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Monday, October 22, 2018

The Secretary,  
Legislative Council Select Committee – Firearm Law Reforms  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Hobart.

Dear Mr Buttsworth,

I have worked both in urban and regional Tasmania as General Practitioner for the last 25 years. This has taken me to King and Flinders Island, the Central Highlands, urban Hobart area, the East Coast and Bruny Island. When the Port Arthur massacre happened in 1996, I was working in St Helens and saw the disbelief and fear in that small community. I spoke to colleagues who were working in the Royal Hobart Hospital Emergency Department that day who tended the injured and heard their concerns that this could actually happen in Tasmania.

Almost immediately as a result of this massacre whereby 12 people were killed in 15 seconds, Prime Minister John Howard and the Liberal Government, took strong action to introduce sweeping gun reforms within Australia, which has resulted in safer Australia. Since that time there have been no mass shootings in Australia like we had here in Tasmania.

The review of this Legislation has been brought to attention by an announcement on State Election poll eve, where a media blackout occurred, which kept the voting public completely in the dark. My question is, why was it necessary to keep this announcement so secret?

Every day I speak to people from all walks of life and discuss the current political/health/environment/family situations as part of my consultation. As yet I have not spoken to a landowner/farmer who is in support of this legislative change and they cannot understand why this has come about when they have not petitioned for the enactment.

In recent news from the USA, New York City had their first weekend in 25 years of no shooting. See <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/10/16/us/new-york-city-shootings-weekend-trnd/index.html>

I cannot understand why our government would even consider changing our gun laws when we could be in that situation. Our community is safe in knowing that this is very unlikely to happen and to think that in the future that we would be celebrating like New York is indeed horrifying.

I urge the committee to reject these changes to our Firearm laws here in Tasmania. The first death with Tasmania to a weapon of this newly introduced legislation is a stain on the Liberal Government who proposed this legislation change.

Sue

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Yours sincerely

Dr Sue Shearman