

**Supplementary
Submission
No 258a**

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

Name: Mr Stephen Larsson

Date Received: 30 March 2021

The Hon. Robert Borsak MLC
Chair, Portfolio Committee No. 5 - Legal Affairs
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

30 March 2021

Dear Mr Borsak

Re: Firearms and Weapons Legislation Amendment (Criminal Use) Bill 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to submit additional material to complement my earlier submission (No. 258). The need to make an additional submission has come about through a very recent publication by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC).¹

The authors of this study examined the number of illicit firearms offered for sale on darknet markets in late 2019 and found:

- Overall 2,124 illicit firearms were identified, 70.5% of which were handguns,
- The majority of handguns (n=1,316; 88%) were semi-automatics, and
- More firearms were listed for sale than identified in previous studies.

The AIC study cites three previously published studies (Paoli *et al.* 2017; Rhumorbarbe *et al.* 2018; Copeland *et al.* 2019) which also reported the prevalence of trade in illicit firearms on the darknet. Importantly, the RAND report (Paoli *et al.* 2017) shows that Australia is estimated to be both a *source* and *destination* for illicit firearms sourced from the darknet (see attachment).

Conclusion

The findings of the AIC study support and expand the findings of three previous reports on the prevalence of trade in illicit firearms via the darknet.

That Australia is nominated as both a *source* and *destination* for illicit firearms raises real concern which warrants vigilance and supports the comment by the Firearms and Weapons Policy Working Group:

“Both the surface web and the Darknet should be the focus of legislative efforts.”²

Yours sincerely

Stephen Larsson

¹ Broadhurst R., Foye J, Jiang C. and Ball, M. (2021). Illicit firearms and other weapons on darknet markets. Australian Institute of Criminology. [Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice. No. 622, 23 March 2021.](#)

² Firearms and Weapons Policy Working Group (2017). Proposal for draft offences relating to illegal manufacture of firearms. Tabled report.

Australia is a plausible *source* and *destination* for illicit firearms via the darknet

Table 5.1 Firearm listings where vendors state products are shipped from: listings generating sales, estimated transactions per month and estimated gross revenue location (ordered by monthly gross revenue)

Country	N listings	N active listings	Transactions (per month)*	Gross revenue (per month)
Multiple/unknown	40	16	7.7	\$29,526
US	201	16	30.5	\$24,987
Netherlands	8	3	4.5	\$8,088
UK	5	1	6.0	\$5,043
Germany	18	4	4.1	\$3,453
Europe	8	4	2.2	\$2,514
Australia	11	2	0.6	\$1,121
Austria	1	0	0.0	\$0
Canada	2	0	0.0	\$0
Denmark	44	0	0.0	\$0
Slovenia	1	0	0.0	\$0
Total	339	46	55.6	\$74,733

Note: Where an individual country or single identifiable region could not be ascertained in a listing, this appears in the table as 'multiple/unknown'.

* The following method was used to calculate our transaction variable: number of feedbacks for each listing divided by the number of days between the date of data collection for each market and the date of the listing's oldest feedback; this generated the rate of feedbacks per day, which, multiplied by 30, provided an estimate of monthly transactions.

Table 5.2 Available shipping destinations for firearms: listings generating sales, estimated transactions per month and estimated gross revenue location (ordered by monthly revenue)

Country	N Listings	N active listings	Transactions (per month)*	Revenue (per month)
Worldwide	307	38	49.2	\$68,561
Europe	9	4	4.3	\$4,154
USA	7	1	0.8	\$1,042
Germany	2	2	1.0	\$813
Australia	4	1	0.1	\$163
Multiple	3	0	0.0	\$0
North America	3	0	0.0	\$0
Northern Europe	1	0	0.0	\$0
Oceania	3	0	0.0	\$0
Total	339	46		\$74,733

* The following method was used to calculate our transaction variable: number of feedbacks for each listing divided by the number of days between the date of data collection for each market and the date of the listing's oldest feedback; this generated the rate of feedbacks per day, which, multiplied by 30, provided an estimate of monthly transactions.

Source: Paoli G-P et al. 2017. [Behind the curtain: The explicit trade of firearms, explosives and ammunition on the dark web.](#)