

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE — REPORT

Statement

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [5.13 pm]: I rise this afternoon to speak about the commonwealth Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee and its April 2015 report, “Ability of Australian law enforcement agencies to eliminate gun-related violence in the community”. This is the report of a Greens-initiated inquiry, and I welcome the results that have come out of it. The majority of Senators involved in the inquiry welcomed the chairman’s comments in the report. The report states, at chapter 4 —

1.152 The majority of Senators attending the inquiry welcome the Chair’s comments that it was not the intention of the inquiry to target law-abiding firearms owners through this inquiry. The Committee heard evidence that lawful use of firearms has a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits to the Australian community which deserve to be promoted to counteract the myths about them which are perpetuated by some in the community.

Basically what the report has highlighted is what we in the sporting shooters community have been saying for a long time: it is not the legal, law-abiding firearm owner who is the problem. The illegal market is predominantly through porous borders, with the illegal manufacture and importation of firearms, so that was quite welcome. The Senators included Hon Ian Macdonald, deputy chair; Senator Linda Reynolds, Liberal Senator for Western Australia; Senator Bridget McKenzie, Nationals Senator for Victoria; and Senator David Leyonhjelm, Liberal Democrats Senator for New South Wales. The report states —

Additional majority of Senators attending the inquiry Recommendations

Recommendation 1

1.221 The majority of Senators attending the inquiry recommend that the Commonwealth commission a study into the social, economic and environmental benefits of hunting across Australia, similar to the report that was released by the Victorian Government in 2013.

It is quite interesting to note that it is similar to a finding in our report here in Western Australia on recreational hunting. The report continues —

Recommendation 2

1.222 The majority of Senators attending the inquiry recommend the Commonwealth establish a formal mechanism for industry and firearm user groups to be consulted on issues relating to firearms regulation.

Recommendation 3

1.223 The majority of Senators attending the inquiry recommend the Commonwealth continue to pursue improvements in border control for detecting illegal imports of firearms and firearms parts.

Recommendation 4

1.224 The majority of Senators attending the inquiry recommend the Commonwealth review its contribution to firearms regulation in the context of the Reform of the Federation White Paper.

Recommendation 5

1225 The majority of Senators attending the inquiry recommend State and territory governments investigate avenues to deregulate the firearm industry to ease the economic burden on governments, industry and legal firearm users.

It is very interesting to note that this Senate inquiry has pointed to those issues and has made those recommendations that firearms in the community are really a problem with the criminal element within the community and not with the licensed side of things. It is therefore a very extensive report. I welcome those recommendations and I hope that our state government takes note of them.