




Speech by

Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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WEAPONS AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (12.51 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Weapons Amendment Bill. It is generally accepted that firearm ownership, possession and use should be regulated, not only in Australia but in communities that wish to be safe and that value the safety of the people within them. Accordingly, it is an acceptable proposition to say that firearm ownership, possession and use should be regulated to restrict access to people who should not have access to firearms, to control access to juveniles, to protect vulnerable people and to prioritise community safety. I think that is a fair and reasonable proposition in a community that values the safety of the people who live within it.

This Queensland government has a very proud record of enhancing community safety, a very proud record of contributing to safer communities and of reducing crime. Members might be interested to hear that I am the patron of the Murrumba Pistol Club, which is located in the Caboolture region.

Ms Boyle: I am sure you take it very seriously.

Mr RYAN: I do take that role of patron of the Murrumba Pistol Club very seriously, and I must say that I am very proud to be the patron of an organisation that not only values responsible gun use, possession and ownership but also encourages its members and members of our community to value community safety and to value responsibility in respect of firearm ownership, possession and use. It probably follows that it was appropriate for me to discuss with the members of the club their views in respect of this bill. As I said, I am very proud to be the club's patron. The people from the club that I have met are good people. They enjoy their sport. They are strong advocates for firearm safety. They support restrictions on access to firearms. Like me, they know that controlling access to firearms and other weapons through administrative restrictions and through possession offence penalties is one way that we can make our communities safer places. I received very positive feedback from the members of the Murrumba Pistol Club about the proposed amendments contained in this bill when I discussed those matters with them.

This bill is about getting the balance right. It is about respecting people's rights, both their right to be a firearm owner where appropriate and their right to live safely in a community where access to firearms is restricted and controlled. Those people who do the right thing, those people who act responsibly, have nothing to fear from this amending legislation. I particularly welcome the changes contained in this amending bill that relate to increasing the penalties for behavioural offences involving weapons, particularly those penalties that relate to the bringing of knives onto school grounds. Whatever we can do to deter people from carrying weapons onto school grounds I think is a positive thing. That particular amendment is very welcomed in my mind.

I also welcome the expansion to the definition of bladed weapons. I welcome the regulation of laser pointers with an output greater than one milliwatt and also the regulation of the possession and use of high-capacity magazines for category B firearms. The other thing that I think is a very important amendment, which has not necessarily been covered too much by previous speakers, is the changes to licensing and registration requirements for permanently deactivated public monuments. In the Caboolture region there are a number of clubs, particularly the RSL clubs, that have faced some financial and

administrative burdens in respect of their public monuments that have been deactivated. I am very pleased that that burden on those clubs from a financial and administrative perspective has now been removed by this amending legislation. I am sure that the members of those RSL clubs will also welcome these changes with open arms.

As I said, this legislation is about getting the balance right. It is about keeping our community safe and respecting the rights of individuals. I would like to commend the review committee on its hard work in respect of this amending legislation. I would particularly like to thank the Queensland Police Service for providing me with a briefing on this amending legislation a couple of months ago. I also thank members of the department for their hard work. I would also like to thank all those groups and people who participated in public consultation on this bill. It is important to get people's perspective in respect of amending legislation like this and I am very pleased that people were involved. I commend the bill to the House.