

Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

I'm writing to you today to express my grave concerns regards to the recently proposed Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024. We are seeking an immediate extension to the consultation period, which is scheduled to end tomorrow, to allow space for a number of aspects of this bill to be refined before passing through parliament. Among everything mentioned below, we have two major concerns about what the ramifications of this new bill could be for our communities, and more directly, our business. The first being the broad scope of what would either re-classify someone as not being 'fit and proper' or see someone being issued with a Firearms Prohibition Order. Among several undesirable outcomes, if passed this bill could see individuals being charged with offenses that are undisclosed unless challenged in court. An option that is unattainable for the average person. The second major concern is for the proposed changes/additions around the 'guilty by association' laws and how our Dealership licenses could be put at risk because of them. Under this type of legislation, we could have our ability to trade heavily impacted without notice. If for example, one of our employees became romantically involved with a person who had not disclosed that they were the bearer of a Firearms Prohibition Order, that would be enough to revoke a dealer's licence. For firearm dealership businesses, and especially larger ones such as us and many others in the state, these changes will severely restrict the effectivity of our operations. The clear objectives to try and reduce the number of firearms in circulation by force could see our businesses acutely devalued or even make them unviable. As an example, if we start to see high volumes of pre-owned firearms hitting the market due to licence revocations, it will consequently devalue our inventory at scale. In summary, the language used in this bill, I feel, is far too powerful and could be used to unjustly incriminate people for whom firearm ownership and trade is crucial to, and with additional consultation I think this bill could be improved so that the state could achieve its desired outcomes of reducing crime across all fronts, without unnecessarily impacting the people that are trying to do the right thing. As with any change in legislation, the law of unintended consequences will likely prevail, and I fear that by making legal firearm ownership harder, it will only bolster the 'black market' firearm trade. As Dealers we serve a critical role in helping to facilitate the Weapons Act and Regulations, and frequently assist Police branches in the handling and storage of firearms, and I don't think any police station would currently be able to effectively facilitate the immediate acquisition of thousands of firearms due to a Dealer Licence revocation. I also know through interactions with our local police officers that it would not be in the interest of public safety and general police operations, for Firearm Dealerships to start closing down due to the possible financial impacts of these changes. For these reasons and many more, as mentioned above we are urgently requesting an extension to the consultation period for the Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024.