



Speech by

KEN TURNER

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Hansard 15 September 1999

WEAPONS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr TURNER (Thuringowa—IND) (10.08 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill is about making some sense in today's world of burgeoning bureaucracy. We have come to a point where we follow a path of duplication, sometimes on a massive scale. Individual State licensing regimes fall into this category, some more than others. This amendment is concerned with the bureaucratic difficulties encountered by firearm owners who travel to and around Queensland or who have moved to Queensland permanently.

It is not legally possible for an individual who states hunting as his genuine reason to own a firearm, backed by a letter of permission from a property owner, to carry that firearm interstate under any circumstances. However, it is possible for members of approved shooting clubs to carry their registered firearms with them when they travel to Queensland. They have available to them a directory of all Sporting Shooters Association of Australia clubs throughout the State and are able to access those clubs' calendars for suitable events in which to complete during the period of their travels or in a location in which they will reside permanently.

They can presently gain temporary recognition of their interstate firearms licence under section 32 of the Queensland Weapons Act for the purpose of participating in a shooting competition conducted by an approved shooting club or approved by the commissioner or for another purpose specified under a regulation for this section.

The Queensland Weapons Act allows an out-of-State licence to be recognised in Queensland for three months in the case of Category A and B firearms. For Categories C, D and H the recognition period is seven days. The difficulties manifest themselves for individuals who travel, either in retirement or by lifestyle choice, by caravan, motor home, boat or some other means, any of which may be their primary place of residence. The current Queensland licensing regime presents these individuals with a situation of bureaucratic absurdity.

When a firearms licence is issued by police authorities in any other Australian State it should be automatically recognised by the Queensland Police Service for the period of time spent in Queensland by the licence holder, provided that it has not expired. Additionally, a licence issued in any other Australian State should be recognised in Queensland until its expiry and the holder then be required to hold a Queensland licence if he or she continues to remain in Queensland. There are precedents for this type of action. In 1996, the Queensland Government recognised interstate boat registrations when those boats remained in Queensland waters for 12 months or less. Members of the armed forces are upon transfer to Queensland permitted to retain interstate motor vehicle registration until its expiry before being obliged to take up Queensland registration.

In January of this year, Inspector McCoomb, former head of the Queensland Weapons Licensing Branch, publicly stated that only 25% of those with guns in Queensland are now licensed. He is—or was—in a unique position to know the truth of that statement. Community perceptions reinforce Inspector McCoomb's statement. If it is too hard, people do not comply. That is almost a part of the Australian ethos. The cost of unnecessary duplication of bureaucratic process is incredibly wasteful in this age of electronic communication. The Howard Government, at the last Federal election, trumpeted

the commission of a national database of firearm owners to be included on its Crimtrac program. What justification could possibly exist for firearm owners to be obliged to duplicate their currently held licence when an electronic check with the issuing authority or the Federal Police would confirm and validate the licence?

There is a growing need to address the high rate of non-compliance in Queensland. It will never be addressed by a bureaucratic procedure which is or appears to be excessively complex or duplicative. I commend the Bill to the House.
