




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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MOTION: DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (8.45 pm): The LNP believes that the fundamental role of any government is to keep its citizens safe. As we have demonstrated to the people of Queensland time and time again, the LNP will always put community safety first. One of the ways this is achieved is by ensuring we have firearms laws that limit the possibility of the tragic events that we have recently witnessed overseas but that, at the same time, do not limit the legitimate rights of our primary producers to have appropriate tools of trade and the rights of those who enjoy shooting as a sport.

The overwhelming majority of Queenslanders support the National Firearms Agreement introduced by then prime minister John Howard in 1996. It is heartening to continue to hear members of the Labor government feting this great prime minister. For this reason the LNP cannot support tonight's motion to disallow Labor's new regulations because it is important that we have national consistency on weapons categories. We also believe that there are important protections that allow firearms owners who legally own lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity greater than five rounds to apply for an exemption under the new laws.

There is another consequence to supporting this disallowance motion that the Katter's Australian Party have failed to realise. A temporary import ban on lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity greater than five rounds was put in place by the Commonwealth government in 2015. That ban remains in place today. That ban will only be lifted once every state and territory has moved to reclassify that weapon from category B to category D. If this disallowance motion is defeated tonight, we will be the fifth jurisdiction to do that, with three to go. Let me say again what this unintended consequence is. If this regulation is disallowed tonight, the temporary import ban will remain in place and none of these weapons will be allowed into the country for any reason. A successful disallowance motion by Katter's Australian Party will backfire on the mover.

I acknowledge that many law-abiding firearms owners see Labor's new regulations as an attack on their rights and an attack on their integrity. This is totally understandable when you look at Labor's track record in this area. Law-abiding firearms owners are unfairly demonised—and we have seen it tonight once again—by left-wing political parties and treated like criminals when all they try to do is the right thing and comply with the law.

It is hard for them to swallow Labor's rationale of watering down tough laws that make it easier for organised crime gangs to get weapons yet treats them with utter contempt and disdain. It is hard for them to swallow the media reports that we see yet again today which sees the CFMEU get away with its ongoing lawlessness and treating construction workers with fear and intimidation, yet law-abiding firearm owners get demonised for trying to comply with the law and have increased red tape and regulations.

It is important to understand how we have come to this debate tonight. Last night we clearly saw the Labor Party and Katter's Australian Party cook up a deal to create a wedge on an important community safety issue which should never be trivialised. It is not often that you see the Governor rushed to parliament on a Tuesday night to sign off on an Executive Council minute. I am sure that

Queenslanders would like to know what deal was made in exchange for the events that took place last night. Last night's political stunt was clearly choreographed, and the blame for that lies at the feet of the Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, who continues to peddle misinformation and use emotional rhetoric that the firearm community are sick and tired of. That was clear from the Deputy Premier's comments on radio this morning on the ABC and her contribution here tonight.

There is no doubt Labor's election platform is skewed in favour of left-wing ideological policies to help salvage the Deputy Premier's political hide in South Brisbane rather than governing for all of Queensland. It is about fighting the Greens on issues that matter to people in South Brisbane rather than across the state. While Labor's policies lurch to the left, Queenslanders will suffer from that skewed policy agenda that they will reject at the next state election. I would encourage Queenslanders to completely disregard the emotional rhetoric and misinformation that comes out of the mouth of the Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad. It is clear that she is deliberately scaremongering. We understand that some people in the firearm community will be disappointed with our position this evening. However, we believe that we have made a balanced decision—one that takes into account the interests of the whole state—and it will not lessen our resolve to ensure fairer gun laws for law-abiding citizens.

Ms Jones: What does that mean?

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection; I will explain it now. It is our plan to respect the rights of law-abiding firearm owners—the people who do the right thing—with a focus on getting back to basics, and that is the centre of our policy, Fairer Gun Laws. We will do this by the following: we will restore proper consultation through a properly constituted ministerial weapons advisory panel as a standing body that will meet every three months and there will be genuine consultation—not being told what will happen as currently happens—and we will ensure that policy decisions are informed by evidence and expert advice, not misinformation and media spin.

We will improve the screening processes with real-time background checks by reforming the application and compliance process so that police can ensure there is a more rigorous system with a focus on compliance, not bureaucracy. This will be done by implementing a licensed instant verification system, with the reforms to be led by the ministerial weapons advisory panel as a priority. We will increase penalties for gun crime and reinforce our approach to cracking down on criminal behaviour, not Queenslanders who are doing the right thing. We do respect the right of primary producers and landholders in this state and the fact that they need firearms as a tool of trade, and those who have had category H weapons licences for years and years and years will be grandfathered.

The current approach by the Weapons Licensing branch has provided great uncertainty and needs to change. The LNP has continued to raise examples of this issue in the media and in the parliament where law-abiding owners have had licences denied for no good reason. Unlike Labor, we will not treat law-abiding firearm owners like criminals. The LNP will continue to respect law-abiding firearm owners and ensure that their rights are protected. We cannot support this disallowance motion tonight which would put Queensland out of step with every other state on a fundamentally important community safety issue.