

23 AUG 2013



22 August 2013

Ms Stacey Martin  
Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation  
GPO box A11  
PERTH WA 6837

Dear Ms Martin

### **Firearms License Fees**

WAFarmers is the State's largest and most influential membership based rural service organisation, representing approximately 4,000 Western Australian farmers across a range of primary industries including grain, meat and wool, dairy, pastoralists, horticulture, commercial egg producers and beekeepers.

Our members contribute more than \$5 billion to the WA economy through the gross value of agricultural products. Additionally, through differing forms of land tenure, our members own, control and capably manage many millions of hectares of the State's land mass and are responsible for maintaining the productive capacity and environmental well-being of that land. Firearms are an accepted and vital 'tool of trade' for the primary producer.

WAFarmers is concerned to ensure that farm businesses are not burdened by inefficient government administrative processes. In this regard we bring to your attention our strong objection to the recently announced increase in firearms license fees following the Auditor General's report on the Firearms Management System.

We understand firearm license fees for individuals in Western Australia are proposed to increase by as much as 134%, in the case of a firearm being added to an existing license. Other fee increases for individual firearm licenses are similarly well in excess of industry accepted CPI increases. We find the proposed fee increases even more perplexing given there appears to be no indication of cost shortfalls in administering the system. It remains to be seen how costs could have increased in such a short period to warrant the increase in fees proposed.

Cost increases of this magnitude for any individual operating lawfully in an industry sector are excessive, let alone the effect these increases will have on the primary industry sector that is already facing significant cost pressures.

The Auditor General's recent report on the Firearms Management System noted that numerous weaknesses were identified with the System. These weaknesses were significant to

the extent that the effective management of firearms licensing and regulation could not be undertaken by the WA Police.

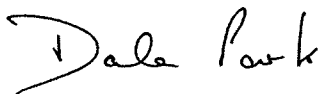
However, we also note the Auditor General did not recommend increasing license fees to rectify these problems. Indeed the Auditor General's recommendations, as we understand, involved improving administrative processes.

WAFarmers notes the WAP's response to the Auditor General's report includes the development of a new Licensing and Registry system dependent on funds being made available. We remain unconvinced that the inefficiencies of an agency should be disproportionately paid for by a particular community sector. In our view any requirement for capital should be provided from normal government funding sources especially when there is an anticipated community benefit.

WAFarmers strongly supports the WA Police in developing more efficient administrative processes which we believe will deliver departmental efficiency dividends in line with Government expectations. License fee increases for individuals of this magnitude will serve only to potentially create an environment of mistrust between WA Police and the farming sector.

In our view burdening individuals with additional costs is not an appropriate response to this matter. WAFarmers calls on Government to limit the planned fee increases for individual firearms licenses to an acceptable level, ideally reflecting the CPI.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Park". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dale Park  
President