

The Select Committee on Firearms,
Legislation and Policy.
House of Assembly,
Parliament House,
Hobart 7000.

24-October 2018

Dear Mr Buttsworth,

I wish to make a submission to the committee reviewing firearms legislation.

I worked for many years in Tanzania as a doctor for Save the Children and was involved in research in remote rural areas which required camping for weeks at a time where elephants and lions walked past our tents.

I needed guns for the safety of my team and as I was experienced in weapon use from earlier UK national service in the army I equipped myself with a 375 magnum Winchester M70 and a variety of lighter weapons.

Tanzania had strict firearm regulations: every weapon was on a separate certificate and every round of ammunition purchased was recorded. There was provision for weapons to be held on loan from other licensed users but the exact dates and serial numbers of all weapons were always specified and approval of all transfers were strictly policed.

When I migrated to Australia in 1969 I was surprised at the casual attitude to firearm ownership and there was little interest by the customs when I imported a 12Guage shotgun and a .22 rifle. Frankly I was amazed at the casual approach to gun ownership and it was only after the Port Arthur massacre that a proper policy for gun control was put in place.

As someone who has held a general big game licence and owned a number of weapons I am not opposed to gun ownership and think our population is well served by the necessary restrictions that followed the Port Arthur event.

I was a farm owner for 25 years at Rowella and we did have the occasional problem of hunters trespassing seeking to hunt and that ended with the tighter regulation that followed Port Arthur.

In conclusion I think we are well served by the current regulations and I think we should strongly resist any change which increases gun ownership, and in particular any change that allows automatic or semi automatic mechanisms.

The only accidental firearm fatality I have known was caused by an automatic shotgun in the hands of an occasional weekend hunter.

Yours truly.

Dr Robert Ward Smith. OAM.