

Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026

Questions and Answers

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What is the background to this Bill?

The *Firearms Act 1996* (the Act) provides for the regulation, registration and control of firearms. The Act was introduced to enact the National Firearms Agreement following the tragic events which occurred at Port Arthur on 28 April 1996.

In 2023, following concerns about firearms information sharing between jurisdictions, including issues highlighted after the December 2022 Wieambilla murders in Queensland, National Cabinet agreed to proceed with implementation of the National Firearms Register (NFR). The Commonwealth subsequently committed to establishing the NFR to upgrade firearms management systems across Australia.

Tasmania has consistently participated in national firearms reform initiatives and maintains its own firearms registry through Tasmania Police. As a signatory jurisdiction to the National Firearms Agreement, Tasmania is participating in the development of the National Firearms Register. The Tasmanian Government supports improved national information sharing through the NFR recognising the benefits of a nationally connected firearms intelligence capability.

In the wake of the tragic events at Bondi on 14 December 2025, the Tasmanian Government announced further measures to improve community safety. These measures include the reclassification of straight pull and button or lever release centre- fire rifles and shotguns to the more restrictive Category C licence and establishing Australian citizenship as a default eligibility requirement for firearms licensing with exemptions for New Zealand citizens in defined circumstances such as primary production.

Broadly, what does the Bill do?

The Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026 will amend the *Firearms Act 1996* (the Act) to be ready for the introduction of the NFR and will further amend the Act for Australian citizenship and Tasmanian residency to be a condition of a licence. It will also reclassify certain firearms, increase penalties for certain offences, create new offences and update some definitions to make the Act more contemporary and fit for purpose.

What does the NFR do?

The NFR will provide law enforcement agencies with near real time access to accurate information regarding registered firearms, firearms licences, permits and other relevant records across Australia.

The NFR will provide a single national view of a firearm's lifecycle, from manufacture or importation through to transfer, surrender, destruction or export. This will improve the ability of police to trace firearms, identify risks associated with firearm ownership, investigate firearm trafficking and theft, and ensure regulatory decisions are based on complete and current information.

By delivering a consistent and reliable national picture of lawful firearm ownership and firearm movements, the NFR amendments proposed in the Bill will reduce regulatory gaps between jurisdictions and improve Australia's overall firearms management framework.

Why are there changes in definitions and terminology?

Several definitions are proposed to be amended in the Bill to increase national consistency and clarity, this will make the Act more contemporary and fit for purpose. Examples of this are 'pistol' being amended to 'handgun' and 'firearm sound suppressor' to 'suppressor'.

When will the new laws commence?

The amendments commence on a day or days to be proclaimed. This means that when the Bill passes parliament, provisions that introduce strengthened penalties for criminal offending may be introduced sooner, while provisions that are pending the launch of NFR functionality will be introduced when the NFR project can deliver the capability. This Bill is about preparing the Act for the NFR as system design is contingent on the underpinning legislation.

What are the changes to detachable magazine limits?

The Act already imposes limits on the size of detachable magazines, the Bill makes the limits more consistent within the Act and more consistent with other jurisdictions.

For Category A the proposed limit is a detachable firearms magazine with a capacity of no more than 10 rounds for a rim-fire rifle, and for a shotgun to have a magazine capacity of no more than 5 rounds, this includes shotgun and rim-fire rifle combinations.

For Category B the proposed limit is for a centre-fire rifle that has a detachable firearms magazine with a capacity of no more than 10 rounds. The Bill proposes to keep the magazine capacity for lever action shotguns as it currently is.

Are firearms with inbuilt magazines excluded from the restrictions on magazine size?

Yes, the difference is that a firearm with a detachable magazine can be reloaded rapidly by inserting a new full magazine. A firearm with an inbuilt magazine, such as a tubular magazine cannot be reloaded rapidly after the magazine has been emptied, this is why the new rule does not apply to a firearm with an inbuilt magazine.

What types of firearms are going to be reclassified?

Centre-fire rifles and shotguns that have a self-ejecting mechanism and only require the pressing of a button or lever release mechanism to complete the reloading cycle, and centre-fire rifles and shotguns that have a straight pull will be reclassified to the more restricted Category C licence.

What will happen if I own a reclassified firearm and I am not eligible for a Category C licence?

If you are not eligible for a Category C firearms licence then the firearm will be subject to a buyback scheme, noting that this scheme is still being negotiated between the Tasmanian and Australian Governments.

With the reclassification of straight pull centre-fire and button or lever release centre-fire firearms into Category C why is there a restriction that only allows one firearm?

The *Firearms Act 1996* already has a limit on the number of Category C firearms that a Category C licence holder can possess. An amendment is being made that increases this limit so that if a Category C licence holder currently possesses Category C firearms, and they own a straight pull or button or lever release centre-fire rifle that is currently Category B, then when this firearm is reclassified, the licence holder will still be able to possess that firearm.

The intention is to move straight pull and button or lever release centre-fire firearms to the more restricted Category C, not to remove this type of firearm from a Category C licence holder who may already own a registered firearm of this action type.

What changes relate to Domestic Violence Orders?

The *Firearms Act 1996* currently provides a restriction on granting a firearms licence to anybody who is subject to a restraint order, interim restraint order, a recognised DVO, a family violence order, an interim family violence order or a police family violence order.

The Commissioner is allowed to consider the history of orders that may have been granted in the last 5 years when determining if a person is a fit and proper person to be granted a firearms licence, however this does not currently include a historical DVO.

This means that currently, a person could have a history of one or more recognised DVOs being issued, those orders having recently expired, the applicant moving to Tasmania and the Commissioner not being able to consider the domestic violence history in determining if an applicant should be granted a firearms licence.

This amendment is to ensure that the Commissioner can consider relevant family and domestic violence history from other jurisdictions in determining if an applicant should or should not be granted a firearms licence.

Changes in Citizenship and residency

The Bill establishes Australian citizenship and Tasmanian residency provisions as a requirement for a firearms licence in Tasmania. There are proposed limited exemptions to the citizenship requirements in defined circumstances or if granted an exemption by the Commissioner of Police. The citizenship requirement is in line with New South Wales and Victoria's legislation.

As is the current case with all licence renewal applications, an applicant will have to demonstrate they still have a genuine reason for a firearms licence to be granted. For a New Zealand citizen they will have to demonstrate that the genuine reason is primary production, animal population control, animal welfare, business or employment, or another reason if prescribed in regulations.

If I am a citizen from another country (not NZ) does this mean that I cannot be granted a firearms licence?

If you are a citizen from another country the default position is that you will not be granted a firearms licence, this position is consistent with the national commitment to firearms reforms.

There will be an ability to apply for a licence on the basis that you are seeking an exemption from the Commissioner. The application will need to contain the evidence to satisfy an exemption.

If I am a citizen from another country and currently have a Tasmanian firearms licence how do the changes affect me?

If you are a citizen from another country and reside in Tasmania, you will need to apply for Australian citizenship before your current firearms licence expires and then provide proof of your Australian citizenship when you renew the firearms licence.

If you are unable to obtain Australian citizenship prior to the current firearms licence expiring, and if you do not receive an exemption from the citizenship requirement by the Commissioner you will become subject to a buyback, noting that this scheme is still being negotiated between the Tasmanian and Australian Governments. An alternate option is you can sell your firearm through a dealer to another firearm licence holder.

I am an Australian citizen and currently have a Tasmanian firearms licence, how do the citizenship changes impact me?

If you are an Australian citizen, then you already satisfy the citizenship requirement to be granted a firearms licence, you will need to demonstrate that you are or intend to become a Tasmanian resident.

As is currently the case, you will still need to demonstrate your genuine reason, meet the fit and proper person testing, and not be subject to any of the other exclusions to have your firearms licence renewed.

How are firearms dealers able to verify the currency and validity of a firearms licence (what's changing)?

Firearms dealers are currently required to sight a person's firearms licence card at the time of sale of a firearm or ammunition. To support community safety and help ensure firearms and ammunition are sold only to persons with a valid firearms licence or permit, the NFR project will be delivering a 'Licence and Permit Verification Service'. Dealers will use this secure electronic verification system to confirm that the presented licence or permit is current and valid. By verifying licence details against official records, this process helps prevent unauthorised access to firearms and ammunition, strengthens regulatory compliance, and enhances public confidence in the integrity of the firearms licensing system.

Will the licence and permit verification system reveal my personal information that is recorded on the firearms register?

No. Only details presented on the firearms licence card will be used to perform the check (i.e. name of the licence holder, expiry date of the card and the State of issue). The licence and permit verification system will only verify that the licence or permit is valid, it will not reveal information contained in the firearms register.

Why are changes being made to borrowing and lending?

The proposed amendments in the Bill would allow a licenced firearm owner to lend a firearm to a second person if that person is licenced for that category of firearm and has the correct storage requirements. This will mean that on lending by the second person to a third person is not allowed.

This will reduce the likelihood of firearms being lost or misplaced and will allow greater oversight of who has possession of registered firearms and where they are stored.

If a registered firearm owner stores their firearm(s) at a location that is not their residential address, then they will have to nominate a storage address for the firearm(s). This will allow law enforcement officers to know where firearms are stored in near real time.

What are the new obligations in relation to lending a firearm to another person?

Lending of a registered firearm by the owner to another person who holds a firearms licence of the appropriate category will still be lawful. What is changing is that the firearm will not be able to be on-lent to third persons. Another person who holds a firearms licence can borrow the

firearm if it is returned to the firearm owner first and the new persons licence is subsequently verified by the firearm owner.

A firearms owner who lends a firearm to another person must satisfy themselves that the borrower's licence is valid, they have appropriate and lawful storage facilities and that the person borrowing the firearm intends to comply with the storage requirements.

Collectively these measures will reduce instances of firearms being misplaced, owners not knowing where their firearms are stored or loaned to persons whose firearms licences have been suspended or cancelled. These measures will implement the NFR objective of maintaining near real time records of where firearms are stored, improving the safety of the community and police responding to incidents.

How will I check the validity of a licence and storage requirements before lending a firearm to someone?

Public safety is enhanced when firearms remain in the possession of persons who hold a valid firearms licence. To support this outcome, firearms licence holders will be required to confirm that any person to whom they lend a firearm holds a valid and current firearms licence. A firearms licence holder portal will enable licence holders to verify the status of a firearms licence card using the licence holder's name, card expiry date, and State of issue, helping to reduce the risk of firearms being loaned to unauthorised persons. This portal is being established through the NFR.

Do I have to notify of a change of address if I am hunting for a weekend (more than 24 hours)?

No, if you are absent from your home and hunting then the firearm is in your possession, this is not a change of storage address and does not need to be notified. If you decide to leave the firearm in secure storage at the address and you are no longer there for the firearm to be in your possession, then the requirement to notify applies as it is a change in storage location.

Why has the time frame to notify the Commissioner of any changes moved from 14 days to at least 24 hours prior or no later than 24 hours after the change?

The proposed amendment is that a licence holder must notify Tasmania Police 24 hours prior to the move or name change but no later than 24 hours after. This is changing from the current requirement to notify within 14 days.

This is to support the objectives of the NFR in having near real time and accurate records in the NFR about who has access to firearms and where they are stored. To reduce administration burden on licence holders the NFR project will deliver options on how notifications can be made electronically.

Changes to applying for a Tasmanian firearms licence when moving from interstate

In line with the amendments to notifying the Commissioner of change in address and name, the Bill proposes to change the time an interstate resident has to apply for a Tasmanian firearms licence. They will now have 7 days to apply for a Tasmanian licence across all firearms licence categories, however once they have applied, their interstate firearms licence will be recognised until the application for a Tasmanian licence has been finalised.

What changes will affect firearms dealers?

The Bill updates sections 91 and 93 to allow dealer record keeping to be made and held electronically, in readiness for the implementation of the NFR. When the NFR has been launched dealers will no longer be required to submit quarterly returns, this is to reduce unnecessary administrative burden on dealers.

There will be increased scope for firearms dealer employees to possess and handle firearms and firearm parts, as well as purchase and sell firearms in the absence of the holder of the firearms dealer licence when the dealer is absent from the business. This amendment aims to reduce the administrative burden on firearms dealers while still providing regulatory oversight.

Why has the term pistol been changed to handgun?

The change in the use of the word pistol to handgun is to increase national consistency.

What are the new penalties or increased penalties for offences?

Part of the suite of amendments include restructuring the section regarding the crime of possession of stolen firearms, this will increase the penalty for possession of stolen firearms and provide clarification on how the matter can be prosecuted. These new penalties and offences can be found in table 1.

Any person who is in possession of a firearm (whether they are the owner or not) must produce the firearm for inspection when requested to do so by a police officer. This currently only applies to the registered owners of a firearm.

Possession of stolen firearms will become an alternative conviction for a person charged with Unlawful trafficking in firearms. This means that where a court does not find a person guilty of Unlawful trafficking in firearms, but the evidence establishes they were in possession of stolen firearms, they may be convicted of the alternate offence.

Unlawful trafficking in firearms will be able to be tried summarily if the defendant and the prosecutor consent. This will speed up the administration of justice and holding offenders accountable when a matter does not warrant being dealt with in the Supreme Court.

A new summary offence of Stealing a firearm or firearm part will be created to mirror the crime of Stealing a firearm or firearm part in the Criminal Code. This will provide a summary option so

that offenders can be held to account when a matter does not warrant being dealt with in the Supreme Court. Currently if a person is not charged with stealing a firearm part under the Criminal Code, then the alternative is a generalised stealing charge, this does not reflect the criminal nature of stealing firearms or firearm parts.

A firearm prohibition order will now apply not only to firearms, but will also apply to firearm parts, ammunition and suppressors. Currently it is not a breach of a firearms prohibition order for a person to possess firearm parts, ammunition or suppressors.

Table 1: provides a list of new offences as well as any increase in penalties for existing offences under the *Firearms Act 1996*.

Section	Offence	Penalty
NEW: 82A	A person in possession of a firearm must produce that firearm for inspection, at any reasonable time, when requested to do so by a police officer.	Fine not exceeding 20 penalty units.
107 (Possession of firearm parts)	A person must not possess a firearm part unless the person is authorised by a licence or permit to possess a firearm of the category to which the firearm part relates.	Fine not exceeding 50 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or both. This is an existing offence for persons who possess firearms parts without a licence, imprisonment has been added as sentencing option.
107A (Possession of stolen firearms)	A person must not have possession of a stolen firearm	Fine not exceeding 300 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years, or both This is an existing offence for persons who possess stolen firearms, the penalty has been increased from 100 to 300 penalty units. The Bill introduces a sentence of imprisonment of not less than 3 months for this offence.
110A (Unlawful trafficking in firearms)	NEW: (3A) Alternative conviction option. A person who is indicted for unlawful trafficking in firearms under the Criminal Code but found not guilty of	The maximum term of imprisonment under the Criminal Code is 21 years. If a person is convicted of the alternate conviction then the penalty will be a fine not

	trafficking may be convicted of possession of stolen firearms under section 107A if the evidence in the proceedings on the indictment establishes that the person committed the alternate offence.	exceeding 300 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years, or both. The Bill introduces a sentence of imprisonment of not less than 3 months for both offences.
NEW: 110C Stealing of firearm or firearm part	A person must not steal a firearm or firearm part.	Fine not exceeding 300 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years, or both. The Bill introduces a sentence of imprisonment of not less than 3 months for this offence.
NEW: 121A Lending and borrowing of firearms	(2) A person must not lend a firearm to another person without – (a) seeing and verifying that the other person holds a licence or permit under this Act that authorises the person to have possession of the firearm; and (b) ensuring that the other person – (i) has the means to comply with the storage requirements under this Act in respect of the firearm; and (ii) intends to comply with those storage requirements.	Fine not exceeding 50 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or both.
NEW: 121A: Lending and borrowing of firearms	A person who borrows a firearm from another person must not on-lend that firearm to another person.	Fine not exceeding 50 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or both.
NEW: 121A Lending and borrowing of firearms	A person who lends a firearm to another person must, if requested to do so by a police officer – (a) tell the police officer where the firearm is located, as far as the person is aware; and (b) tell the police officer the name of the person who has borrowed the firearm.	Fine not exceeding 50 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or both.

What are the offences that will attract mandatory sentencing?

In addition to amending the *Firearms Act 1996*, the Bill will also amend the *Sentencing Act 1997* to introduce minimum mandatory imprisonment for specific firearms offences. The offences that will be listed as relevant firearms offences are:

- Section 234A of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* - Stealing a firearm or firearm part.
- Section 107A of the *Firearms Act 1997* – Possession of stolen firearms
- Section 110A of the *Firearms Act 1996* – Unlawful trafficking in firearms.
- Section 110C of the *Firearms Act 1997* – Stealing a firearm or firearm part.

The amendments to the *Sentencing Act 1997* are modelled on a similar section in the Act that allows for non-application of the minimum mandatory sentence in certain circumstances, such as if the offender was a youth, there is a mental impairment, or if the court thinks the sentence is unjust in the circumstances.