

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

Submission No: 285
Submission By: Gun Control Australia
Publication: Making the submission and your name public

Submission to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

Strengthening Queensland's firearms laws to align with national reforms and protect community safety

From: Gun Control Australia (GCA)

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

Executive summary

Gun Control Australia (GCA) welcomes the Queensland Government's stated commitment to improving community safety and disrupting extremist and criminal misuse of firearms.

However, the current draft legislation does not adequately address the preventive settings required to reduce firearm harm across the broader community. The reforms focus heavily on criminal misuse while leaving largely untouched the structural regulatory mechanisms that determine how many firearms circulate in the community, how they are categorised, and how rigorously need is assessed.

Most concerningly, Queensland's reform direction appears to have ignored key nationally emerging standards supported by the Commonwealth and adopted or pursued in other jurisdictions. This places Queensland materially out of step with the rest of Australia at a time when national consistency is both achievable and essential.

Queensland has an opportunity to lead — but only if it adopts a prevention-first approach grounded in harm reduction and public safety.

The central principle: firearms policy must prioritise prevention

The Weapons Act 1990 (Qld) recognises that weapon possession is subordinate to public and individual safety. That principle must guide reform.

Firearms are uniquely lethal. Increased prevalence increases risk — including suicide, family and domestic violence, accidental discharge, theft diversion, and catastrophic misuse.

Effective firearms regulation cannot rely solely on enforcement against “criminals and terrorists.” It must reduce the overall opportunity for harm through structural prevention.

National consistency: Queensland is moving out of alignment

The Commonwealth has signalled renewed commitment to nationally consistent firearm regulation, including strengthened controls and clearer limits on civilian ownership.

Several jurisdictions have adopted or are moving toward:

- Numerical caps on firearm accumulation (4 recreational / 10 occupational);
- Modernised categorisation frameworks;
- Stronger lifecycle licensing checks;
- Enhanced intelligence sharing and national register alignment.
- Queensland’s draft reforms do not incorporate these preventive settings.

If Queensland does not align with nationally emerging standards:

- Cross-border enforcement will weaken;
- Diversion risks will increase;
- National register benefits will be diluted;
- Harmonisation will become nearly impossible in practice.

A fragmented approach undermines the purpose of the National Firearms Agreement.

Priority reforms Queensland should adopt

1. Introduce a numerical cap on firearms per licence holder

Queensland currently has no meaningful cap limiting firearm accumulation.

Unlimited accumulation increases theft risk, enforcement complexity, and the likelihood of private arsenals forming in suburban settings.

Recommendation 1:

Introduce a cap of four firearms per individual, with tightly defined exemptions allowing primary producers and specified occupational or sporting shooters to possess up to ten.

2. Properly apply the “genuine reason” test to each firearm

In addition to a numerical cap, the most significant improvement Queensland can make to public safety is the rigorous application of the genuine reason test to each firearm, not merely the licence as a whole.

Under the 1996 National Firearms Agreement, firearm possession was intended to be conditional upon a demonstrated genuine reason. In practice, however, once a person holds a licence, subsequent acquisitions are rarely subject to meaningful scrutiny regarding necessity.

A licence holder should be required to demonstrate a genuine need for each additional firearm, supported by evidence directly linked to their stated purpose (for example, documented primary production requirements or clearly defined sporting disciplines).

This would:

- Ensure accumulation is purpose-driven, not convenience-driven;
- Strengthen enforcement consistency;
- Reduce stockpiling without justification;
- Align practice with the original intent of the NFA.

Recommendation 2:

Amend Queensland legislation and administrative practice to require evidence-based demonstration of genuine need for each initial and subsequent firearm acquisition.

3. Modernise firearm categories to restore the intent of the NFA

The categorisation framework is foundational to Australia's gun laws. Under the original National Firearms Agreement, Categories A and B were intended to capture low-power firearms without rapid-fire capability.

Subsequent changes — particularly the 2017 amendments permitting certain lever-action shotguns in Category B — have weakened that intent. Firearms with rapid-fire capacity now sit in categories originally designed for lower-risk weapons.

This undermines the coherence of the categorisation system and increases community risk.

The fundamental principle is simple: firearms capable of causing mass harm in a short period of time should not be widely available in the community.

Only firearms without a detachable or fixed magazine capacity allowing rapid reloading should remain in Categories A and B. Firearms capable of holding magazines and being rapidly reloaded should be recategorised to at least Category C.

Recommendation 3:

Review Queensland's category framework to ensure Categories A and B are limited to non-magazine, low-capacity firearms consistent with original NFA intent.

Recommendation 4:

Recategorise firearms capable of rapid reload or high-capacity magazine use to Category C or higher.

4. Address emerging design workarounds

Technological developments continue to produce firearms that technically comply with semi-automatic restrictions while replicating similar functional outcomes.

Recommendation 5:

Restrict assisted repeating action and straight-pull repeating action firearms (or their technical equivalents) to higher-control categories.

Recommendation 6:

Prohibit semi-automatic handguns, with narrow exemptions limited to Olympic-level disciplines under strict oversight.

5. Strengthen licensing integrity across the lifecycle

Suitability for firearm access can change rapidly due to mental health decline, radicalisation, or domestic violence escalation.

Queensland's decision not to adopt routine mental health checks following Wieambilla represents a missed preventive opportunity.

Recommendation 7:

Introduce structured mental health suitability assessments at application and renewal stages, designed with appropriate clinical safeguards.

Recommendation 8:

Reduce maximum licence duration to two years, supported by digitised renewal systems.

Recommendation 9:

Fully align with national intelligence-sharing frameworks and ensure robust legislative authority for Commonwealth cooperation.

6. End unlicensed “come and try” shooting pathways

Allowing unlicensed individuals to handle firearms at ranges or promotional events undermines the principle that firearm access is contingent on prior assessment.

Recommendation 10:

Require prior Queensland Police Weapons Licensing assessment before any unlicensed individual handles or uses a firearm.

7. Prohibit firearm handling by children under 18

There is no coherent public safety rationale for allowing minors to handle firearms.

Recommendation 11:

Prohibit the use, possession or handling of firearms by individuals under 18 years of age.

8. Strengthen regulation of privately made firearms and 3D printing

Queensland's blueprint-related offences are welcome but should be complemented by preventive measures.

Recommendation 12:

Work with other jurisdictions to strengthen oversight and disruption of privately made firearms, including cooperative detection and prevention measures.

9. Protect policy integrity and governance

Firearms regulation is public safety policy and must be protected from disproportionate industry influence.

Recommendation 13:

Publish annual reporting on Queensland's compliance with the National Firearms Agreement and alignment with national reforms.

Recommendation 14:

Reform consultative structures to ensure balanced representation including public health, domestic violence prevention, medical experts, and victims' advocates.

Closing Comments

Queensland has taken steps aimed at disrupting criminal and extremist misuse of firearms. However, enforcement-focused reform without preventive structural measures leaves significant risk unaddressed.

By declining to adopt key nationally supported reforms — including firearm caps and strengthened lifecycle checks — Queensland is moving out of alignment with the rest of Australia at a time when consistency is both achievable and necessary.

Gun Control Australia urges the Queensland Government to amend its current reform package to include preventive harm-reduction measures that:

- Reduce firearm accumulation;
- Strengthen licensing integrity;
- Modernise classification;
- Protect children;
- Align Queensland with national standards.

Community safety must remain paramount. Firearm possession is a privilege, not an entitlement.