




Speech By  
**Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGEЕ**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2017

**MOTION: DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (8.39 pm): I rise to speak against the disallowance motion. I am no stranger to firearms. My father was a rifle champion in his youth and his family rural property owners. I grew up around firearms and I grew up with a healthy respect for the valid role they play in certain circumstances and a healthy respect for the dangers they pose. This government will never be against responsible gun ownership, but we will also never forget that the paramount principle in responsible firearms policy is to protect the community. This regulation demonstrates that commitment to protecting the community with strong gun laws while continuing to support responsible gun owners.

The National Firearms Agreement, which, as we all know, had its genesis in 1996 following the tragic events at Port Arthur, has formed the basis of successful gun control in this country for over 20 years. It has formed the basis of Queensland's regulatory framework for the control of firearms which has indisputably served to prevent the types of tragic mass shootings observed overseas. The community—certainly my community—does not want to see this changed. Since 1996 over one million weapons nationally have been handed in and destroyed through gun buyback schemes or weapons amnesties. Nationally, mass shootings have reduced from 11 in the decade prior to 1996 to zero in the 21 years since. Evidence shows that the rate of firearms related deaths, both suicides and homicides, has also greatly reduced since 1996. These are indisputable facts.

This amendment regulation will bring the treatment of lever action shotguns, currently classified as a category A weapon, into line with other types of shotgun such as pump action or self-loading weapons. This reclassification brings Queensland into line with the 2016 COAG decision to strengthen the National Firearms Agreement. New South Wales has legislated to classify lever action shotguns, Western Australia has done it and the ACT has done likewise. It is time Queensland followed suit.

Lever action shotguns with a capacity of five or fewer rounds will be transferred from weapons category A to category B, and those able to hold more than five rounds will move to category D in respect of the potential threat they pose. The reclassification of low-capacity lever action shotguns to category B will have negligible impact on existing owners. The reclassification of lever action shotguns that hold more than five rounds to category D is warranted. High-capacity lever action shotguns do not by their nature require reloading as frequently as low-capacity shotguns. They have the potential to cause maximum harm in minimum time. Marketing for the Adler shotgun claims that the Adler A110 12-gauge lever action shotgun 20-inch model is 'tailor made for fast and furious pig shooting ... This new technology lever action shotgun is a game changer for the Australian market, and must-have'. That may not be a problem when such a powerful weapon is in the hands of a fit and proper person with a genuine reason for possessing such a firearm, but it is absolutely incumbent on any responsible government to put appropriate safeguards around such possession in the broader community interest.

I appreciate that not all firearm owners will be in agreement with this decision—some will vehemently oppose it—but it is vital that Queensland, and indeed Australia, continues to comply with the spirit of the National Firearms Agreement to keep Queenslanders safe. It is vital that we remain vigilant and committed to that decision 21 years ago to set a policy course in regard to firearms that

seeks to achieve the best balance between the needs of people such as sporting shooters and primary producers who require genuine access to firearms and the interests of the broader community. The community expects it.

While I am talking about gun control, I want to talk for just a moment about category H licences and the capacity to carry a concealed handgun. To use the words of Tim Fischer, Australia's deputy prime minister in the mid-1990s when Australia radically changed its gun laws, the suburban person with a gun in the drawer next to their bed—something, I gather, still common in the United States—has never been part of normal Australian life. Under our current laws, that handy bedside gun would also be illegal, unless the bedside table was a gun safe bolted to the wall with a key kept separately and the ammunition stored elsewhere. This is what the community expects. It is certainly what the families across my electorate expect.

The Palaszczuk government will never support a weakening of our gun laws. Under the Palaszczuk government, Queensland will remain part of John Howard's world renowned National Firearms Agreement. The LNP's election policy on firearms regulation does not, however, give this same commitment. The LNP's proposed removal of the genuine reasons criteria for reapplications for category H licence holders to hold concealable handguns is a blatant watering down of gun laws and a deviation from the National Firearms Agreement. Under the current laws gun owners must reapply and, as well as showing that they are a fit and proper person, they must have a genuine reason to hold a concealable handgun. The LNP wants that test gone and has vowed to renew all existing category H gun licences. This is absolutely out of step with the expectations of much of the Queensland community.

The strong gun controls in this country have worked for 21 years. They are to be respected and not deviated from without extreme caution. Allowing the continued possession of a concealed handgun without, in changed circumstances, a genuine reason is appalling but predictable LNP policy, but it is a policy that I know people in my electorate will reject strongly. As I said in my opening remarks, this government will never be against responsible gun ownership, but we will also never forget that the paramount principle in responsible firearms policy is to protect the community.