

Consultation on the Knives and Prohibited Weapons Bill 2026

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Overview

As an island state, Tasmania occupies a unique position within Australia. Because of that, we face challenges that are often very different from those experienced on the mainland.

Many people describe Tasmania as being "10 years behind the mainland." When asked why, there's rarely a single, clear explanation beyond the higher cost of transport and the persistent effects of geographic isolation.

For many Tasmanians, however, that perceived delay isn't a disadvantage—it's a blessing. Our separation has often insulated us from the social and political turmoil that can emerge in larger mainland cities, particularly Melbourne and other parts of Victoria. While we inevitably share in national conversations, Tasmania has long benefited from the ability to assess policies on their merits, rather than adopting them simply because they have gained momentum elsewhere.

That distinction is important because many of the policies now being proposed—such as the ban on the sale, supply and manufacture of machetes—are largely responses to problems occurring elsewhere. Before importing those policies into Tasmania, we should first ask whether they address a problem we actually have, or whether we're simply following the mainland's response to its own circumstances.

Imposing Questions

I believe that before we act, we should be seeking clarity and asking important questions in regards to how and who these laws will apply in reality.

What is a Weapon?

A weapon, in the broad sense of the term is defined as "*any device or instrument used to injure, defeat or destroy an enemy, or used for self-defence*" source

What is a Tool?

A tool is described as "*any physical device, software, or conceptual method used to perform a task, modify the environment, or achieve a specific goal*" in the context of a noun. source

Observations

Just simply based on these basic definitions; we can see there is considerable over-lap between a Tool and Weapon. They are not mutually exclusive terms however; that overlap relies on one crucial concept: **Intent**.
Any tool or object can become a weapon when combined with malicious intent... Sporting Equipment for example: Golf Clubs, Tennis Racquets, Base and Soft-Ball bats, Field Hockey Sticks, ect.

In regards specifically to machetes, these amendments do not specify **WHAT IS** and **WHAT IS NOT** a machete under law. Leaving such obvious and important distinctions up to police officer-discretion is not only asking for trouble when the law inevitably does not get applied evenly, but leaves potential gaps in the system. Officers should have a standard or template to apply in cases where possession may be considered illegal.

Recommendations

Instead of just blanket banning these tools of agriculture, bushcraft and manufacturing. We should focus on laws already in place where carrying knives, edged and bladed items in built-up areas, metropolitan and Central Business District-zoned areas without an excuse is more heavily penalized.
We should **PUNISH THE PERPATRATOR, NOT THE PEOPLE.**
We should be focused on the intent of the person in question, not always the surface level circumstances in which they present to police.
Objects are inanimate and, without human intervention and intent, cannot harm or cause damage to another person or property.