




Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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### **WEAPONS REGULATION DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (8.07 pm): This is truly a disturbing and misguided disallowance motion moved by member for Everton tonight, and I will not be supporting it. It is ironic that a referee is moving a disallowance motion. I find that strange. The opposition is trying to move an amendment to a technical clause of the Weapons Regulation regarding the suspension of a licence if the endorsed representative loses authority to represent the firearms dealership.

Those members opposite, including the member for Gregory, may be interested to note that Minister Byrne has established a number of weapons consultation forums to ensure that Queensland's weapons policy framework reflects the diverse needs of key stakeholders, including police, victims of crime organisations, the legal community, the agricultural industry, the firearms industry and sporting and recreational shooters. These forums have provided a constructive mechanism for full and open consultation with stakeholders regarding Queensland firearms policy and regulatory settings, including the NFA review, and will continue to meet into the future.

**Mr Millar:** That is what we are looking forward to.

**Mr BUTCHER:** You just said that there was no consultation for those people. I will take that interjection. He has been there. Those forums are there. In 2016 the Weapons Regulation 1996 expired and had to be renewed. I note that the Weapons Regulation 1996 was introduced by the Borbidge LNP government following the terrible events in Port Arthur.

The advice of the Queensland Police Service is that there has been no policy changes made between the changes from the Weapons Regulation 1996 to the Weapons Regulation 2016 which became effective from 1 September this year. Do not take my word for it. Take the word of the Queensland Police Service. The 2016 regulations were modernised to reflect modern drafting standards such as renumbering and making minor word changes. You have to ask: given that these changes are so minor, why is the LNP wasting the time of the House with such a bizarre disallowance motion here tonight? I will get to that in a moment. First, let us run through how the regulation has worked for the past 20 years and will continue to work into the future.

Currently, a licence held by a body—that is, a firearm's dealership—is held in the name of the representative. In circumstances where the representative dies or their authority is otherwise revoked, the licence would be suspended until a new representative is nominated. In such cases, Queensland Police Service Weapons Licensing would liaise with the dealer's associate to ensure all weapons remain in secure storage. Furthermore, the dealership would be provided the necessary assistance, where possible, to ensure that their business remains in a position to trade. The Queensland Police Service would then work with the business to ensure a new representative could be appointed at that time. This process has worked perfectly since it was first introduced in 1997.

Let us step through what would happen if section 16 were disallowed, as asked for tonight. The Queensland police advise that, should section 16 be removed from the regulations, it will have the effect that, if a representative dies or their authority is revoked, the licence will be cancelled without the ability to nominate a new representative. That leads to more down time and, as the member for Gregory said, less service to the community and the people involved in the dealership.

Any new representative would be required to seek an entirely new licence with the supporting information, resulting in firearms being surrendered for safekeeping for long periods of time. If section 16 is disallowed, it will create significant issues for those firearms dealers who want to take over. In particular, it would substantially increase the time taken for the 'new applicant' to go through the process in order to become the dealer.

If those opposite want to make life more difficult for firearms dealers, go ahead and disallow section 16, but do it with the knowledge that you will actually be, pardon the pun, shooting firearms dealers in the foot. The simple fact is that this debate is not about a technical section of the Weapons Regulation. What we are seeing tonight is the LNP being patsies of the gun lobby as part of a coordinated campaign to pressure governments right across Australia to go soft on guns.

The LNP are hopelessly divided on guns. Two weeks ago we saw the LNP in New South Wales sabotaging efforts by every other jurisdiction in Australia, including their fellow LNP governments in Western Australia, Tasmania and the Commonwealth, to reclassify the Adler shotgun. You have Senator Bridget McKenzie undermining the position of federal Justice Minister Keenan. You have Western Australian Liberal MP Ian Goodenough undermining the position of his own Premier, Colin Barnett. The LNP are tearing themselves apart over guns. The Nationals are fighting with the Liberals over guns. The far right are fighting with the moderates over guns.

My twin brother is a senior sergeant based in Gladstone and has been a police officer for more than 20 years. In that time he has seen more trauma than we can possibly imagine, being the first on the scene of a fatality, delivering news to loved ones or simply fronting up to work day after day, year after year not knowing what he might be confronted with—the ever-present danger that he might be injured or worse. In the words of Police Commissioner Ian Stewart, 'No matter how experienced, skilled, equipped, or courageous an officer may be, at times fate and circumstances will conspire, resulting in the serious injury or the tragic death of an officer.' Police officers put their safety aside for the betterment of the community they serve and, as the brother of a police officer, I want to say that this sacrifice is acknowledged and appreciated.

I have talked to my brother on many occasions and the fear for their safety is a real issue that they face every day or night when they clock on for their shift. I will not stand for this state to be flooded with tens of thousands of high-powered, high-capacity firearms such as a seven-shot Adler shotgun which can be used by those with nefarious motives. I do not want him and his colleagues to face criminals armed with stolen, high-powered, high-capacity firearms. I do not want him and his colleagues to have to respond to heinous crimes caused by these weapons being in the hands of the wrong people. While the LNP might be happy to throw away longstanding principles supporting the tough gun laws brought in by their former leaders Rob Borbidge and John Howard, the Palaszczuk government will never go soft on guns.