




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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WEAPONS REGULATION DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (8.14 pm): I rise to support the disallowance motion on the Weapons Regulation 2016 moved by the member for Everton. I think it might be of interest to this House to know that there are more people who die from mosquitoes than from weapons dealers. I think that is particularly important. You really should be taking aim at the mosquitoes, not the weapons dealers.

Mr Dickson: Zika virus.

Ms LEAHY: Absolutely, and Ross River. Previously it was the case that the dealer's licence was attached to the business itself, not the individual. Suspending a dealer's licence could have major implications for that dealer and the equipment that they supply, not to mention the effect that this will have in many rural and regional communities. I walked into one of my local dealers in Charleville the other day. He explained to me how primary producers are coming to him because they have to hand in their category H weapons for destruction. They may well be two hours outside of Charleville but, because of the actions of Weapons Licensing and this government, they now have to hand that weapon in and their only choice is for the weapons dealer to make sure that weapon is destroyed. This is the case. It is a direct result of this Labor government's lack of consultation and disgraceful attitude towards law-abiding licensed weapons owners.

In the way this regulation stands there could be very detrimental effects in rural and regional areas and to small businesses. There are very few small businesses in my electorate who are simply just a weapons dealer. They are a combined weapons business. They might be selling sporting equipment, for instance, like the one at Roma. They might be selling lawn mowers like the one I was in at Charleville. It is the weapon dealer's licence which is combined with other small businesses. This change would have a detrimental effect on those small businesses in those communities.

It does not surprise me that members opposite have little understanding of how far some of the people in my electorate would have to travel to deal with their local weapons dealer. I know many of you have not been there and perhaps you should visit. It is also not known how long it would take to revoke the suspension and what happens during a period of suspension. This part has changed in the regulation and that is clearly because of the inadequate consultation by this Labor government. It has failed to pick up on this error in this regulation. Again, as always with this government, there is a distinct pattern here, and there are concerns in relation to how arrogantly this government has decided that it will not consult with members of the community who are directly affected by the regulations and the legislation it is putting in place.

Primary producers in my area, who have been very unfairly labelled and vilified by this Labor government as lone cowboys, are greatly concerned. They are properly licensed weapons holders who are responsible weapons owners who use category H weapons day in day out as tools of their trade. It is very unfortunate and very disrespectful that they should be labelled lone cowboys. Their only other choice if they do not have a category H weapon is to use a pocket knife.

I also want to highlight the importance of appropriately licensed weapons dealers in rural and regional areas. I will give you an example that I am aware of. The minister may be interested to learn a little bit about this particular situation. Where there is a farming couple on a property and the husband is the licensed weapons owner and he, due to whatever circumstances, passes away, the situation occurs where the spouse is living in the home and she does not have a weapons licence. What happens in these situations is that, unbeknown to the spouse, the police generally turn up on the doorstep. We may well have a situation—and I am aware of some—where an 80-year-old lady is living on her own and the police turn up totally unannounced and they start to literally interrogate that person in relation to what they have done with their weapons.

She is really not in a position to have a weapons licence and is not the sort of person at the age of 80 who is going to do the training to make sure that she has a .410 shotgun to shoot the snakes around the house. They have to make arrangements either to hand their weapons into a dealer—if there is no dealer in their community, that is very difficult to do at a time when they are grieving—or to hand them to the police or arrange for the transfer of that weapons licence and those weapons to another family member. All this happens without a single piece of correspondence from Weapons Licensing acknowledging their loss and the fact that under legislation they have to make some changes.

Those women and those spouses rely very heavily on the advice of their local weapons dealer. I would be very disappointed if this government made it harder and harder for those weapons dealers to hold their licence and to put threats in place like this regulation does, which is one of the reasons why we are moving this disallowance motion. I do not want it to be any harder for those licence dealers and those small business people to go about the very important community service that they do. They do not just make money from weapons. They provide a community service and advice which is particularly important in many situations, particularly where there is a bereavement, which I have outlined.

I urge the government to support this change and this disallowance motion. It is easy to fix this. It is not that hard. I can also assure members that they have nothing to fear from licensed, law-abiding weapons owners and dealers in Queensland, particularly those people in rural and regional Queensland who do a lot more community service work than selling weapons.