

From: [alan](#)
To: [Todd Buttsworth](#)
Subject: submission: tasmanian gun laws
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Attachments: [gun_control_law.docx](#)

[N.B. the submission below is also attached as a word document]

Alan Taylor

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Peaceful coexistence is an essential principle of an open, safe, democratic society. Crime prevention, crime detection, punishment and especially reform of offenders are all necessary for maintenance of community security.

To this end, there must be integrity and transparency in all policy formulation processes, no less in weapon control than in any other.

The central object of gun control laws is, necessarily, the effective reduction of crime and the increase in public confidence to achieve that principle of an open, safe and democratic society.

In Tasmania, we have well defined processes of social and criminal justice, public order and safety. As a result, there is a limited need for the individual ownership of firearms and other weapons.

In our community, there is no need for individual ownership of weapons in order to ensure personal safety. Neither should there ever be, and it should be the intention of gun control legislation should ensure that.

The only reason for an ordinary citizen to possess a firearm or other weapon in our community is for restricted commercial, agricultural, recreational and sporting use, or as a registered collector or dealer. Therefore, there needs to be clearly defined and enforced regulation regarding firearm and weapon ownership, registration and licensing.

As a consequence, ownership and possession of firearms should be restricted to those in the community with a demonstrable legitimate need. As a matter public safety, all owners of firearms should remain licensed and registered.

If anything, the licensing and registration of owners, users, collectors and dealers of firearms and weapons should be further restricted. The 'genuine reasons' test should be strengthened, not relaxed.

The main reason for this is that the move for greater gun possession is increasing, not decreasing. The pressure from spurious 'gun ownership rights' groups is currently to relax the laws and allow greater gun ownerships. If anything, the pressure should be in the opposite direction. There has been no discernible change in our society, such that any relaxation of the gun laws could be deemed necessary. It should be the expressed intention of legislators to resist that pressure, not to assist it. It is the responsibility of legislators to act in the best interests of the entire community and not pander to a small sectional pressure group which does *not* have the public good at heart.

With that in mind, the management, transport and storage of firearms and weapons should be also tightened in line with the an earlier Auditor General's recommendations.

There is no case in Tasmania for possession of high-powered, rapid fire, rapid repeating, or concealable weapons. Because of the apparent (and documented) increase in the illegal possession of hand guns in the rest of Australia, there needs to be further restriction on the ownership and use of handguns through legislation and regulation in Tasmania, including a total ban on handguns for private use, and legislation which severely penalises the carrying of concealed and other hand weapons in public.

Regulations relating to improper use should be maintained and stricter penalties for the use of a firearm or weapon by any person with any blood alcohol reading, or during illegal or heavy prescription drug use, or after a person has threatened or intimidated others should be strengthened, as should oversight of the proper and legitimate use of firearms and weapons by state officials.

In other states of Australia, there is an insidious move to relax our gun laws being made by representatives of international small arms manufacturers, and by Australian operated companies (such as Noia) not only by lobbying elected representatives and by offering inducements of shooting day-trips, dinners and gifts. There is also insidious, covert pressure being applied by representatives of foreign groups such as the NRA for reasons which have no validity in Australia, and especially in Tasmania.

The pro-gun control interests in Tasmania are open, public and uncorrupted. The same cannot be said for the anti-gun control lobby.

Tasmanian pro-gun control lobbyists have only one objective: the maintenance and improvement of public order and safety, and the minimising of injury and deaths from gun shot wounds.

Conversely, the pro-gun lobby has a mixture of commercial self interest and political arguments which have no application or validity in Australia, much less Tasmania. We do not have a constitutional 1st amendment guaranteeing a right to bear arms. We do not have an unconscionable death rate from gun shot wounds. We do not have a culture of self protection by personal gun possession and the object of all future gun control legislation in Tasmania must be to avoid that at all costs.