes to house the guns and so forth. No alarm is going to stop a criminal. He knows the response time of police and can take his time while the siren or alarm goes off. Once again, further laws do not restrict the criminal.

(g) This proposed law would not affect the criminal, but restrict the already overly loaded law abiding citizen. Read my comments in (e) and see what happens when you make a law that all honest people should own a firearm. It is also good for the defence of the Nation in the long run. As it stands now, we are a sitting duck for an invasion by any other Nation's boy scouts, let alone an Army invasion.

(h) Why not scrap the current registration system altogether like Canada has. It costs the taxpayer an enormous amount of money and has proved that it does not prevent a crime. Canada was told that a registration system would only cost a few million dollars. Two BILLION dollars later they said enough was enough and scrapped it. There is no need for registration of category A and category B weapons. Put shotguns back to category A. Allow us to have our semi automatic rifles back because we simply cannot compete Internationally with a bolt action rifle against those other Nations such as New Zealand who have semi automatic rifles. Why is an entire Nation punished because of one person committing a crime with a semi automatic firearm?

There are far too many restrictions on honest gun owners now. Let's get some common sense into the picture and I am sure the effect will be a much saner approach than the one which would only further increase the cost to the honest gun owner and prove nothing at all in preventing crime.

Use the laws in place now to punish criminals, not honest gun owners.

Regards,

(PATRICK LEONCE KEALY)