

**Submission
No 79**

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE FIREARMS AND
WEAPONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CRIMINAL
USE) BILL 2020**

Name: Mr Sean Ambrose
Date Received: 26 June 2020

I am writing as a licensed and long range competitive shooter and with concern in regard to the legislative amendments that the government is seeking to introduce. I am a qualified Range Officer with the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia. I am also a former range officer and club champion of Sutherland Shire Small Bore Club. As a competitive shooter our firearms are vastly different to those that are purchased off the shelf. These firearms are generally worth a small fortune and are often referred to within the shooting fraternity as the Formula 1 of competitive shooting. They are in the best sense of the word "custom" rifles and are fitted with high end components with machining tolerances measured in thousands of the inch. To give you an example and to raise some concerns regarding what constitutes gun smithing and what the majority of benchrest and other competitive shooters are routinely doing as part of maintenance, cleaning and for the development of their firearm/s. Depending on the yardage, conditions on the day (wind, mirage, humidity etc) I could decide to either run my match rifle in 6mm BR or 7mm08 Ackley Improved. My match rifle has 3 barrels with its registration and I have the tooling to remove the barrel and change it to meet specific weight limits, conditions or yardage. My concern is that the amendments would then prevent me from changing barrels to make specific weight limit for the respective discipline or change caliber to compensate for wind. After a match my rifle is stripped down and I remove the barrel. It makes it easier to clean the firearm and its components. A custom match rifle has reduced tolerances and it is imperative to ensure that they are thoroughly cleaned. A build up of residue and carbon can impede performance and as such it is necessary to remove the barrel from its action to ensure that successful cleaning has been achieved. There are also times where I may need to change scope rings, mounts or optics. This along with having removed the barrel could very well be deemed as gun smithing. I also use a bore scope to visually inspect the barrel for excessive wear and fouling. In high end competition a barrel is usually junked at 750/1000 rounds due to loss of accuracy. The use of a borescope to identify premature wear or fouling could constitute gun smithing. At times it is also necessary to strip down the bolt and apply lubricant. When reloading ammunition and attaining the correct seating depth for the projectile, the method used is to remove the firing pin and close the bolt on an inert round. Essentially we are feeling the pressure of the bolt close and we are also listening for the bolt to click with the upward lift. As I understand the legislative amendments would deem this as gun smithing and essentially prohibit and restrict my ability to develop and maintain an accurate rifle as seating depths continually alter due to the wear caused by each successive round fired through the barrel. The disassembly of a bolt could also be deemed as "gun smithing" when it is in fact used for cleaning or for reloading purposes. I have further concern with fact that many match rifles are fitted with weight systems. The weight systems are essentially to dampen recoil but also because match rifles in specific classes are prohibited from exceeding a specific weight limit ie a Light Gun can not exceed 4.763 kg. In terms of light and heavy varmint classes I am required to change barrels to make weight for each respective class or add or subtract weight that is held within the stock. The legislative amendments could constitute any of this as gun smithing. Further concern is found with the fitting of triggers. It is quite common to remove a trigger for cleaning or to adjust a trigger overtime due to the wear that occurs due to friction or to replace springs that lose their tension and integrity due to excessive fouling and/or oxidation associated with cleaning solvents and humidity. The legislative amendments sought by the government would prohibit me from fitting, cleaning or adjusting a trigger. It is beyond absurd that the government is seeking legislative amendments that will hinder and impede competitive shooters, irrespective of their disciplines and is further attempting to obstruct one of the fastest growing sports and recreational pursuits in NSW. Shooting is not only a sport. It is a discipline, a science and when one finds his element it becomes a meditation. A shooter is not only competing against other shooters but he is competing against his personal best and the elements such as wind, mirage and the image distortion associated with humidity. The further the yardage is extended thus then requires a greater preparation and discipline in regard to the maintenance of a match rifle. This is without including to the equation the tooling that competitive shooters use to maintain their firearms such as action wrenches, barrel vices and torque wrenches. Under the legislative amendments these could become prohibited items. As a young infantry soldier we were trained to strip and reassemble our rifles and the machine gun blindfolded. The legislative amendments could in fact deem this as gun smithing and have consequences for the ADF in the training of soldiers. The legislative amendments should be measured and weighed for what they are worth. It is nothing more than bureaucratic bastardry with intent to hinder and obstruct legitimate and competitive shooters and to provide statistics and revenue for the government by handing out infringements for technicalities based upon a police officers discretion as to what constitutes gun smithing. I do not support these amendments. I look forward to and anticipate an earnest reply and consideration to my concerns. I am willing to appear in person and give evidence to the committee if required. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.