

Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024

Submission No: 158
Submitted by: Christopher Broad
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

Dear Premier Hon Steven Miles MP, Hon Mark Ryan MP, Hon David Crisafulli MP, Hon Timothy Mander MP, Hon Dan Purdie MP, and the Community Safety & Legal Affairs Committee, I trust this letter finds each of you well. I write to you today to voice my objections to portions of the Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024 as tabled on Wednesday 1 May 2024, as well as the short consultation period granted to Queenslanders. I request you vote to pull the Bill and permit an extended duration for community review and considered feedback of the extensive documentation. The Bill and Explanatory Notes, covering some three hundred pages, with such wide-reaching changes, cannot be effectively digested and understood in the short period made available for community consultation. I kindly request an additional 6 weeks be made available for community comment. Furthermore, I ask you to support the Castle Law Bill 2024 introduced by Hon Nick Damento MP on 1 May 2024 with utmost haste. This simple, clear Bill returns power to ordinary citizens, some who live in fear that should they retaliate against criminals who seek to damage, thief, or cause bodily harm to them and those they care about while in their homes, cars and going about their law-abiding lives, render them an offender in the eyes of the law. Should you be unable, or not convinced, to extend the consultation period for the Bill so the community can provide holistic submissions, I have provided select feedback of the Bill below given my own time constraints. I ask for your representation on the below points:

Supporting comments to the intent of the Bill:

- I. The Labour Government has proposed a means by which to curb youth crime in Queensland.
- II. The Bill appears intent on addressing emerging areas of criminal activity, namely knife crime.
- III. An attempt to address the spread of antisocial and criminal activities has been made. A proposal to punish people who magnify their (legal or illegal) activities with members of the public, which results in public disturbances and crime, as well as those who engage in criminal activity but did not incite it. Examples such as the riots in Logan, amplified by the identity Spanian on 10 March 2024, or the riot after the Wakeley church stabbing in NSW on 15 April 2024.

Opposing comments to the Bill:

- I. Electronic verification process for purchase of ammunition at the time of sale is of concern to me for two reasons:
 - o The present system works and is simple – individuals with a Weapons Licence can purchase ammunition and (gun) powder from dealers.
 - o Queensland Police has failed to instil confidence it can manage the administrative demands of Weapons Licencing in its present form. The proposed system which tracks ammunition purchases is unjustified and will be a source of public expense into the future for no clear benefit. The lack of clear benefit implies a utility which has not been disclosed. Conceivably such a system could generate meta-data and statistics leading to future restrictions on ammunition purchases for law abiding Queenslanders and licenced interstate firearms owners.
- II. Introduction of a new restriction on weapons ownership through the introduction of a new term – firearms prohibition order, and modification of the fit and proper persons eligibility test is an unnecessary duplication. I have immediate concern with the criteria that assesses an associate of a Weapons Licence holder, where that definition: “associates with the offender in a way that involves seeking out or accepting the offender’s company, whether the association happens in person or in another way, including, for example, electronically.” ... is too broadly worded. It suggests anyone who has an associate who commits a crime exempting them from a Weapons Licence may and will impact access to weapons for law abiding Queenslanders. This is a gross impingement on the freedoms of law-abiding Queenslanders and is ripe for misuse in its present form.
- III. Furthermore, criminals already illegally accessing weapons have already bypassed the weapons licencing process, rendering the number of changes aimed at capturing weapons misuse ineffective, and hence uncalled for, legislation.
- IV. I have deep

concerns as to the vagrant potential that (online) censorship may be applied by the Queensland Police. This concern is amplified given the trajectory of governing bodies throughout history which embark on the censorship journey. Coupled with the Federal censorship bill Communication Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill, I am left fearful of the accelerated government and police overreach imposed on Australians and Queenslanders. Additionally, the Bill demonstrates a material impact to public freedoms for an unclear positive improvement in 'public safety'. Case and point, the censorship of the church stabbing in NSW, where the severity of the censored content was disproportionate to the tactics employed by the Federal e-Safety Commissioner. V. Insertion of a clause whereby "a change in the mental or physical fitness of the licensee or the licensee's representative" may result in Queensland Police withholding or rejecting the renewal or cancellation of Weapons Licence. Such broad terminology is open for wide-reaching interpretation. The impact of such interpretation under the existing legislation has been seen when assessing a fit and proper person, for example the Queensland woman refused licence renewal due to post-natal depression, which she had recovered from 15 years prior, to the renewal refusal, as disclosed by Shooters Union in January 2021. Overall, I am yet to be convinced that the Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024 strikes an acceptable balance between public safety and the restrictions of Queenslanders' freedoms. I am not convinced the Bill will positively impact law-abiding Queenslanders. Additionally, I expect the Bill will result in contempt for Police if the proposed laws are used to apprehend persons who meet the broadly defined terms, scenarios, and locations described in the Bill. I request you return my letter to share your own views and detail how you will be addressing my concern in your role as representative to the community of Queensland when the Bill is debated and ultimately voted on.