



Speech By  
**Hon. Bill Byrne**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 April 2016

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Firearms, Regulations and Licensing**

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.20 pm): Firearms policy is an emotive issue for many in our community. There are strongly held views from different sectors about different aspects of firearms regulation and licensing. Therefore, to ensure that any future policy framework reflects the diverse views of key stakeholders, such as the police, victims of crime, recreational and sporting shooters and the agricultural sector, a decision has been made to establish a new Weapons Consultation Forum.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BYRNE:** Just wait.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BYRNE:** I have never ruled it out. As members of this House would appreciate, firearms and firearms and weapons policy is a complex and evolving area for governments to consider and for agencies such as the Queensland Police Service to uphold and enforce. The forum will meet on an as-needs basis and provide an opportunity for key industry, recreational and community stakeholders to provide their views directly to me as the accountable minister.

I appreciate that the forum may or is likely to include robust conversations from time to time. As a member representing a regional area in this House, I am well aware of the importance of different firearms to certain constituencies. I suspect that I am the only member of this House who has ever been qualified for aerial destocking operations under the old BTEC program. I know a little bit about the application of such tools. Nevertheless, it is critical that voices of moderation and the broader views of community members are filtered into any proposal to shift weapons regulation in Queensland.

The membership of the forum will be determined by the government following an expression of interest process. This is similar to the Parole Board process. I look forward to engaging with other members of this House and external stakeholders as part of this process and I appreciate the contributions from those members who have already conveyed their views to me.

I make it clear that the new Weapons Consultation Forum will be different from the former government's Weapons Advisory Panel. That panel had no representation from the broader community and had police officer representation, via the Queensland Police Union, only as a last-minute afterthought from the then premier, as we well remember. I want to ensure that our administrative practises reflect the spirit and object of the Weapons Act in Queensland which, ultimately, is to maintain public safety above all else.