

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Program: 1.2 AGD Operating Expenses - National Security and Criminal Justice

Question No. AE17/159

Senator Watt asked the following question at the hearing on 24 March 2017:

An updated National Firearms Agreement was recently uploaded to the Department's website.

1. When was the Agreement finalised?
2. What are the major changes contained in the updated Agreement?
3. Can the Department confirm that there has been no relaxation of gun laws in the Agreement?
4. I have here a screenshot of the Minister's website with no media release, and a search for stories in the week following the new Agreement shows no media coverage.
5. Why was there was no media release? Did the Department offer to write one? Was the Department instructed not to prepare one? Were you instructed to 'bury' this update?
6. Will there be a COAG communique?
7. Has the Department sought or received any feedback from stakeholders, including sporting shooters' associations and gun control advocates about the updated National Firearms Agreement since it was released?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1. The Law, Crime and Community Safety Council agreed to the updated National Firearms Agreement in February 2017.
2. Key changes in the updated National Firearms Agreement include:
 - a. incorporating the 2002 National Handgun Agreement and other ministerial decisions so that the Agreement is the single reference for firearms regulation in Australia
 - b. adding an opening statement setting out the purpose of the Agreement and firearms regulation more broadly
 - c. streamlining the Agreement to make it easier to read and understand, and
 - d. reclassifying lever action shotguns.
3. Yes.
4. No question.
5. The department was not instructed to write a media release, nor asked to 'bury' the update of the Agreement.
6. The COAG made a reference to the updated National Firearms Agreement following its meeting on 9 December 2016.
7. Yes.