




Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**

**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 February 2020

**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.27 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I do not have strong views on many of the amendments. I will make a quick comment in regard to electronic devices. I am sure this amendment is well intentioned and will be an improvement for police in doing their duties—and that is a good thing—but we need to be very careful. We can be complacent in terms of the way information is gathered. I know there is a lot of debate federally about that. I do raise caution when we pass legislation about how information is retained, gathered and stored. I know that it is always done with the intention of targeting criminals but, without trying to sound too much like a tinfoil hat wearer, for all sorts of reasons it should raise politicians' awareness.

Certainly, we took note of the issues relating to firearms. The suspension of a notice extension from 30 to 90 days makes a lot of sense. That is a tidying up of the laws; well done. That represents good interaction with the advisory committee, and I do not have a problem with that. Another issue concerned regulating firearm modifications. If someone is a licensed person undertaking firearm modifications, they have some rights and responsibilities to control for whom they are doing modifications. I do not have a problem with that.

It is always difficult to pass judgement on these things without thinking about the inadvertent consequences down the track. That is difficult to do with any laws, and that is particularly so with firearms. I acknowledge that the government works with the firearm advisory committee, which is a really good thing, but even it can sometimes pick up anomalies in laws.

By and large, firearms are really more the domain of rural and regional residents. Just like we do not have the majority here, fewer and fewer people are tuned into the nuances associated with firearm ownership. That leads me to the next issue, and this is an issue that I disagree with and, given the opportunity, will be voting against this clause in the bill—that is, the definition of 'magazine'. I would not say that it is highly contentious and I acknowledge that there were no great concerns raised by anyone from the firearms industry with regard to this issue in the discussions on it. However, I make the very strong point to the House that nor was there any evidence to suggest why this should be done, and that is a central issue with so many amendments that are made with regard to firearms and weapons licensing in this state—that is, it is always the default position to diminish or reduce the rights that are available to owners. In this case, attached magazines will be categorised in the same way so there is the potential to reduce the capacity in tubes.

If people have said that there is no real impact so we do not have any objections to it, then the same argument can be used in reverse: why then do it? If there is no evidence to say why it should be done, then I would be erring on the side of caution the other way and saying not to do it because in all likelihood there could be inadvertent effects from this down the track that will impact on licensed firearm owners. As we say time and time again in this House, licensed firearm owners are not the issue of concern when it comes to firearm and weapons licensing and any offences associated with firearms.

There are never any issues associated with licensed firearm owners. Even when we throw in the issue of theft of firearms from licensed firearm owners, it is still such an absolute minute fraction of any activity in that space that it does not warrant any change in legislation.

I want to dwell on that point because time and time again we see things come before the House and licensed firearm owners are always demonised with a reduction in their rights or their capacity to effectively and safely use firearms in the manner in which they are accustomed to. We will be objecting to that. There is no strong reason to object to it or not to have it, but nor is there any strong reason to have it there in the first place. On that basis, we will be opposing that part and supporting the rest of the bill.