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From: Peter Parkes [redacted]
Sent: 03 August 2026 12:02
To: Submissions.Strategy.Support
Subject: Submission on the Police Offences Amendment (Knives and Prohibited Weapons) Bill 2026

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I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed prohibition on machetes and the broader approach taken by the Police Offences Amendment (Knives and Prohibited Weapons) Bill 2026.

I support strong penalties for violent offending, carrying weapons for unlawful purposes, threatening behaviour and other criminal conduct. However, I do not support the criminalisation of ownership and possession of a commonly used tool based on the actions of a small minority of offenders.

The Bill Regulates Objects Rather Than Behaviour

The focus of the criminal law should be unlawful conduct, not the mere possession of tools that have legitimate everyday uses.

Machetes, knives and other edged tools are commonly used for property maintenance, agricultural activities, gardening, vegetation management, camping and recreational purposes like camping and fishing. The overwhelming majority of owners use these tools responsibly and without incident.

The proposed legislation shifts the focus away from punishing criminal behaviour and instead creates offences for possession itself. This risks criminalising otherwise law-abiding members of the community while doing little to address the motivations of those who commit violent crimes.

Criminals Will Simply Substitute Other Implements

The proposal appears to assume that removing one category of blade will reduce violent offending.

However, an individual determined to commit an offence has access to countless alternative implements capable of causing harm. Kitchen knives, axes, files, screwdrivers, sharpened metal, tools and other common household items remain readily available.

The legislation therefore risks addressing the appearance of action rather than the underlying causes of violence.

If the objective is reducing violent crime, it is difficult to see how prohibiting one particular class of blade will significantly affect offenders who are willing to ignore criminal laws in the first place.

The Burden Falls Primarily on Responsible Citizens

One of the unintended consequences of prohibition is that compliance tends to come largely from those who already obey the law.

Law-abiding owners will surrender property, alter their behaviour and comply with new regulations. Individuals involved in criminal activity are less likely to do so.

This creates a situation where responsible citizens lose access to lawful tools while the practical impact on serious offenders remains uncertain.

The result may be significant inconvenience and expense for legitimate users without a corresponding improvement in public safety.

The Exemptions Are Arbitrary and Inconsistent

The proposed exemptions appear to favour some legitimate uses while excluding others.

Agricultural professionals are recognised as having a legitimate need for machetes. However, many other groups may have equally legitimate reasons to possess such tools, including:

- Rural landowners.
- Property maintenance workers.
- Forestry and bush regeneration volunteers.
- Campers and outdoor recreation users.
- Collectors and historical enthusiasts.
- Individuals maintaining private acreage.

The bill provides no convincing justification for why one lawful user should be exempt while another may become a criminal offender.

Evidence of Effectiveness Should Be Demonstrated

Before introducing a prohibition of this nature, Government should clearly demonstrate:

- The scale of the problem being addressed.
- The proportion of offences involving machetes.
- Why existing laws are inadequate.
- Evidence that a prohibition will reduce offending.
- How success will be measured.

Without such evidence, there is a risk that the legislation imposes substantial restrictions on responsible Tasmanians without delivering a measurable public safety benefit.

Conclusion

The criminal law should focus on punishing unlawful behaviour and protecting the community from genuine threats. Existing offences already address assault, threatening conduct, weapon-related crime and possession in inappropriate circumstances.

The proposed prohibition on machetes does not adequately distinguish between criminal misuse and legitimate ownership. It is likely to have its greatest impact on responsible citizens while offering limited deterrence to those intent on breaking the law.

I therefore urge the Government to reconsider the proposed prohibition and instead focus on measures that target criminal conduct rather than possession of lawful tools.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Parkes
[redacted]