

Tasmania Police

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CONSULTATION SUBMISSION ON THE FIREARMS AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2026

As Commissioner of Police, I welcome the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026* (the Bill).

Tasmania Police is the principal law enforcement agency in this state. The aim, behind everything we do, is that Tasmania is a place that is safe for everyone to live, work and visit. I see this Bill as an important step towards reducing risks and improving safety for our frontline police officers and the broader Tasmanian community.

As you are aware, I have publicly expressed my support for further reforms than what is currently proposed, including the introduction of limits to the number of firearms that a person may own, aligned with national reform discussions and legislation that has been passed in Western Australia and New South Wales. Reducing the total number of firearms in the community, while continuing to permit the lawful use of firearms by people who can demonstrate a genuine reason and need, will enhance officer and community safety.

Tasmania Police has a range of responsibilities under the *Firearms Act 1996* (the Act), including the granting of licences, registration of firearms, conducting licence reviews and suspension or cancellations, and the investigation of criminal offences under the Act. Tasmania Police is deeply impacted by any reform of this legislation.

Tasmania has consistently supported nationally coordinated firearms reforms since the introduction of the *Firearms Act 1996* and continues to participate fully in the development of the National Firearms Register (NFR) and broader National Firearms Agreement (NFA)

reform agenda. The Bill represents an important step in modernising Tasmania's firearms regulatory framework and implementing agreed national reforms.

Tasmania Police supports the Bill noting that the proposed amendments will significantly improve firearms tracing, intelligence sharing, compliance monitoring and public safety outcomes. The reforms are particularly important in the context of National Cabinet decisions made following the Bondi terrorist attack of December 2025 and the ongoing implementation of the NFR.

The Bill addresses the more immediate legislative priorities, including:

- implementation of NFR requirements;
- strengthening controls against firearms theft and trafficking;
- reclassification of straight-pull and button/lever-release firearms;
- enhanced information sharing and verification requirements;
- improved dealer reporting and record-keeping obligations;
- citizenship requirements for firearms licensing; and
- stronger sentencing outcomes for serious firearms offending.

Noting my views on further reforms that I believe ought be considered, the proposed amendments will assist Tasmania Police in our efforts to improve oversight and regulation of firearms in our community.

National Firearms Register Reform

The NFR is the most significant firearms reform project undertaken nationally since the NFA in 1996.

National Cabinet has agreed that the Register will provide near real-time access to firearms licensing, registration and permit information across all Australian jurisdictions. Key capabilities include licence verification, interstate movement notifications, regulatory alerts and improved intelligence sharing.

Many of the proposed amendments directly support those objectives, including:

- creation of licence and permit verification requirements;
- improved dealer transaction reporting;
- electronic dealer record-keeping provisions;
- storage location reporting requirements; and
- information-sharing enhancements.

Tasmania Police strongly supports these reforms as essential prerequisites for successful NFR implementation.

Reclassification of Straight-Pull and Button/Lever-Release Firearms

Tasmania Police supports the proposed reclassification of straight-pull and button/lever-release rifles and shotguns to Category C, however notes that the proposed definition limits the reclassification to centrefire versions only. This limitation is unnecessary and does not

align with community safety considerations. Rimfire rifles should also be included in the definition.

National reform discussions have identified that these firearms can achieve rates of operation that significantly exceed those traditionally associated with conventional bolt-action firearms and effectively circumvent the intent of longstanding restrictions on rapid-fire firearms. It has been widely reported that these types of firearms were used in the December Bondi terrorist attack. It is apparent the rapid reloading operation of these firearms enabled faster targeting of victims in a shorter time period.

New laws introduced by the Commonwealth in January 2026 now restrict importation of all types of these firearms, including rimfire versions. These firearms can no longer be imported into Australia unless the importer satisfies the same tests applicable to the importation of a semi-automatic firearm. For Tasmania that is a category C or D licence – depending on the magazine capacity.

To expand the definition of straight-pull and button/lever-release rifles and shotguns to include rimfire rifles would affect reclassification of an additional 1,141 firearms.

Current Registered Firearms by Rimfire Status – Selected Types

	Straight Pull	Self Ejecting	Total
Is Rimfire	652	489	1,141
Is Not Rimfire	1,175	38	1,213
Total	1,827	527	

Source: Tasmania Police Firearms and Weapons Database System, 2 July 2026

The reclassification of all straight-pull and button/lever-release firearms appropriately aligns the licensing framework with contemporary firearm technology and community expectations regarding public safety.

Firearm Theft and Trafficking Reforms

Firearm theft remains a significant source of diversion into illicit firearms markets.

Tasmanian data demonstrates an increasing trend in firearms theft incidents with an increasing number of firearms being stolen. In 2021-22 there was an average of 3.3 firearms stolen per incident and by 2025-26 there was an average of 3.7 firearms stolen per incident.

The below table demonstrates trend data over five years:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Firearm Theft Incidents	37	27	35	42	40
Number of Firearms Stolen	121	90	123	160	149

Source: Tasmania Police Offence Reporting System 2, 9 July 2026

The strengthened offence provisions contained within the Bill will significantly improve Tasmania Police's ability to target criminal access to firearms, including:

- increased penalties for possession of stolen firearms;

- alternative verdict provisions;
- summary prosecution options;
- a specific firearm theft offence; and
- mandatory custodial sentencing provisions.

A snapshot of firearm offending and licence suspension or cancellation

Tasmania Police is responsible for investigating all firearms offences and for prosecuting summary firearms matters. Over a five-year period there has been a modest increase of incidents where either a firearm has been used as a weapon in the commission of a crime, or where there has been the unlawful discharge of a firearm (not necessarily in connection with a crime).

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Incidents Involving Firearm Use	97	100	83	118	108
- Firearm Used as Weapon Incidents	70	69	57	76	79
- Unlawful Firearms Discharge Incidents	34	41	34	49	33

Source: Tasmania Police Offence Reporting System 2, 9 July 2026

Five-year trend data demonstrates there has been a steady increase in the number of offenders charged with firearms offences.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Firearms Offenders	456	489	511	695	672

Source: Tasmania Police Prosecution and Information Bureau Systems, 9 July 2026

This data captures all firearms offenders and does not delineate which offenders were firearms licence holders as opposed to offenders who did not hold a licence. There is strong argument that the increased firearms dealer and firearms owner reporting responsibilities, along with introducing the enhanced capabilities from the NFR will reduce diversion of lawful firearms to the illicit firearms market thus assist in reducing firearms offending and improve community safety.

It is also useful to consider suspension or cancellation decisions that have been made in relation to firearms licence holders. Tasmania Police may suspend or cancel a firearms licence pursuant to sections 51 and 53 of the Act. Suspension of a licence occurs in the first instance where a licence holder is issued with an order, charged with a relevant crime or offence; or when information is received that indicates some risk posed to themselves or others. Cancellation may follow a suspension in those circumstances, or following conviction for an offence. During the last 5 years there has been a steady increase in the number of suspensions and cancellations. The implementation of the NFR will assist in monitoring compliance with the Act by licensed firearms holders.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Firearms Licences Cancelled	65	129	129	144	272
Firearms Licences Suspended	230	291	277	339	342

Citizenship Requirements

Tasmania Police supports making Australian citizenship the default qualification for firearms licensing, with the proposed exemptions.

This position aligns with Tasmania's contribution to national reform discussions, which have supported Australian citizenship as a core licensing requirement while recognising appropriate exemptions for New Zealand permanent residents and individuals legitimately employed within primary production industries. I support the balanced approach reflected in the Bill which also allows for discretion where it is reasonable that it should apply.

Further Reform Recommendations

While Tasmania Police supports the Bill, consideration should be given to additional reforms that have been discussed nationally and are being progressed by some jurisdictions, with the support of the Commonwealth.

Firearms Ownership Caps

One of the key policy positions arising from the national reform discussions post-Bondi is the introduction of a limit on the number of firearms that a person may own. This aims to address the concentration of large numbers of firearms within a comparatively small proportion of licence holders.

The link between reducing firearms in the community and reduction of harm is well evidenced. The Australian Institute of Criminology reports² that between 1991 and 2001 the rate of firearms related deaths in Australia decreased significantly. In 1991 there were 629 firearm related deaths in Australia and by 2001 there were 333 firearm related deaths, this represents a 47% decrease. It is noted the NFA was implemented during this period resulting in the national buyback.

The impact of firearms caps in Tasmania on current licence holders would not be significant but would enhance community safety. Current statistics indicate in Tasmania:

- 75 per cent of licence holders own five or fewer firearms;
- 25 per cent own six or more firearms; and
- 1,541 licence holders own eleven or more firearms.

Tasmania Police acknowledges that firearm ownership caps must include appropriate exemptions for:

- primary producers;
- collectors;
- firearms dealers; and
- legitimate competitive shooting activities.

² <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi269>

It is important that Tasmania remains engaged in national policy development on ownership caps and preserve flexibility to implement nationally agreed settings that will improve community safety for all Tasmanians:

- access to intelligence that provides continuous intelligence-based monitoring of firearms licence holders;
- automatic alerts regarding adverse intelligence holdings;
- notification of interstate firearms prohibition orders; and
- ongoing assessment of public safety risks.

Future Restrictions on Emerging Firearm Technologies

National Cabinet has agreed that reform work should continue regarding firearm technologies designed to circumvent existing categorisation frameworks.

Parliament should maintain a mechanism for expedited regulatory response to:

- emerging rapid-fire firearm platforms;
- novel operating systems;
- conversion devices;
- future technological developments not presently contemplated by the Act.

This will ensure the legislation remains responsive to emerging risks. It is noted that the Victorian Government has provided authority to the Commissioner of Police to temporarily reclassify new firearms technologies and high risk emerging firearms.

Conclusion

The *Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026* represents a substantial and necessary enhancement of Tasmania's firearms regulatory framework.

The Bill aligns Tasmania with nationally agreed reform directions, supports implementation of the National Firearms Register, strengthens responses to firearm theft and trafficking, improves information sharing and modernises licensing arrangements.

Tasmania Police supports the Bill, subject to the comments and recommendations outlined in this correspondence.

Yours sincerely



Donna Adams PSM APM
COMMISSIONER