

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017**

**Attorney General's Department**

**Program: 1.2 AGD Operating Expenses - National Security and Criminal Justice**

**Question No. BE17-030**

**Senator Watt asked the following question on 24 May 2017:**

Senator WATT: I have a few other questions about firearms. You are probably aware that earlier in the year some amendments were passed in the Senate to the firearms trafficking bill and those amendments, among other things, added aggravated offences for trafficking 50 or more firearms or parts with maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The amendments also increase the maximum penalty for basic firearms trafficking offences from 10 years to 30 years. Senator Brandis, this is probably best directed to you: will the government support this bill as amended? My recollection is that the government did support those amendments to the firearms trafficking bill in the Senate, though I might be wrong there.

Senator Brandis: I will just get that checked.

Senator WATT: Regardless of whether the government supported it or not, the amendments were passed by the Senate, so my question is: will the government support the bill as amended in the lower house?

Senator Brandis: This is a matter being handled by Mr Keenan, so I will check with his office.

Senator WATT: Are you not aware?

Senator Brandis: Yes. I am advised that the Labor amendment in the Senate weakened the bill by removing the mandatory minimum sentences. When the bill comes back to the House of Representatives we will be amending it to restore the mandatory minimum sentences.

Senator WATT: So you will be opposing the increase in sentences from 10 to 30 years?

Senator Brandis: We will be strengthening the bill by moving to reinstate in the bill the mandatory minimum sentence provision that the Labor Party removed in the Senate.

Senator WATT: Will you be supporting the addition of aggravated offences for trafficking 50 or more firearms or parts?

Senator Brandis: We supported those other amendments, so I think the answer is yes.

Senator WATT: Do you know when the government intends to progress that bill in the lower house?

Senator Brandis: I cannot immediately tell you what the forward sitting program of the House of Representatives is, so I will have to take that on notice.

**The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:**

The timing of any debate on the Criminal Code (Firearms Trafficking) Bill 2016 is a matter for government.