

**FIREARMS AMNESTY**

*Statement*

**HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural)** [9.48 pm]: I rise tonight to speak about the firearms amnesty which was launched by the Minister for Police and the Commissioner of Police last week. Members would be excused if they thought that an amnesty was basically a matter of handing in a firearm without fear of prosecution. That is pretty much what the word “amnesty” means. However, looking through the amnesty, there are conditions which are of some concern to us. Those conditions are that when one hands in the firearm, there will be no prosecution providing that the item was not used to commit an offence, and also that it has not been lost or stolen and the person handing in the firearm can give a reasonable account as to how they came to be in possession of the firearm.

Having conditions like that on an amnesty discourages people from handing in firearms for fear that they could be prosecuted. What constitutes an offence? Is simply firing the unlicensed firearm an offence? The bottom line is that the local crime boss will not hand in his smuggled Glock or home-made machine gun. We are talking about grandpa’s old .303 that has been sitting in the shed or someone who has come into possession of an illegal firearm and would like to hand it in. Unfortunately, with these conditions, people may be discouraged from handing in those firearms, which completely goes against the purpose of the amnesty. I feel that if the government is serious about getting illegal firearms off the street, maybe it should look at an amnesty that does not include conditions such as that.