



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

MC16-140060

16 November 2016

Mr

Dear Mr

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 September 2016 regarding firearms regulation in Australia. The Minister for Justice, and the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism, the Hon Michael Keenan MP has portfolio responsibility for firearm matters. The Minister has asked the Department to reply on his behalf.

Whilst the regulation of firearms in Australia is primarily the responsibility of state and territory governments, the National Firearms Agreement (the Agreement) sets out a national approach to the regulation of firearms that should be followed by all jurisdictions.

Following a recommendation of the joint Commonwealth-NSW Martin Place Siege Review, a review of the NFA is currently underway.

The Australian Government is conscious that the regulation of firearms is of great interest to many members of the Australian community. For this reason, we have consulted broadly to ensure that any changes to the Agreement continue to strike an appropriate balance between community safety and those with a genuine need to access firearms.

The review is not about targeting law-abiding firearm owners, but rather focuses on simplifying the Agreement and ensuring that it remains current today.

In addition to incorporating advice from all Commonwealth, state and territory law enforcement and justice agencies, the review of the Agreement has involved consultation with the firearms community (industry and recreational groups), community safety organisations and individuals to produce sensible, practical changes where required.

As you may be aware, the Australian Government recently extended the importation prohibition on lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity of more than five rounds. The prohibition is intended to be in place until the review of the Agreement is concluded and the agreed outcomes are implemented. This requires the states and territories to reach consensus on the Agreement and implement any required changes.

While Australia has some of the strongest firearm controls in the world, illicit firearms remain a threat to community safety. The Australian Government is committed to removing illegal firearms from the community and tackling gun-related crime.

Since 2013, the Government has:

- Introduced legislation which doubles the maximum penalties and provides mandatory minimum sentences of five years' imprisonment for the trafficking of illegal firearms offences;
- Invested **\$88 million** to increase screening and examination of international mail, air and sea cargo. This funding boost gives our agencies greater tools to detect illicit firearms and firearms parts at our borders;
- Invested **\$116 million** in the National Anti-Gang Squad, with strike teams now in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia and liaison officers in Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Since the introduction of the Squad in 2013, over 892 illegal guns have been taken off Australia's streets; and
- Provided **an additional \$25.4 million** to fund the expansion of the AFP's National Forensics Rapid Lab to enhance the AFP's capacity to detect and seize illegal firearms and target the criminal syndicates that peddle them.

Thank you again for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Firearms Team