




Speech By
Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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MOTION: DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (8.21 pm): If that is the calibre of the candidates of the One Nation party in Queensland at the next election, we can probably all rest easy. During my time in this place it has no doubt been a surprise for some to find out that I have been an advocate on behalf of the licensed shooting community. It is something that I have spoken about with my colleagues across this House and it is something about which I am passionate. In comparison with our friends in the United States, we are fortunate in Australia that gun ownership is not a political wedge issue; it is a public policy question. However, the fundamental framework is broadly agreed upon and settled. This is in large part due to the sensible approach taken on this issue by most sides in the debate over the past 20 years. It is a credit to former prime minister John Howard and his government that in response to the horrendous massacre at Port Arthur he and his ministers acted with such speed to address the issue of the future of gun ownership in a way that has dramatically reduced firearm deaths. It is a credit to the former Borbidge government that in the lead-up to a state election and in the face of community opposition they supported this important reform through to completion.

I will not accept fringe arguments that we need guns for our national security or for personal property defence. That is the role of our professional army and our professional police force respectively. However, we live in a free society and there are legitimate recreational and agricultural uses for firearms, so we must regulate our access to firearms accordingly to ensure that they end up in responsible hands and for legitimate reasons. It is easy to lose perspective in this debate and move to a position of hyperbole. I have worked hard to ensure that the licensed shooters in my community and, indeed, across Queensland have an extra voice in this place.

The politicisation of this group in our community is not positive for them and it is not conducive to good policy outcomes. It achieves nothing positive at all. One of the reasons I have been a vocal advocate on this issue is that there has been unfair demonisation of licensed shooters in the media and in our political process. I have had numerous meetings with individuals, advocates and stakeholders in my community and beyond. I am disappointed that the hard-won gun reform legacy of John Howard was so carelessly abused, first by Tony Abbott and then by Malcolm Turnbull in their horsetrading with crossbench Senator David Leyonhjelm.

This trading on gun laws was part of a shameful exercise to strip away workplace rights and reinstate the illegitimate Australian Building and Construction Commission. This, of course, backfired horribly on Senator Leyonhjelm when Malcolm Turnbull reconnected with his dormant climate-change-believing, leather-jacket-wearing former self and did the right thing on gun laws at long last. It was either the ghost of progressive Malcolm Turnbull or the ghost of the Howard prime ministership that haunted the Prime Minister. In any case, Senator Xenophon summed up the situation well when he stated, 'The problem with horsetrading is sometimes you end up with a donkey or, worse still, you end up making an ass of yourself.'

To be clear, the Palaszczuk government will never support a weakening of our gun laws. Under the Palaszczuk government, Queensland will remain part of John Howard's internationally lauded National Firearms Agreement, NFA. At the December 2016 meeting of COAG, all states and territories

agreed to reclassify lever action shotguns. At the meeting it was determined that lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity of five shots or under would be categorised as category B weapons and those with a magazine capacity of more than five rounds would be categorised as category D weapons—one of the most restrictive categories. In the 20 years since the Howard reforms it must be noted that we have seen technology and weapons advancements, so we need legislation that is reflective of that. As I have said to many, including the member for Mount Isa and also Rob Nioa, someone cannot market a lever action firearm as shooting off eight shots in eight seconds and not expect that to result in community concern.

Mr Katter interjected.

Ms BOYD: It is not new technology; I take that interjection from the member for Mount Isa. It is a rapid firearm. It can shoot off bullets at a rapid rate and there is legitimate community concern around that. The laws that we make in this place need to reflect technological advancements. While the lever technology is old, the fire rate is new.

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. The reclassification of low-capacity lever action shotguns to category B will have a negligible impact on existing owners. All current owners possess a firearms licence permitting them to own either a category A or B weapon. This will enable retention of the lever action shotgun under the conditions of their current licence after its reclassification from category A to B.

Reclassifying lever action shotguns as category B weapons will, however, affect new acquisitions by requiring a person, for the first time, to state a 'genuine need' to possess it. This is not a requirement for category A weapons. Reclassifying high-capacity lever action shotguns to category D will significantly restrict community access to them as the authority to possess a category D weapon is granted only for specific reasons, such as agricultural culling.

However, there is no intention to adversely impact the rights of law-abiding gun owners who possessed a high-capacity lever action shotgun prior to their reclassification. That is why the Weapons Legislation (Lever Action Shotguns) Amendment Regulation 2017 includes appropriate transitional provisions to enable continued ownership rights for existing licensees. The amendment regulation will grandfather the affected weapons by adding an endorsement to the licence of registered owners. The QPS will add an endorsement to the licence of all owners of high-capacity lever action shotguns if, immediately prior to the notification of this amendment regulation on 10 October, the shotgun's magazine capacity recorded in the commissioner's firearms register was more than five rounds, or is more than five rounds because of a lawful modification of the gun. The endorsement will state that they must retain possession of the shotgun even though it is a category D weapon.

The provisions will also allow for a person inheriting such a weapon to be granted a similar endorsement enabling them to possess the weapon under the conditions of a category B licence, provided that the inheritor already holds a firearms licence. Having had extensive consultation and conversations in this policy space, I absolutely understand that not all firearms owners will agree with this decision. That said, once the changes are implemented, most weapons licence holders in Queensland will continue to be able to own lever action shotguns, including the five-shot Adler shotgun.

I want to be very clear in this debate: this is not about demonising licensed firearm owners. All of the evidence backs in that our licensed firearm owners are doing the right thing. Very rarely, if at all, do we see crimes committed by licensed shooters with registered firearms. It is just not prevalent in our country. Our role in government is to keep the community safe, and part of that is limiting access to high-powered weapons that can, if in the wrong hands, cause the kind of devastation that we saw in Las Vegas in recent weeks. At the beginning of the Adler debate I did not see myself making a speech like this, but I am very confident that as a government we will continue to work closely with all stakeholders. We will continue to carefully balance the interests of those with a genuine need to access firearms with the safety and security of the broader community.

We are a government committed to implementing strong gun protection laws. The reclassification of the Adler lever action shotgun needs to happen to comply with the NFA. All other states and territories are making this change in order to comply with the NFA that was set down by John Howard. We need to make that change too, and ultimately we will keep Queensland safe from those who would do us harm. It is for these reasons that I cannot support the member for Mount Isa's disallowance motion.