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**To:** Strategy and Support, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management**Email:** submissions.strategy.support@DPFEM.tas.gov.au

AMA Tasmania submission on the *Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026*

Introduction

AMA Tasmania welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026*. AMA Tasmania approaches firearms regulation as a public health and community safety issue. Firearm-related harm includes homicide, family violence, accidental injury, intimidation, theft and diversion into the illicit market, and suicide. AMA policy has long recognised that restricting access to firearms can reduce morbidity and mortality, and has supported firearms registration, national licensing consistency, and refusal, suspension or cancellation of licences where there is a reasonable concern about violence or domestic violence risk.

Summary of AMA Tasmania's position

AMA Tasmania supports the broad intent of the Bill to strengthen firearms regulation, improve community and police safety, support the National Firearms Register, and reduce the risk that firearms are accessed by people who pose a risk to themselves or others. AMA Tasmania particularly supports stronger controls relating to domestic and family violence, firearm prohibition orders, intelligence sharing, licensing eligibility, firearm storage, lending arrangements, reclassification of higher-risk firearms, magazine-capacity limits, and measures that reduce theft and diversion.

AMA Tasmania does not support the proposed three-month mandatory minimum prison sentence for stealing, or possessing, a stolen firearm. AMA Tasmania supports serious penalties for firearm theft and possession of stolen firearms, but sentencing should remain a matter for judicial discretion.

AMA Tasmania also recommends that the Bill more explicitly address suicide prevention and acute mental-health risk, including by ensuring clear powers, information-sharing pathways and timely processes to suspend access to firearms where a person is experiencing an acute risk of self-harm or where a serious safety concern is raised.

Key issues

National Firearms Register and intelligence sharing: AMA Tasmania supports the amendments required to connect Tasmania with the National Firearms Register. Near real-time access to accurate information about firearms, licences, permits and related records should enhance police and community safety, assist responding officers, support interjurisdictional intelligence sharing, and reduce diversion into the illicit market.

Information-sharing provisions should allow relevant safety information to be acted upon promptly, including information relating to domestic and family violence risk, firearm prohibition orders, licence eligibility, storage compliance, stolen firearms, and credible risks of self-harm or violence.

Domestic and family violence: AMA Tasmania supports provisions allowing relevant historical domestic violence orders to be considered in licensing and regulatory decisions. Firearms can magnify the risk and consequences of family violence, including through physical harm, coercive control, intimidation and threats. Decision-makers should be able to consider patterns of conduct and relevant historical risk factors, and should have clear powers to refuse, suspend or cancel licences and seize firearms where there is a reasonable concern about violence, intimidation or coercive control.

Suicide prevention and acute mental-health risk: The greatest opportunity for reducing firearm-related deaths in Australia lies in preventing suicide and self-harm. Firearms are highly lethal, and reducing immediate access during periods of acute distress is an important prevention strategy. AMA Tasmania recommends that the Bill provide clear, practical mechanisms for temporary suspension of access to firearms where there is credible information that a person may be at imminent risk of self-harm or may pose a risk to others.

Such mechanisms should include appropriate safeguards, procedural fairness, review rights and time limits. They should be practical for rural and regional settings and should not deter people from seeking help. AMA Tasmania recommends consultation with medical practitioners, mental-health services, police, family violence services and rural communities on the design of any risk-notification or temporary removal process.

Reclassification, lending, storage and magazine limits: AMA Tasmania supports, in principle, measures that reduce access to higher-risk firearms and strengthen accountability for firearm possession, lending and storage. This includes the proposed reclassification of straight-pull and button or lever-release centre-fire rifles and shotguns to Category C, restrictions on on-lending, licence and storage checks before lending, notification when firearms are stored away from their registered address, and limits on detachable-magazine capacity for some Category A and B firearms.

AMA Tasmania also supports the proposed compulsory buyback arrangements for affected reclassified firearms and the proposed voluntary buyback for other lawfully held firearms.

Firearm prohibition orders: AMA Tasmania supports stronger firearm prohibition orders where they improve the capacity of police to respond to credible risks of violence, criminal misuse, intimidation, coercive control or diversion. Prohibition orders should operate alongside effective information sharing, enforcement powers, and safeguards against arbitrary or disproportionate use.

Licensing eligibility and citizenship: AMA Tasmania supports robust licensing eligibility requirements, including reliable proof of identity, background checks, violence-risk assessment, storage verification and ongoing compliance. The proposed Australian citizenship requirement should be assessed against its community safety purpose, administrative practicality and fairness, including the adequacy of exemptions for people with legitimate occupational or other demonstrated needs.

Mandatory minimum sentencing

AMA Tasmania supports serious penalties for stealing firearms and possessing stolen firearms. Firearm theft is a serious community safety issue because stolen firearms may be used in violent offending, intimidation, family violence, organised crime or terrorism, and may be difficult to recover once diverted into the illicit market.

However, AMA Tasmania does not support the proposed three-month mandatory minimum prison sentence. AMA Tasmania has previously opposed mandatory minimum sentencing because it is not an

evidence-based or proportionate way to improve community safety. This position does not minimise the seriousness of firearm-related offending.

Mandatory sentencing risks fettering judicial discretion, producing unjust outcomes in exceptional cases, increasing contested pleas, increasing court costs and delay, and shifting discretion from the court to charging and prosecutorial decisions. Courts should retain the ability to impose imprisonment, including substantial imprisonment, where the seriousness of the offending warrants it, while also considering culpability, risk, prior history, intent, coercion, mental impairment, youth, rehabilitation prospects and community safety.

AMA Tasmania recommends that the mandatory minimum term be removed and replaced with sentencing guidance that preserves judicial discretion while making clear the seriousness of firearm theft and possession of stolen firearms. This could include increased maximum penalties, aggravating factors, and a requirement that courts consider the risk of diversion, violence and community harm.

Limit on the number of firearms held by an individual

AMA Tasmania notes that the Government has stated that the Bill does not propose a general cap on the number of firearms an individual may own. AMA Tasmania considers that this issue should remain under active consideration. AMA Tasmania supports in principle a reasonable limit on the number of firearms that may be held by an individual without additional scrutiny. While the evidence does not identify a single optimal numerical cap, it supports reducing unnecessary access to firearms, preventing suicide, minimising the risk of firearms being used in family violence, and limiting the number that can be stolen or diverted into the illicit market.

Any cap should include carefully defined exemptions for demonstrated occupational, sporting and collecting needs, supported by enhanced storage, inspection and reporting requirements. Where an individual seeks to hold a large number of firearms, additional scrutiny should apply to genuine need, storage arrangements, theft risk, security standards, inspection frequency and ongoing fitness.

Recommendations

1. Support the Bill's overall intent to strengthen firearms regulation, improve public and police safety, and prepare Tasmania for the National Firearms Register.
2. Proceed with stronger firearm prohibition orders, improved intelligence sharing, strengthened storage and lending requirements, reclassification of higher-risk firearms, magazine-capacity limits, and buyback arrangements.
3. Ensure domestic and family violence risk, including relevant historical domestic violence orders and patterns of coercive or intimidating conduct, can be considered in licensing, suspension, cancellation and seizure decisions.
4. Strengthen the Bill's approach to suicide prevention and acute mental-health risk, including clear temporary suspension or removal mechanisms with appropriate safeguards.
5. Remove the proposed three-month mandatory minimum prison sentence and instead rely on increased maximum penalties, sentencing guidance and aggravating factors that preserve judicial discretion.
6. Consider a reasonable limit on the number of firearms that may be held by an individual without additional scrutiny, with carefully defined exemptions for demonstrated occupational, sporting and collecting needs.

Conclusion

AMA Tasmania supports stronger, evidence-informed firearm laws that reduce preventable harm, improve community safety and support timely action where firearms present a risk to individuals, families or the broader community. The Bill contains several important measures that AMA Tasmania supports, particularly in relation to the National Firearms Register, domestic and family violence, prohibition orders, intelligence sharing, storage, lending and firearm diversion.

AMA Tasmania recommends that the Bill be strengthened by more explicitly addressing suicide prevention and acute mental-health risk, and by considering additional scrutiny where individuals seek to hold large numbers of firearms. AMA Tasmania also recommends that the proposed mandatory minimum sentence be removed, while retaining strong penalties and sentencing options for serious firearm offending.

Yours sincerely

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