

Submission to the enquiry concerning “The ability of Australian law enforcement authorities to eliminate gun related violence in the community”

To the Committee Secretariat,

My name is Scott Payne and I would like to submit my views and concerns to this inquiry as a personal submission and I hope my submission is received as constructive and helpful to your enquiry.

I am a former Australian Army soldier. I gave 13 faithful years of service including 2 operational tours of duty to the Middle East and East Timor until I was medically discharged in 2011. I have been a licenced firearms holder for the last 15 years and have enjoyed the various aspects of the sport including hunting and club level competition shoots and have never had an infringement concerning firearms.

I am a father, husband, friend, co-worker, tax payer and veteran. I have no drug crops or drug labs to defend, no debts that need collecting, no protection needed from rival gangs or drug dealers therefore my ownership of firearms is for participation in my sport, not as to be used as a criminals tool. Take away the above mentioned issues and then gun crime will drop away. Don't take away people's right to participate in a sport. Otherwise baseball bats, knives, archery equipment, vehicles and other blunt or sharp objects that are used in other sports and activities should be banned as well.

I will address each point as per below:

- A. *the estimated number, distribution and lethality of illegal guns, including both outlawed and stolen guns, in Australia:* For this point I recommend that Police be given more powers and if possible funding to gain better intelligence data to enable them to act without the fear of “Red Tape” or being held to ridiculous levels of account that is currently thrust upon our frustrated state Police Forces. I say this as I hear this exact point from friends who are Police members across the country.
- B. *the operation and consequences of the illicit firearms trade, including both outlawed and stolen guns within Australia:* From my point of view, criminals will continue to operate with such a brazen manner despite knowing that the consequences are minimal. To hardened criminals, the current laws are clearly too soft. Most law abiding citizens would be abhorred to spend even one night in jail let alone a few day in remand. Please consider the great majority of law abiding citizens who love this sport and do everything required to satisfy the ever tightening laws that only punish them, not the criminals.
- C. *the adequacy of current laws and resourcing to enable law enforcement authorities to respond to technological advances in gun technology, including firearms made from parts which have been imported separately or covertly to avoid detection, and firearms made with the use of 3D printers:* I strongly agree that Police and associated authorities be given more funding and freedom of maneuver when combating these issues. That way those of us who have nothing to hide have nothing to worry about as we will stand up to scrutiny and criminals who are doing the wrong thing will be caught and dealt with i.e. punish those who DESERVE IT not those who don't.
- D. *the extent to which the number and types of guns stolen each year in Australia increase the risk posed to the safety of police and the community, including the proportion of gun-related crime involving legal firearms which are illegally held:* Again I support extra funding and increased powers to our Police forces to increase the frequency of inspections of firearms storage. I do however think that current storage laws should outlaw timber cabinets as storage devices. Only steel vault style cabinets should be allowed and be securely fixed to the structure.

- E. *the effect banning semi-automatic handguns would have on the number of illegally held firearms in Australia:* Again, please consider those who are doing the right thing and abiding by the already current strict laws. If all semi-automatic hand guns are banned, a buy back scheme should be considered to fairly compensate owners as we would be losing a lot of money that we have invested into our sport. For example one competition pistol could cost over \$4000 a piece and then all our associated ancillaries such as holsters, magazines, reloading equipment, cleaning equipment and current stocks of ammunition would be unable to be sold as there would be no market to sell to.
- F. *stricter storage requirements and the use of electronic alarm systems for guns stored in homes:* I strongly support this if it will allow law abiding citizens to maintain if not gain some relaxation on the current stringent laws regarding firearms.
- G. *the extent to which there exist anomalies in federal, state and territory laws regarding the ownership, sale, storage and transit across state boundaries of legal firearms, and how these laws relate to one another:* I strongly support a review of all state and territory laws regarding the above laws. The current laws are far too restrictive on just about every aspect of firearms laws. This causes lawful firearms owners to feel like we are the criminals. For example all semi-automatic rifles have been banned. Certainly, military style firearms do not need to be in every home but when hunting a quick follow up shot on an animal may be needed to make sure we are being humane. Even a soldier, who is well trained in marksmanship can sometimes miss the mark due any number of reasons. So why not allow semi-automatic "Hunting rifles" to be considered? I'm quite sure a criminal would have a hard time robbing a bank with a 5 shot rifle with a 24" barrel! Please also consider that for some, suitable hunting properties are interstate and require us to transit across state borders to participate in our sport.

In summary, I implore this committee to PLEASE take into consideration the law abiding citizens who love our sport and who do the right thing and have suffered long enough. The negative press generated by criminal activity, anti-gun group rhetoric and public ignorance to our sport has been allowed to unjustly affect our cause. Please target the criminals and protect us as we have done nothing wrong. We have nothing to hide and I'm sure we will all be willing to show that. However we continue to endure being marginalized and stereotyped by certain interest groups and media scare mongering. Target the criminals not the law abiding citizen who has gone to great lengths to acquire correct licensing and storage facilities, demonstrating responsible firearms ownership.

I am more than happy to be contacted at any time if any of my points need clarification or expanding.

Kind regards,

Scott Payne