

Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 136
Submission By: David Harris
Publication: Making the submission and your name public

Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns Out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026

Introduction

I am a Queensland resident and licensed firearms owner. I make this submission in support of law-abiding firearms owners and to encourage the Committee to ensure that amendments arising from this Bill are proportionate, evidence-based, and clearly focused on preventing criminal and terrorist misuse of firearms, rather than imposing additional burdens on compliant licence holders.

Support for Targeted Measures Against Criminals and Terrorists

I strongly support measures that prevent firearms from being accessed or used by criminals, organised crime groups, or extremists. Illegal trafficking, possession, and misuse should attract strong penalties and effective enforcement.

However, reforms must clearly distinguish between criminal actors and licensed firearms owners who already undergo extensive background checks, probity assessments, training, and ongoing compliance.

Protect Recreational, Rural, and Occupational Firearms Use

Queensland has a large community of lawful shooters who use firearms for:

- Primary production and pest animal control
- Recreational and sporting shooting
- Vermin management and property protection
- Training and competition

These users demonstrate a strong safety culture. Additional restrictions that do not deliver a measurable public safety benefit risk discouraging compliance and unfairly burdening responsible people who already follow the law.

Proposed Category Reform – Semi-Automatic .22 Rifles (Low Capacity)

I respectfully propose that semi-automatic .22 calibre rifles with a fixed or detachable magazine capacity of less than 10 rounds be reclassified to a lower licence category (Category A or B) rather than remaining in highly restricted categories.

Low-capacity semi-automatic .22 rimfire rifles are widely used for training, pest control, and recreational shooting. The .22 Long Rifle cartridge is a low-energy rimfire round, commonly used by junior and novice shooters, with mild recoil and limited effective range compared to higher-powered sporting cartridges.

A capacity-based classification approach better reflects actual risk than classification based solely on operating mechanism.

Supporting Evidence – Extremely Low Public Risk Profile of .22 Rimfire Rifles

Australian publicly available datasets on firearm injury and death generally do not report outcomes at the level of detail required to isolate "semi-automatic .22 rifles with magazines under 10 rounds" as a distinct risk category. As a result, there is no clear evidence demonstrating that this specific subset presents a heightened public safety risk.

The absence of such evidence supports a risk-based regulatory approach that focuses on:

- Individual suitability and behaviour
- Secure storage and compliance history
- Demonstrable misuse patterns rather than applying broad restrictions based purely on mechanical operation.

Decades of lawful ownership and widespread legitimate use further demonstrate that .22 rimfire rifles are an established, low-risk component of Queensland's firearms ecosystem when held by licensed, compliant owners.

Historical Context – National Firearms Agreement Focus

The 1996 National Firearms Agreement (NFA) was developed in response to public safety concerns primarily relating to:

- Semi-automatic and pump-action shotguns (with limited occupational exemptions); and
- Semi-automatic centre-fire rifles.

Rimfire rifles, including .22 calibre sporting and pest-control rifles, were not identified as the primary risk driver underpinning the NFA reforms.

This historical context supports a contemporary regulatory approach that considers calibre, energy, capacity, and actual misuse patterns rather than applying blanket restrictions.

Licensing Eligibility – Permanent Residents and Five Eyes Exemptions

If the Bill introduces a requirement that firearms licence holders must be Australian citizens, I strongly recommend that exemptions be included for:

- Australian permanent residents who meet all suitability and probity requirements; and
- Citizens of Five Eyes partner nations (Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, and Canada) who are lawfully resident in Australia and pass all background checks.

Citizenship from these countries alone is not a reliable indicator of risk. Suitability assessments and behavioural history provide a far stronger basis for determining public safety outcomes.

Conclusion

I support strong action against illegal firearms, organised crime, and extremist violence. I respectfully urge the Committee to ensure the Bill:

- Targets criminals rather than licensed owners
- Protects legitimate recreational and rural firearms use
- Considers reclassification of low-capacity semi-automatic .22 rifles
- Applies fair, evidence-based licensing criteria with appropriate exemptions

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.