

Submission to:

The House of Assembly Select Committee on Firearms Legislation and Policy

I was a Registrar in the Anatomical Pathology Department of the Royal Hobart Hospital in 1996 when the Port Arthur massacre occurred. It was a terrible time. The Police, Paramedics and all the staff at the Royal Hobart Hospital did the most astounding job in the face of such a ghastly event. I had to explain to my three young children why the newsreader was crying on the radio as I drove them to school that awful Monday morning.

The one good thing to come out of the Port Arthur massacre was the National Firearms Agreement (NFA). In my experience, Tasmanians are proud that Australia has such effective gun laws and aghast that their State Government is proposing to change them.

*The National Firearms Agreement affirms that firearms possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on **the overriding need to ensure public safety**, and that public safety is improved by the safe and responsible possession, carriage, use, registration, storage and transfer of firearms.*

The NFA is working - it was updated and agreed to by all States in 2017.

Now, 2018, the Tasmanian Liberal Government proposed changes, just before a State election, that will completely undermine and contravene the NFA.

This is complete madness.

The Tasmanian State Government claims other States in Australia have already made these proposed changes. Just because other States have chosen to breach the NFA doesn't mean Tasmania should follow suit - quite the contrary - Tasmania should lead the way back to sanity. Tasmania has experienced first hand the mayhem that may result.

I have been associated with an agricultural property for thirty years where vermin control has been an ongoing problem. At no time has the NFA impeded the vermin control. My family and I feel safe knowing that the weapons used on the property are correctly stored and registered and the persons licensed to use them have had suitable training. All the gun owners I know are comfortable with and supportive of the NFA in its present form.

The NFA must not be watered down to suit the interests of major firearm dealers and politicians. I don't want to live in a country like the United States of America where gun violence is the highest in the world. I grew up in Rhodesia/Rhodesia-Zimbabwe/Zimbabwe, experienced a terrorist war and migrated to Australia in 1983 to escape violence and menace. A country full of guns simmers with violence and menace.

Please, never lose sight of **the overriding need to ensure public safety**. The proposed, politically motivated changes to the National Firearms Agreement must be REJECTED.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Dr. Sorrel Standish-White