

Submission regarding the ability of law enforcement to eliminate gun violence

As a preface, I am a licensed shooter and would describe myself as a very keen firearms enthusiast. I am also keenly aware that the ownership of firearms bestows serious responsibility on me to keep those firearms safe, handle them appropriately and prevent unauthorised access. I am very pleased that we have a licensing system that allows some vetting of the type of person who can legally own a gun as there are plenty of people you meet in everyday life whom you are glad do not have access to firearms.

My submission is that further restriction or imposition on law abiding licensed firearm owners has NO impact on reducing gun crime as gun crime is committed by CRIMINALS who by definition, do not obey laws. The committee must have statistics on crimes committed by LICENSED shooters with REGISTERED weapons. I believe you will find these to be insignificant and therefore the conclusion would be that our licensing system is working.

I do not have a current pistol license, do not own one and do not participate in the sport of pistol shooting however banning the ownership of semi automatic pistols by law abiding members of society will not stop ownership by criminals. I have heard that only 5% of containers arriving in Australian ports are inspected by customs. I do not know if this is true but the Committee MUST have a factual answer to this question before making any decisions. Even if the statistic is 10% of containers are inspected then 90% of the remainder could be carrying a pistol for a criminal who doesn't mind breaking importation laws since he is already a criminal. Therefore only licensed and monitored law abiding individuals would be prevented access to a semi automatic pistol by this measure. Any pistol can only be used at an approved range and there are not huge numbers of legally held loaded pistols being carried in the community. This is already illegal.

We know huge amounts of illegal drugs enter the country. We have laws against this. The drugs continue to come. Is it difficult for the drug dealer to add a pistol to his shipment?

The storage requirements for pistols are considerably more stringent than for longarms already and further tightening would again have little impact. I may choose to install an alarm in my home or I may not and that should be my choice (until ownership of a certain number of firearms is reached). If making alarm installation mandatory is to be considered, the committee must also consider how to make sure alarm activation is attended to. If the police or security firm turn up 20 mins later (if the neighbours bother to call it in) what will that achieve. Again does the committee have facts on the number of firearms related offences committed using stolen registered firearms. Is this really a problem that needs to be fixed or is it a headline to try to placate the masses?

I submit that law enforcement activity and legislative reviews need to be directed at criminals and not designed to create more red tape for law abiding, licensed firearm owners in an attempt to create technicalities to turn them into "criminals". Using a firearm in the commission of an offence should have a mandatory custodial sentence as should the mere possession of an illegally held firearm. I am confident that senior Police members will have suggestions on what powers they need to more effectively combat the proliferation of armed criminal gangs which will make more sense

than those I can come up with and perhaps these should be publicised and debated but at a time in our history when the public opinion of politicians is at an all time low, many voters, both licensed firearm owners and non firearm owners look with extreme cynicism at the NSW ammunition bill in the ABSOLUTE knowledge that it inconveniences law abiding fire arms owners and does NOTHING to stop an armed criminal in the Sydney suburbs doing a drive by shooting. In other words Politicians have made noise to be seen to be doing something but in reality, doing nothing at all.

I urge the committee to use this process to consider actions that may have some impact on criminal activity rather than creating another media soundbyte that has no positive impact on the issue and just adds to a growing level of cynicism. We would like our leaders to lead.