

Attachment A – Letter signed by gun control advocates calls for 'unbiased' review of laws

Tuesday 25 October 2016 available at <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/oct/25/letter-signed-by-gun-control-advocates-calls-for-unbiased-review-of-laws>

Dear Minister Keenan,

Australia's gun control laws are the envy of the world. Since the landmark 1996 national firearms agreement (NFA) our state, territory and federal firearms laws have been focused on the goal of ensuring community safety. We believe that any review of the NFA must have direct input from gun control advocates and be focused on community safety.

The NFA only came about because of the courage of political leaders, especially former prime minister John Howard, in response to the tragedy of the mass shooting at Port Arthur in 1996. In the 20 years since Port Arthur, and the NFA that followed, Australia has not suffered another mass shooting. This is a clear case of good politics and genuine political leadership working to save lives. At present the Australian government is undertaking a review of the NFA. We support an unbiased review of the NFA that addresses any loopholes and weaknesses in the country's gun control laws. One weakness is the error in classifying the six shot Adler A110 shotgun as a category A rather than category C firearm. Related to this is the failure to make the temporary importation ban on the eight-shot Adler A110 permanent. However there are many other pressures on our gun control laws that deserve national attention.

So it is with real concern that we see you have organised repeat official meetings to discuss changes to the NFA with the firearms industry and the pro-gun lobby in the form of the Firearms Industry Reference Group. At these meetings you have informed the gun lobby representatives that the review of the NFA is:

"... an opportunity to simplify the national firearms agreement to assist the firearms community," and

"... the government is keen to simplify the regulations and the bureaucracy to lessen red tape for firearms users."

The Firearms Industry Reference Group contains representatives from government departments and the Sporting Shooters' Association, the National Firearms Dealers Association, Shooting Australia and the Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia. It contains not a single gun control or community safety advocate. Unsurprisingly, these meetings ignore community safety issues and instead focus on watering down the NFA, importing more guns, increasing children's access to weapons and removing limits on firearms ownership.

If the review of the NFA is to retain credibility you must give at least equal access to gun control advocates. Gun violence can affect people in their relationships, their workplaces, their homes or the public domain. So it is essential you officially engage with representatives from the public health sector, criminologists, gun control advocates, unions,

domestic violence workers and victim support groups. Given the enormous support in the community for our world-class gun control laws it is remarkable that these representatives are not already routinely engaged by your office in the review of the NFA. We look forward to hearing from you, signed

1. Martha Jabour, executive director, Homicide Victims Support Group
2. **Nicholas Cowdery AM QC**
3. Sam Lee, Gun Control Australia
4. Geoff Derrick, secretary, Finance Sector Union
5. Lee Rhiannon, Greens senator for NSW
6. Rebecca Ivers, professor of public health, University of Sydney
7. Moo Baulch, CEO of Domestic Violence NSW
8. Anna Kerr, principal solicitor, Feminist Legal Clinic
9. Melissa Donnelly, deputy secretary, Commonwealth Public Sector Union
10. Charles Watson, distinguished professor of health science, Curtin University
11. David Shoebridge, NSW Greens MP and justice spokesman
12. Dr Alex Wodak AM, emeritus consultant, St Vincent's hospital, Sydney
13. Tim Ayres, secretary, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (NSW)
14. **Walter Mikac, founder of Alannah and Madeline Foundation**
15. Rita Mallia, president of the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (NSW C&G)
16. **Clare Petre, acting EO of Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia**
17. Kat Lane, acting co-ordinator of Financial Rights Legal Centre
18. Simon Chapman AO, emeritus professor University of Sydney
19. Rebecca Peters, former chair, National Coalition for Gun Control
20. Natalie Lang, secretary, Australian Services Union (NSW)
21. Denele Crozier, CEO, Women's Health NSW
22. Helen Campbell, executive officer, Women's Legal Service NSW
23. Kelly Banister, CEO, Australian Women's Health Network
24. Kerriane Watt, associate professor in public health, James Cook University
25. Christine Robinson, coordinator, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre
26. Ann Brassil, CEO, Family Planning NSW
27. Sruti Sinha, co-ordinator, Women's Family Court Support Service
28. Brent Waters, consultant child psychiatrist
29. Emeritus Professor David Weisbrot AM, past president, Australian Law Reform Commission.
30. Cait McMahon OAM, managing director, Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma-Asia Pacific
31. Dr Peter Manning, author, journalist, academic and former head of ABC TV News and Current Affairs
32. Julie McCrossin, journalist
33. Eva Cox, adjunct professor
34. Eileen Baldry, professor of criminology, UNSW
35. Alan Rosen, professorial fellow, University of Wollongong
36. Spider Redgold, convenor, Erinyes
37. Bruce Donald, lawyer and consultant
38. Ron Witton