



Speech by

PETER WELLINGTON

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard 9 June 1999

WEAPONS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—IND) (8.58 p.m.): I support the concept and operation of a prohibited persons register. One of the concerns I have with this Bill is that it will place a mandatory requirement on all doctors and psychologists to report a condition or illness which for the purpose of the Bill would make a person unsuitable to obtain or hold a firearm licence or a weapon.

If this Bill is supported, I believe it may act as a real deterrent to men and women who need professional assistance and counselling. I say this because it appears to me that some people who may need professional assistance and counselling may refuse to seek that assistance from doctors because of their concern that they will be automatically reported to the commissioner for placement on the register. I believe we need to encourage men and women who need that assistance to come forward and seek out that assistance from doctors, instead of making it more difficult for them.

In his second-reading speech, the member for Caboolture spoke about the need for licensed firearms owners to not be treated like criminals, not be harassed by Government departments and not be subjected to unnecessary regulations or intrusions on their day-to-day activities. I support that statement. However, clause 22 of the Bill, which inserts a new section, imposes a general confidentiality obligation in relation to information gained in the administration of the Weapons Act.

My interpretation of the Bill is that it will make it more difficult for the commissioner to provide information on the register to other State and Federal Government law enforcement agencies and inquiries. I certainly cannot support the restrictions on the easy exchange of information between these agencies because I believe that we need to ensure that the Government law enforcement agencies and related agencies are not hindered in their endeavours to investigate and pursue investigations of illegal activities. I could talk for another 18 minutes, but I simply say that I cannot support the Bill in its current form.
