

Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024

Submission No: 59
Submitted by: Rhys Bosley
Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

14/05/2024

Attention: Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee

Dear Committee,

Please find my commentary about the *Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024*, the first of which is general and the second two which specifically relate to firearms related matters, below.

Social Media

The protection for journalists in 26B(2) of the section titled “Publishing material about particular offending behavior”, does not make sense. 26B(1) requires that the material depicts an offence and is published for the purpose of glorifying the conduct or increasing the offender’s reputation. A journalist should not be publishing the material for the purpose of glorifying conduct or increasing the offender’s reputation either, their only justification is to report the news.

The drafting risks creating confusion that only professional journalists may publish such material at all. Given the importance of citizen journalists, neighborhood watches and others such as victim of crimes groups in sharing details of offences, to help catch offenders and promote public safety, this is unacceptable. I think the 26B(2) should be removed to alleviate the confusion. The requirement for the glorification of conduct or increase in reputation before an offence is committed, should be enough to protect journalists.

Guilt by association

I consider allowing authorities to determine who is a fit and proper person to own a firearm, as well as to issue firearms prohibition orders, by who they associate with, to as a matter of principle be a serious and unacceptable transgression of human rights. Nobody should be discriminated against with respect to firearms ownership or any other reason, because they happen to be related to, are in a relationship, a friendship or a legitimate business relationship with, a person who happens to have a criminal record. I consider that those provisions should be removed from the legislation.

I would also like to share some insights which may give comfort in removing the associates provision, about how the apparent fear of legal firearms in Queensland, is

not supported by the actual facts and risks.

The first relates to mass killings, which many continue to associate with firearms ownership. From my online search it appears that apart from the Port Arthur Massacre, where 35 people were killed with a type of firearm that is no longer available to the Australian general public, the most deadly mass killings in the last 60 years in Australia were all arson attacks. The Childers Backpacker Hostel, the Whisky Au Go Go and the Savoy Hotel claimed 15 lives a piece and the Quakers Hill nursing home fire claimed 11 lives.

The first shooting apart from Port Arthur to match a fire was the Hope Forest Shooting which killed 10 people, as did the Churchill bushfire. The Queen Street mass shooting killed 8 victims (and the perpetrator) and was also conducted with a firearm that is now not available. That shooting was matched in lethality by the Cairns child killings, where a woman killed 8 children with a knife. Car attacks are also lethal, the first Melbourne Car Attack in 2017 killed six people.

This demonstrates that even if currently available firearms were further restricted, criminals have plenty of tools to achieve the same deadly effects, by other available means.

I note the statistic that the rate of firearms theft has increased by over 21 percent over the last decade, which is just over the rate of population growth at around 17 percent. I also note that in my experience, more exotic firearms tend to start to make their way into collections of over and above the basics of four or five guns, which in many cases would include air rifles that pose a lower risk in the hands of criminals. Criminals are also likely to have a great deal of trouble in sourcing ammunition for these types of firearms and in many cases the firearms are powerful enough that a criminal who has no experience with the firearm and legitimate facilities for practice, would have trouble accurately shooting them.

As far as I can see there is too much unfounded worry in the community about legal firearms ownership and in my opinion the Queensland Government should be promoting the reality that legal firearms do not pose a significant risk. I also see no evidence that further regulating currently available firearms ownership in the manner proposed, is going to make the Queensland public any safer.

There is certainly no justification to trample on a right as important as freedom to associate.

License Verification for ammunition purchases

There is no evidence presented that there has actually been a problem with invalid firearms licenses being used to purchase ammunition. Until evidence is provided that this risk is significant and the measure justified, I do not see why firearms dealer should have to administer another process on behalf of the government, presumably at their own expense.

Regards,

Rhys Bosley

Independent Candidate for Algester

<https://rhysbosleyforalgester.au/>

