



Hon Colin de Grussa MLC - Member of The Legislative Council

Hon. Peter Foster MLC
Chair, Environment & Public Affairs Committee
Legislative Council of Western Australia
4 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005
via email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au

5th December 2023

Dear Chair,

RE: Petition 115 – Extending Consultation period on proposed firearms reforms

I write in relation to the above petition which I tabled in the Legislative Council on 14 November 2023.

The petition specifically calls on the Legislative Council to extend the consultation period from one month to three months in order to ensure genuine and thorough consultation with firearm owners, dealers, recreational and sporting shooters, primary producers, and collectors.

There are many aspects of the Government's proposed modernisation of firearms legislation which may well bring positive improvements to the legislative framework.

In particular those reforms aimed at modernising the licensing processes in relation to firearms are welcome.

The 62 page consultation paper provided by Government contains many proposals, which have largely not been considered by all registered firearms owners, as they have not been provided with a timely opportunity to do so.

I note the Minister's response to Parliamentary Question Without Notice 1473 asked by me on 16 November 2023 in which he states:

The public was notified through engagement with the Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance, which represents some individual firearms licence holders, clubs, dealers, collectors and the broader firearms community; the Western Australian Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board, consisting of representatives from the Western Australian Farmers Federation, Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia, Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association, vegetablesWA and Wines of Western Australia; ministerial media briefings or statements; the Western Australia Police Force website, including via the firearms licensing service's blogsite; the state government website; and media advertisements in all mainstream media, including newspapers, radio, television and online sites.

Whilst the response may, at face value, seem to encompass a wide-ranging consultation process, there is a clear omission in engaging directly with firearms licence holders. It should also be noted that the listed participants have been engaged throughout the entire process since the Government announced its intention to reform the firearms legislation and not specifically in relation to the consultation paper.

I, and other MPs have received numerous emails and written correspondence in relation to the announcement of the consultation papers' release. On the 7th of November in a question asked by me in the Legislative Council, the minister advised that over 4,200 submissions had been received by WA Police in relation to the consultation paper. The volume of submissions and the more than 12,500 signatures to petition 115 are a clear indication of the level of interest in these reforms by the community.

The proposed reforms are being touted by Government as the biggest reforms to Firearms legislation in Western Australia in 50 years. A consultation period in line with the scale of the reforms, providing all members of the community an opportunity to offer considered feedback should be used. In view of the comprehensive proposals, I strongly advocate for a three month consultation.

Members of the community have also identified errors in the consultation paper. In relation to the proposed new licence categories of "Target Shooting" or "Hunting", I provide the following as an example.

The Minister has stated publicly that under the proposed reforms set out in the consultation paper, an individual seeking to licence firearms under either of the two new licence categories of *Target Shooting* or *Hunting* will not be permitted to own any more than **five** firearms in total.

The written example in the consultation document on Page 9 contradicts the minister's statements and confusingly indicates that **two** firearms for a *target licence* and **four** firearms for a *hunting licence* would be attainable, which clearly totals **six** firearms.

This is a fundamental error and needs to be corrected. It is difficult to understand how a mistake such as this has been overlooked, but it begs the question - why wasn't this corrected and the consultation period extended with a corrected version of the document?

Extracted from page 9 of the consultation paper

Approved Purpose	Maximum Firearms Licensable
Competition Shooting (<i>Competition Licence</i>)	10*
Target Shooting (<i>Target Shooting Licence</i>)	5
Hunting (<i>Hunting Licence</i>)	5
Max. Combined Firearms under an Individual Licence	10


*Note - the Commissioner can authorise additional firearms for competition purposes in special circumstances that will be specified in the regulations.

For example, a person has 3 firearms licensed for competition purposes, 2 for target shooting and 4 for hunting. As the combined number of firearms is 9 and below the maximum of 10, this would be acceptable.

I have been advised by members of the community that other errors were found in the document, and that WA Police were advised of these errors.

I thank the committee for the invitation to provide a submission and look forward to its inquiry into the matters raised in the petition.

Yours sincerely,



Hon. Colin de Grussa MLC

Leader of the Nationals WA in the Legislative Council