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

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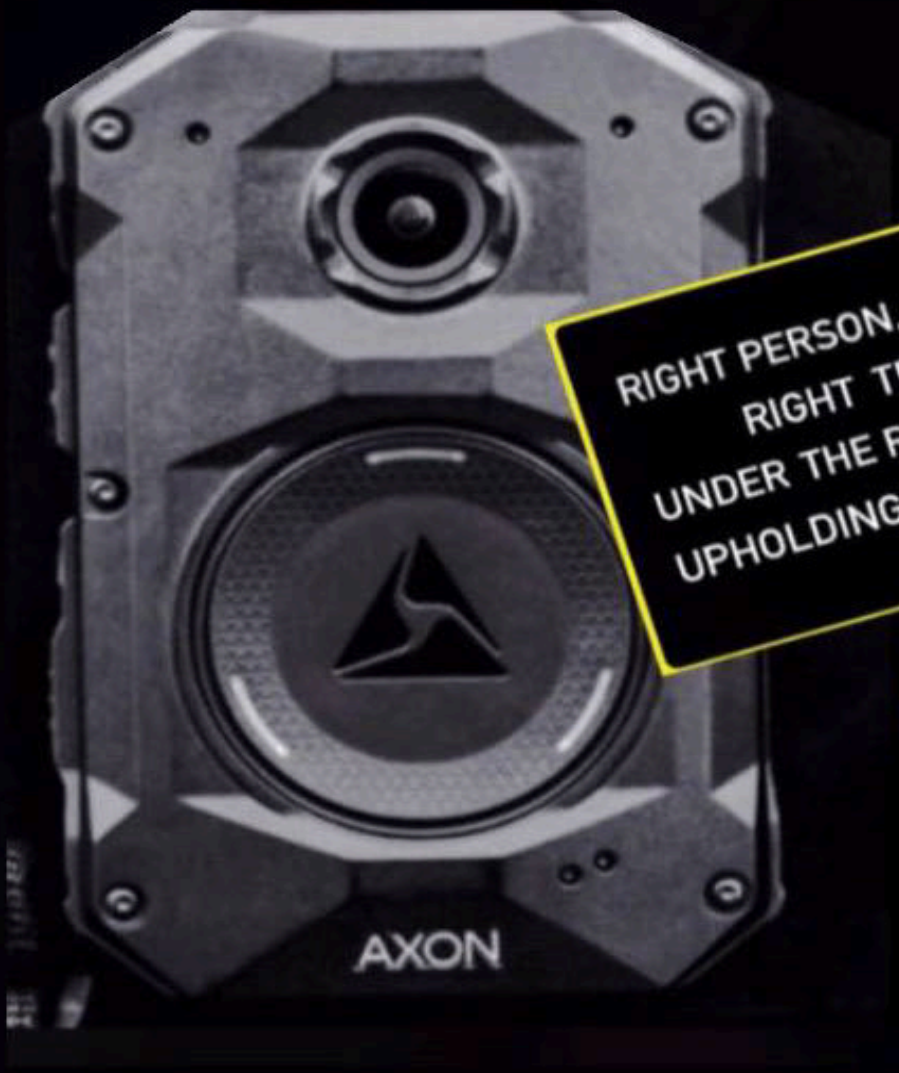

RIGHT PERSON. RIGHT TRAINING.
RIGHT TECHNOLOGY.
UNDER THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP.
UPHOLDING THE RIGHT TO LIFE

OPCAT
NPM
RIGHT TO LIFE

Operation
WATCH OVER ME

AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND
LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR POLICE-RELATED DEATHS

Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee
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16 February 2026

SUBMISSION – Fighting ANTISEMITISM AND KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AMENDMENT BILL 2026

ANZLEAC4PRD is a peer led platform of families affected by police related deaths.

This submission asks that the inquiry look beyond individual offenders and isolated events to the broader public safety system in which firearms are licensed, issued and carried.

Recent tragedies at Bondi and Wieambilla prompted renewed scrutiny of gun access. One issue remains under examined: the intersection between firearm access and mental health risk, including within state institutions. Public safety requires that risk be addressed wherever it arises.

Police organisations across Australia report high levels of psychological injury. Many officers are reluctant to seek help due to concerns about career impact or loss of operational status. Police suicides and police involved shootings remain serious concerns. Service firearms have been used to harm both officers and members of the public.

These are not isolated events. They point to systemic risk that should form part of any public gun reform discussion.

Gun policy and mental health cannot be separated. Access to a firearm increases the lethality of a crisis. Where trauma, fatigue or deteriorating mental health are present, risk escalates quickly.

Work health and safety law requires organisations to protect workers and others from foreseeable harm. Where firearms are routinely carried, that duty must extend to managing psychological risk.

Although critical incident and coronial processes are commonly initiated after police firearm harm, there is limited publicly available evidence that these events consistently trigger parallel WHS notification, investigation or prosecution examining organisational contributors.

Enterprise bargaining arrangements and outdated classifications of operational status may also operate as practical barriers. They can complicate questions of criminal responsibility and restrict recognition of psychological injury for work related claims. If governance settings impede scrutiny or early intervention, reform is required.

In 2025, the Audit Office of New South Wales reported that the New South Wales Police Force had not adequately examined whether workplace hazards or stressors contributed to 171 critical incidents between mid 2019 and mid 2024. These incidents involved death or serious injury to police or members of the public. The finding was that systems were not adequately interrogating organisational risk.

By contrast, the Queensland Audit Office last undertook a detailed review of police mental health in 2017 to 2018. There has not been a comparable recent public performance audit of similar scope in Queensland.

That gap matters.

Modern governance requires three steps when critical incidents occur:

Hazard identification
Not only what happened, but whether rostering, fatigue, supervision, training gaps or repeated trauma created foreseeable risk.

Root cause analysis
Looking beyond individual decision making to systemic contributors such as workload, deployment models, leadership culture and welfare support.

Preventive controls
Embedding measurable safeguards such as clinical oversight in high risk responses, structured debriefs, fatigue monitoring and independent review.

Where confidence in coronial systems has been questioned, and one jurisdiction is actively examining organisational contributions to fatal and serious incidents while another has not revisited the issue in years, the question is straightforward. Are systems being tested against current operational realities, or are they relying on outdated assumptions?

The 2025 NSW findings reinforce a central principle. Critical incidents are not isolated events. They are indicators within a broader risk system. If the system is not examined, the risk remains.

If the law accepts that firearms pose heightened risk when held by a distressed member of the public, it must apply the same logic within state agencies.

Where an armed officer is experiencing psychological injury, fatigue or cumulative trauma, and is deployed to a mental health crisis, risk is not theoretical. It is compounded.

Families affected by police related deaths consistently describe missed opportunities for earlier intervention. Warning signs are often visible. Too often, systems respond only after harm occurs. Prevention requires structures that identify risk early and act on it.

With this in mind, ANZLEAC4PRD's 2026 research objective is to act as an independent external research partner to police in the Operation WATCH OVER ME pilot, with independent governance, analysis and reporting.

The purpose is clear. To test whether real time oversight, clinical input and structured governance controls reduce foreseeable risk in police led mental health responses. The focus is not blame. It is measurable prevention, organisational learning and safer outcomes for both the public and officers.

Public safety cannot be selective. Credible gun policy must address risk wherever it arises, including within government institutions.

Reform should integrate mental health safeguards, firearm access controls and enforceable work health and safety obligations. It must also recognise non delegable duties and vicarious liability, ensuring organisations remain legally responsible for systemic failures that contribute to foreseeable harm.

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Senior police are due to meet with the Victorian head of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners on Wednesday amid the group's "serious concerns" that the force is now depending on general practice doctors to make the final decision on whether someone is mentally and physically capable of serving as a police officer.

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RACGP - GPs push back against firearm health check
https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/professional/gps-push-back-against-firearm-health-check

Join RACGP WA for an overview of the Firearms Act and the reforms that are taking place on 31 March 2025, including the practical considerations and the role of GPs in terms of the mandatory Firearm Authority Health Assessment (FAHA) process.
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