

**Submission
No 251**

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

Name: Mr Brenton Bliss
Date Received: 14 August 2020

The Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee Members of the Enquiry into the provisions of the Firearms and Weapons Legislation Amendment (Criminal Use) Bill 2020

Dear Sirs and Mesdames,

As a licenced Firearms Owner and a member of the NSW SSAA Kempsey Branch, certified Range Officer (and on our committee as Maintenance Officer) I am writing to express my concerns over several clauses and wordings contained in the proposed amendments to the above Act and Regulations.

Firstly, **Firearm Precursors:**

Any person (and by provision, a company), who owns a drill, lathe, mill, file, hacksaw, hammer, screwdriver, etc, is now an illegal manufacturer under these rule changes. This description also pertains to miscellaneous screws, bolts nuts, washers, springs, odd pieces of tubing, metal bar, etc. A piece of timber may also produce a rifle stock or pistol grip. It would also be assumed that any person or company supplying any of the above tooling or hardware will also become outside the law by association? This illegality is whether or not a firearm or firearm part is made or not. I am sure the local garage who maintain my vehicle have all necessary tooling to manufacture a firearm or a firearm part. I am sure the intention of these amendments will not lead to police intervention in their operations. However, if a licenced firearms owner has any "precursors" in their shed, whether for maintaining a vehicle or a clothesline, are they now subject to "reasonable grounds" (see below)?

All responsible legal firearm owners will have a parts breakdown diagrams for the firearm(s) they own, if the firearm is purchased new from the majority of recognised manufacturers. These form part of most owner's manuals and are required to ensure the continued safe operation of the firearm. If an owner has purchased the firearm second-hand (or indeed, an ex-military firearm or an antique) then a breakdown is readily available for most, if not all, through the internet. The downloading of a firearm breakdown from the internet is not necessarily with the intention of producing a firearm or part, it is for the safekeeping of the firearm. Such diagrams now become illegal under the proposed changes. Additionally, if an antique firearm is being discussed, it may well become necessary to actually manufacture a part to replace a broken or worn item to maintain the firearm in a serviceable condition. This now becomes a nefarious operation.

Any person who has a hobby building model ships will now become an illegal firearms manufacturer, old world galleons and warships carried a variety of cannon and these modellers reproduce them faithfully to maintain the romance of the period in their models. To produce these miniature cannon models they will have plans and the methods of production. Despite being a non-firing replica, these now become illegal.

The function of a Club Armourer, not to mention the occupation of Gunsmith, now become illegal under these amendments, and a redundant term in our language. This causes me personal disappointment as I had intended to apply as our club armourer, having spent 12 years in the Royal Australian Navy, 4 years of those as a competitive inter-service rifle shooter and an instructor on the L1A1 service rifle.

Secondly, **“On reasonable Grounds”**:

This term is used throughout the proposed amendments and is open to interpretation by different individuals. Despite the vast majority of police officers carrying out their duties with diligence there remains the ‘odd one out’ on occasions who will have a different ‘interpretation’ of a rule or law. These ‘on reasonable grounds’ also allow the officer concerned to enter premises, by force if needed, whether the occupant is present or not, and to “provide assistance or information” reasonably required. Where is an individual’s right to silence without legal advice? and what, indeed does constitute “on reasonable grounds”?

My conclusions to the proposed amendments is this continues an ongoing agenda to give the state the power to ultimately remove all private firearms ownership, targeting and stigmatising all law abiding firearms owners going about their chosen sport, a sport that promotes health and fitness (physical and mental) and stresses the safe use and operation of all firearms. Governments regularly talk of their concern for the mental health of the general public, however we of the public who enjoy shooting sports as a recreation are rarely mentioned and when we are we are demonised. I know we all are aware there will be no affect to illegal firearms users by the introduction of these amendments.

Finally, being a responsible and legal firearms owner in NSW, I trust this submission will not paint me personally in a negative manner with those who enforce the firearms regulations of the state.

Regards and thanks,

Brent Bliss

NSW Firearms Licence