



Speech by

**PAUL LUCAS MLA**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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Hansard 28 April 1999

### **WEAPONS AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (10.54 p.m.): Tonight I am pleased to speak in the debate on the Weapons Amendment Bill. As the Minister pointed out in his contribution, this Bill is a paradox. It is symptomatic of some of the contradictions in the material that we get from the One Nation benches in this place. Its Bill is mixed up and schizophrenic in its drafting. On the one hand, the member wants to pander to the extreme sections of the gun lobby and, on the other hand, he wants to restrict gun ownership in a manner that is so onerous that he clearly could not have intended it when he was drafting the legislation.

If Mr Feldman is intending with this legislation to keep the extreme elements of the gun lobby in his camp, he will fail. This morning or yesterday morning I was disgusted to hear that he was on—he can correct me if I am wrong—the radio defending Mr Owen and his Internet sites that depict the houses of members of Parliament. That is the level to which he has sunk in this debate. The member ought to realise that, if he is going to make indictable offences the basis of a lifetime ban on gun ownership, he will force more people to hand over guns, which will result in further compensation. That will cost society and the State even more. As a former policeman—and this is the issue that really does surprise me—the member ought to realise that it is the police who are the strongest supporters of gun control. They are the ones who unfortunately have to face the consequences of the irresponsible use of guns. They are the ones who have to face those consequences day after day.

I think it behoves this House to reject the legislation. In reality, one will never be able to legislate to stop violence. Unfortunately, the tendency to violence is a human trait. It is not a trait that comes about as a result of guns being available. But the problem with the use of guns is that guns give an immediacy to putting violence into effect in a direct and serious manner. That is the problem. That is why guns are very dangerous implements that must be restricted to people who can use them responsibly.

**Mr Knuth:** Have you ever fired one?

**Mr LUCAS:** Yes, I have fired one.

**An honourable member:** Do you have a licence?

**Mr LUCAS:** No, I do not have a licence. When I used guns when I was in the Army Reserve, one was not required to be licensed. Yes, I have used them. I understand that they are very dangerous weapons. I do not have a use for a gun at present so I do not own one. The fact is that the Government's legislation does not outlaw gun ownership but restricts it. It is very unfortunate that these tragedies have occurred. Tonight I will not impugn anyone's motives except to say that we must err on the side of caution. I think the community accepts that we should do that. The legislation suggested by One Nation is dangerous. I do not honestly think that the member for Caboolture believes in it. It is legislation that he has introduced in a desperate attempt to resurrect some sort of political credibility for One Nation amongst certain elements of its constituency. The fact is that One Nation brought it out before the Mulgrave by-election. We saw what happened to the party at the Mulgrave by-election. We heard the outrageous comments of the member for Tablelands before the Mulgrave by-election. Shortly thereafter, he decided to jump ship.

**Mr Nelson** interjected.

**Mr LUCAS:** The member could not remember; that would be right.

In conclusion, I fully support the Government's position. The deliberate use of weapons and guns to cause death is one thing. However, we also have to protect society from the accidental use of guns. For example, unfortunately, children can be killed as a result of guns being housed or looked after improperly. I remember a situation that happened in a family I knew.

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