

Tasmania Police

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Hon Felix Ellis MP
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

Via email: s36(1) Exemption Applied

Dear Minister

FIREARMS MANAGEMENT AND REFORM IN TASMANIA

In the wake of the Bondi terrorist incident, we are once again confronted with the devastating consequences that arise from the misuse of firearms. While these events are tragic, they also present an opportunity for meaningful reform that addresses the risks highlighted by such horrific crimes.

Following the Port Arthur massacre, in which 35 lives were lost, the Government acted swiftly and decisively to strengthen Australia's gun laws. The introduction of the National Firearms Agreement (NFA) and the subsequent buy-back program represented a watershed moment in our nation's approach to firearm safety. However, the impact of these reforms has diminished over time. The total number of firearms in circulation nationally now exceeds pre-1996 levels.

This moment provides a renewed opportunity to consider how we meet community expectations regarding the management and oversight of firearms. Many Australians remain unaware of the sheer number and types of firearms that can be legally owned and used in this country.

As Commissioner of Police, I take very seriously my dual responsibility: ensuring the safety of the Tasmanian community and safeguarding every police officer who places themselves in harm's way each day. Firearms present a real and increasing threat to both the public and our officers. The murder of Constable Keith Smith on 16 June 2025 was a confronting reminder that the presence of a firearm can change the outcome of even the most routine policing task.

As Police Minister, you have played a vital role in supporting Tasmania Police through the budget process, strengthening essential safety equipment such as MIPVs and enabling the introduction of new initiatives including Tasers. Police officers across the State are sincerely grateful for this commitment. They are now looking to you once again to demonstrate continued commitment to their safety. You stood with us in the aftermath of the tragic murder of Constable Smith, and we now seek your support as we confront the growing risks posed by firearms in our community.

As you are aware, there are now 157,022 registered firearms in Tasmania, owned by 36,598 licence holders. Almost 9,000 licence holders own six or more firearms. Firearms theft means that even legally registered and stored firearms can fall into the wrong hands, enabling serious criminal activity, including family violence.

The National Firearms Agreement—endorsed by Tasmania, all other jurisdictions, and the Commonwealth—makes clear that “firearms possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety.” I believe this principle must remain central to our decision making. Public safety must take precedence over the privilege of firearms ownership.

Together with my fellow Australian Commissioners of Police, I stand ready to support reforms that enhance public safety, strengthen police safety, and improve community confidence.

In terms of policy and legislative change, I reiterate my support for the national firearms reform agenda, including a proposed firearms cap.

Thank you for your leadership and for the serious consideration you and your Government are giving to this issue. I look forward to continuing to work with you towards reforms that improve safety for all Tasmanians

Yours sincerely



Donna Adams PSM APM
COMMISSIONER