



Trevor WATTS MP

LNP Member for **Toowoomba North**



*Delivering for
Our Region*

Mr Peter Russo MP
Chair
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Via email: lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

August 8, 2019

Dear Mr Russo,

Response to public submissions on the Weapons and Other Legislation (Firearms Offences) Amendment Bill 2019.

I would like to provide a response to the submissions made by various stakeholders in relation to the Weapons and Other Legislation (Firearms Offences) Amendment Bill 2019 (the Bill).

The Bill aims to strengthen the legislative framework which applies to weapon and firearm crime by:

- increasing current penalties for certain weapon and firearm offences;
- introducing new offences; and
- introducing a new legislative framework to prohibit high-risk individuals from acquiring, possessing or using a firearm.

I note the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, the Public Health Association of Australia, the Women's Legal Service (Qld) the Catholic Women's League Queensland Inc. and Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia were supportive of the objectives of the Bill, especially with respect to the implementation of the Firearms Prohibition Order (FPO) framework.

I would like to take this opportunity to address several aspects of the Bill which were raised in submissions to the committee.

Possession of digital blueprint and device for manufacture of firearms

The Bill inserts a new section 67A 'Possession of digital blueprint and device for manufacture of firearms' and 67B 'Defences for offence against 67A' into the Weapons Act 1990.

The offence does not apply to a person who is authorised by an armourer's licence to manufacture the firearm concerned or is acting in the ordinary course of the person's duties as a member, other than a police officer, of the Queensland Police Service.

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The LNP replicated the definition of 'digital blueprint' as contained in the Firearms Act 1996 No 46 [NSW] to achieve consistency with other Australian jurisdictions.

I acknowledge feedback from the Firearms Owners United concerning the definition of 'digital blueprint' and the feedback from the Firearms Dealers Association in relation to the need to include intent as an element of the offence.

FPO Framework

The Bill inserts a new Part 5A 'Firearms prohibition orders' into the Weapons Act 1990. The overriding objective of the FPO legislative framework is to prevent a high-risk person from acquiring, possessing or using a firearm.

As outlined in the Bill, the commissioner may make an order (FPO order) against a person if, in the opinion of the commissioner the person is not fit, in the public interest, to have possession of a firearm or the person is a participant in a criminal organisation.

With respect to the making of an FPO order, the LNP established a framework based on elements contained in other Australian jurisdictions for the purpose of achieving consistency. In particular, in New South Wales, the Commissioner may make an FPO against a person if, in the opinion of the Commissioner, the person is not fit, in the public interest, to have possession of a firearm. In South Australia, the Registrar may issue an FPO order against a person who is or has been a member of, or a participant in, a criminal organisation.

I acknowledge the feedback with respect to aspects of the FPO framework and will consider the recommendations made by stakeholders.

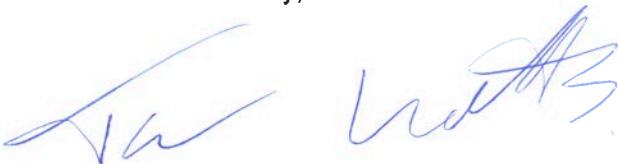
Objective of the Bill

As articulated in the Explanatory Speech, the overarching policy objective of the Bill is to strengthen the legislative framework in relation to weapon and firearm crime. This Bill sends a strong message to criminals and organised crime groups that Queensland will not tolerate threatening and intimidating behaviour.. This Bill reinforces community safety and deters individuals from committing weapons offences and other associated crimes.

The proposed provisions in this bill will not only recognise the challenges of modern policing but assist police officers in tackling criminals and organised crime groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response.

Yours Sincerely,



Trevor Watts MP
Member for Toowoomba North
Shadow Minister for Police and Counter-Terrorism
Shadow Minister for Corrective Services