

The Secretary
Legislative Council Select Committee – Firearms Law Reforms
Legislative Council
Parliament House, HOBART 7000

1st August 2018

Re: Submission to the Tasmanian Legislative Council Select Committee - Inquiry into Firearms Law Reforms.

The AIPN is extremely concerned about the 2018 Firearms Policy statement for the Tasmanian Liberals. We believe that this proposal poses a predictable and unacceptable risk to public safety and contradicts the aims and intentions of the 2017 National Firearms Agreement (NFA).

The Australian public has a right to safety from gun violence. This right should be preserved by all Legislative Councils across the nation.

The push to relax the terms of the NFA through lobbying state and territory governments/political parties places all Australians at risk. The impact of Australian gun law reform in 1996 was clear, with mass shootings all but eliminated and an unequivocal reduction in suicide and homicide numbers and rates. This reform placed Australia as one of the world leaders in firearm control and safety – a position that should not be relaxed.

The AIPN believes that:

- No one should own a firearm without a demonstrated need to do so, that a firearm should not be reclassified as a tool of trade for primary producers;
- There should be no extension of the licence period (currently no more than 5 years) in order to ensure licensees continue to have a genuine reason and it is appropriate for them to own a firearm (e.g: monitoring of mental health issues, criminal convictions, concerns for potential for family or community violence);
- Reducing the current storage and transportation requirements of firearms will unnecessarily place children and the public at serious potential risk. Any reduction in the terms of storage or transportation risk children or unlicensed persons accessing the firearm or places an unacceptable risk of theft and illegal possession;
- There is no acceptable need for the general community - including competition shooters, primary producers or employees of primary producers - to own or access semi-automatic or prohibited weapons or sound suppressors;
- The purchase of ammunition should continue to be restricted; and
- The formation of any representative body to consult on matters related to regulation and use of firearms must include a membership beyond firearm owners, firearm user

groups and the firearm industry. These groups do not necessarily represent the views of the broader Australian community and any representative body should include an equal and representative membership of health practitioners, public health representatives and professional bodies with the public interest in mind.

We would like to register our concern that any relaxation in the terms of ownership, licence, transportation or classification of firearms risks undermining the spirit, intention and positive impact of the NFA. We believe that all Australian states and territories should be held to and be able to demonstrate compliance with the NFA (and that the Commonwealth should be called on to ensure states and territories are in compliance). The AIPN also believes that prior to any relaxation or changes to the NFA a consultation process with a broad professional group beyond firearm owners, firearm user groups and the firearm industry who can represent public interest, legal considerations and public health must occur and we are willing to represent injury prevention professionals in any such endeavour.

Any move to normalise gun ownership or create a belief that gun ownership is a 'right' or 'requirement' in Australia should be met with the strongest opposition in order to preserve public safety. The AIPN supports retaining strict gun control and compliance with the existing NFA.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Debbie Scott
Chair
Intentional Injury Subcommittee
Australasian Injury Prevention Network



Professor Rebecca Ivers
President
Australasian Injury Prevention Network