

Tasmanian Antique Firearms

Consultation

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Contact

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The Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia (SIFA) thanks the Tasmanian Police Firearms Services for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed regulation of antique firearms.

SIFA is the national peak body representing Australia's shooting industry. Our industry has been conservatively estimated to contribute over \$2.4 Billion to Australia's GDP, whilst supporting over 19,500 jobs.

After reviewing the consultation papers, SIFA has several concerns around the proposed regulation and the process that has been undertaken.

Introduction

The introduction of the consultation paper proposes 6 conditions that the Minister is pursuing for the regulation of antique firearms.

- 1. There will be no licensing requirements, and no requirement to do a firearms safety course.***
- 2. Antique firearms manufactured prior to 1 January 1900 will only need to be registered with Tasmania Police.***
- 3. Owners will simply need to provide contact details, information about the type of firearm and where and how it is stored.***
- 4. There will be no requirement for engraving or stamping of the antique firearm.***
- 5. The process will be entirely free.***
- 6. If it is to be displayed, there will be display requirements including that the firearm must safely be secured in a rack or in a locked display cabinet that is fitted with glass or other material of sufficient strength to prevent theft.***

SIFA Comment:

We note that under the previous exemption No. 4, antique firearms did not need to be registered, or the owner of these items licensed¹.

Why is it that the Minister is now seeking that people who possess antique firearms, must register their property with Tasmania Police?

When SIFA examines proposed firearms regulation, we are guided by our position on data driven firearms policy².

¹ Letter from Commissioner Adams to firearms owners representative groups, 8th January 2024

² <https://sifa.net.au/data-driven-firearms-policy/>

SIFA is deeply concerned that the Minister, Commissioner and Tasmania Police have failed to provide this consultation with any evidence to suggest that antique firearms collections have had a negative impact on public safety.

Likewise, there is no specific evidence presented to suggest that the registration of antique firearms with Tasmania Police will present any tangible public safety benefit.

Recommendation 1: Tasmania Police to provide supporting evidence, that a change in policy to require registration of antique firearms will have demonstrable and tangible public safety benefits.

Recommendation 2: If no supporting evidence can be provided for recommendation 1, Tasmania Police remove the proposal to register antique firearms.

Questions

- 1. The Government is considering whether or not owners of antique firearms should meet the same fit and proper person test as required for general firearms licence applicants? This could also include whether there should be different requirements for antique firearms owners.***

SIFA Response:

SIFA has already highlighted that there has been no evidence presented to suggest a change in registration policy is needed, or that it will have any tangible impact on public safety. The same must be stated for 'fit and proper person' checks.

Antique firearms pose little risk to public safety as they amount to an inert piece of metal and wood, and the consultation in its introduction proposes that there will be no licensing requirements.

This idea of 'fit and proper person checks' raises 2 questions:

How will fit and proper person checks work? And;

If adopted, what impact will these extra checks have on police resources?

Recommendation 3: There should be no requirement for antique firearms owners to undergo 'fit and proper person' checks.

- 2. *The Government is considering whether an antique firearm should be fitted with a durable tag that does not require modification to the antique, such as affixed to the trigger guard or similar? This process would be free upon registration. It is further proposed that removal, falsification, tampering or modification of this tag be made a finable offence.***

SIFA Response:

SIFA must question where is the evidence that demonstrates the process of tagging and registering antique firearms will have positive public safety benefits.

Given there hasn't been a requirement for this under the previous exemption No. 4, the Minister must explain why this added requirement is now needed.

The process of tagging a firearm, so that the tag remains on the item in perpetuity, under threat of fine, is a further overbearing and unnecessary burden.

Recommendation 4: There should be no requirement for an antique firearm to be tagged or registered.

- 3. *The Government is considering whether an antique firearm should be treated as an ordinary firearm if it is breech-loaded and capable of discharging self-contained cartridge ammunition?***

SIFA Response:

We accept that if a firearm takes ammunition that is currently commercially available, there is larger risk and wider public safety concerns.

SIFA would support treating an antique, breech-loading firearm, as an ordinary firearm, **ONLY** in the instance that the firearm in question, uses ammunition that is currently commercially available.

If the ammunition is not commercially available, or of a type that is no longer manufactured e.g. pinfire, teatfire or needlefire, then there should be no added regulation to the collection of this firearm.

Recommendation 5: There should be no added regulation on antique firearms where commercially available ammunition is no longer available.