

## Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024

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Please forgive the crudity and layout of this submission, but having only been notified of this a couple days ago and being forced with an unrealistic submission date, coupled with work and family commitments, one does his best. I find myself answering the call for help from the associations I am a member of and I am not an avid keyboard warrior nor am I adept to writing letters or submissions to parliament or local members for that matter, so please bear with me.

I am a small business owner offering engineering and maintenance services to rural and regional areas of the state. I am a licensed firearms owner (and have been since around the late 90's), and current member of the SSAA and Shooters Union Australia, whom I heavily depend on to notify me of changes and look out for my best interests and advice within the fraternity.

When the government of any country or state, justifies any infringements on the liberties, freedoms and rights of its people as being for the greater good of the community, (as mentioned multiple times during a brief look at this bill and notes, and a whole section dedicated to justifying it) it should serve as no greater indication that a line has been crossed.

Although a brief look through the amendments seems to be targeting the bad guys of the community, I feel the amendments around carrying knives in public and firearms amendments, hold too much risk for collateral damage for everyday citizens.

Having worked around the Western Downs for the last 10 years an incident that is highlighted for me is that, in Sept 2021 a local rural man (75) was charged in Chinchilla magistrates under section 51 of the Queensland weapons act for carrying a knife in public. They deemed that his stated use of using his pocket knife for cutting open feed bags and hay bales was not a reasonable excuse! Something he has done for the past 60 years.

So under this amendment the same offender would now be liable for over twice the penalty units or 2 years jail for the same offence! That would seem a little over the top for most people I think, the fact he was even convicted in the first place is reprehensible.

Whilst it is impossible to for me to cover all topics of concern within the bill due to the short time frame I was made aware of it, I shall endeavor to keep my comments short and my focus on the changes which I feel affect the most persecuted people in the country, Law Abiding Firearm Owners (LAFO's)

Every time any changes to firearms laws comes under the spot light, lots of statistics and figures get thrown around, with minimal or no explanation of the fundamental details of when, where or what occurred and the estimations or assumptions get more elaborate and lack any specifics. While this may look impressive and/or concerning to people who are unfamiliar or uneducated about firearms in the general population, it only amounts to scaremongering and spreading untruths about what legal firearms are available to license holders as well as vilifying LAFO's as irresponsible and the reason the illicit gun trade is booming.

Although under the guise of deterring or hindering "an increasing number of organised crime groups, including outlaw motorcycle gangs, engaging in the trafficking of illicit firearms."

There is amendments which should be concerning to all Queensland residents, especially without time to review all notes and conduct their own due diligence.

I would like to just pick one amendment to address but, to be honest, although seemingly well intentioned, from LAFO point of view, all I can see is the collateral damage that would accumulate along the way, (that the minister deems to be in the best interest of the community) , and most amendments can be used to persecute LAFO's further, and none of them come anywhere near close to solving the real "problem" and that is, apart from the token occasional mention, and the use of the wording "high risk individuals" the criminal element is being left right out of the conversation for the most part... Even an admission by the minister, that laws thus far have not stopped offenders. If the current stringent laws have failed to make a dent, flogging the same dead horse won't make any difference unless, the aim is to erode more liberties and freedoms of the people of the state.

What needs addressing in my opinion, before any more infringements on LAFO's and the residents of Queensland, is increased police numbers and presence in general but specifically in population dense areas/ functions, increased monitoring of persons of interest, increased surveillance of actual convicted criminals/street gangs and known offenders or POI's with illegal firearms, and better proactive community-based surveillance initiatives. And all of this points to the actual problem, of lack of police funding. (I have a family member and former colleagues who are current members of QPS so I hear first-hand of the massive funding shortfalls in this area)

In other words, better attempts to mitigate, rather than making law after law in a reactive mode.

This of course would probably cost more money, rather than just passing laws and policing the already policed.

But have you stopped to think what the real cost is? What the cost of eroding our children's and our grandchildren's liberties, freedoms and rights are? Year after year, decade after decade? If 25 or 50 or 100 years of changing and imposing laws hasn't worked so far, maybe, just maybe that's not the answer.

Gavin Organ

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