



Speech by

**CAROLYN MALE**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Hansard 28 May 2003

**WEAPONS [HANDGUNS AND TRAFFICKING] AMENDMENT BILL**

**Ms MALE** (Glass House—ALP) (1.05 a.m.): I rise in support of the Weapons (Handguns and Trafficking) Amendment Bill 2003 as a person who grew up with and used firearms. I am sure that no-one needs me to outline the horrific carnage that can be caused by dangerous criminals who use guns against innocent people. Most of us are passionate about the need to ensure the tightest of gun controls for this very reason so that our community here in Australia can remain safe, so our children and families can be safe, and so that we do not have to live our lives in fear. We have all seen very graphic reasons in recent times to illustrate just why legislation like this is necessary and why we need to go even further in our efforts in gun control. This bill also introduces stricter penalties to punish those who are illegally in possession of dangerous weapons.

Weapons are currently grouped into types with penalties reflecting the type of weapon. Possession of military style fully automatic firearms currently identified as category R weapons will attract the highest penalties under these changes for the obvious reason of the sheer damage they are capable of inflicting. The proposed penalties for unlawful possession of a weapon will range from 100 penalty units or two years imprisonment for category A, B and M weapons; 200 penalty units or four years imprisonment for a category C or E weapon; and 300 penalty units and seven years imprisonment for category D, H and R weapons. The bill will include a new penalty of 13 years imprisonment for a person being unlawfully in possession of 10 or more firearms where at least half are category D, E, H or R weapons. If the person has possession of 10 lesser firearms—that is, category A, B, C or M—the maximum penalty is 10 years imprisonment. I am sure all members will regard these penalties as reasonable. Who could doubt that someone in possession of 10 illegal weapons could only be up to no good?

The bill will identify the possession of most categories of firearms punishable by three years or more—that is, C, D, E, H, or R—as indictable offences. The bill will increase penalties for an offence of illegal firearms manufacture and unlawful supply of firearms to: for a category D, H or R weapon, 500 penalty units or 10 years imprisonment; for a category C or E weapon, 300 penalty units or seven years imprisonment; and for a category A, B or M weapon, 200 penalty units or four years imprisonment. A person who unlawfully supplies five weapons where at least one of the weapons is a category D, E, H or R weapon will be liable for a penalty of 13 years imprisonment. The bill will prescribe an offence where a person who supplies at least five lesser weapons will be liable to a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.

These are tough but necessary and sensible changes. Let us not forget that they are part of a broader national bipartisan approach on this issue. We have to show those people who possess, supply or manufacture illegal firearms that we mean business. These people are trafficking in human misery, making a profit on weapons which are used to kill innocent people. Their actions are beyond contempt and we must crack down on their behaviour in every way we can. I commend the bill to the House.