

FIREARMS BILL 2024

Referral to Community Development and Justice Standing Committee — Motion

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [11.05 am] — without notice: I move —

That the Firearms Bill 2024 be referred to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee for consideration and report to the house by 20 June 2024.

I move the motion under standing order 171, which, for the enlightenment of those members in the house who may not be familiar with it, reads —

- (1) At any time after the second reading and before the third reading stage has been moved, a motion without notice “That this bill be referred to a standing (or select) committee” may be moved or the bill may be referred without notice to a legislation committee.
- (2) No motion referring a bill to a committee may be moved after a motion for the third reading of a bill has been moved.

Relating to the portfolios of the latest standing committees, standing orders state —

- (2) The functions of each committee are to review and report to the Assembly on —
 - (a) the outcomes and administration of the departments within the committee’s portfolio responsibilities;
 - (b) annual reports of government departments laid on the Table of the House;
 - (c) the adequacy of legislation and regulations within its jurisdiction; and
 - (d) any matters referred to it by the Assembly including a bill, motion, petition, vote or expenditure, other financial matter, report or paper.

Quite clearly, standing orders provide the ability to refer a bill to one of the standing committees of the Parliament. The Parliament’s website indicates that the Speaker on 5 May 2021 tabled a schedule showing portfolio responsibilities for each of the standing committees appointed by the Legislative Assembly at the commencement of the forty-first Parliament. The departments that fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee include, amongst many others, police. Therefore, it is the appropriate committee to examine the Firearms Bill 2024.

The committee system exists and we should use it. At the commencement of discussion of this bill, the government refused to accept the need to allow or to support it going to the Standing Committee on Legislation in the other place. In refusing that request, the Minister for Police in his remarks displayed a little of the old jealousies that exist in Parliament between the two houses, with comments such as —

... Hon Mia Davies would suggest that ... the only organisation, the only part of this Parliament capable of making amendments to or reviewing the legislation is some committee set up in the upper house.

Clearly, the role of that upper house committee is to review complex legislation. In previous Parliaments, that committee reviewed many pieces of legislation. Very large and complex bills such as the Firearms Bill 2024 are ideal bills to be referred to that committee. In my view, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 should have gone to that committee for review. Instead, only a very slender bill has been sent to that committee, and only after public outrage over the fact that the committee had been sitting there with resources and doing no work for the entirety of the Parliament. Much to the surprise of the government, it reported that the little slender bill had been introduced into the wrong house. That was a trip-up and an own goal on the part of the government. I digress. I will go back to the point of this committee.

The minister has a chance to allow a committee whose terms of reference under the standing orders of the house include the ability to look into matters affecting the police portfolio, including any matters referred to it by the Assembly, including a bill, to review this legislation.

We have gone through consideration in detail. In my view, serious questions remain around policy and trying to balance the objective of the bill—public safety—with many of the other sections of the bill that impinge on Western Australians and create new responsibilities and imposts, and to ensure that they are measured and correct. We have a disagreement between many sectors of the committee and members of Parliament around those measures. During consideration in detail, we found that although figures are often advanced, such as the number of firearms that might be collected, there is no modelling or statistical analysis that supports any of it; it is just an estimate made by someone. It is almost presented as evidence of a need. I think that committee could look at those matters, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to ensure that we have the mix right.

Members should bear in mind that we support a rewrite of the firearms legislation. We support most of what is in the proposed firearms legislation but are opposed to elements within the legislation. We had divisions on certain elements and we also flagged intentions to propose amendments on key areas of the legislation in the other place when time allows for proper drafting through parliamentary counsel. But questions remain around the legislation that has been advanced. An interrogation by that committee would be valuable in order to gain a better understanding of the objectives and whether the objectives are being reached and at what cost. These are the things that could be considered.

I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party would like to speak on this motion. I think she has some other business that might call her away for a little while. She is supportive of this proposal but because of urgent business needs and other commitments, I put on the record that she will not be present for the remainder of the debate.

I will go through some of the other matters that raised concern, which I am sure other members might want to go through or highlight in their third reading contributions. Either way, this is an opportunity to add impetus to the move to refer this legislation to a committee.

One thing that was quite obvious when we went through the bill was that there is a massive reliance on regulations that are not yet known and a large amount of arbitrary discretion with very little outline of how that discretion will be used by the Commissioner of Police or the commissioner's delegates. Let us face it, these decisions will not be made by the commissioner. We were told that most of these decisions will be made by an inspector level delegate, with some analysis by people at the sergeant level. It is some comfort that experienced officers will be used but nonetheless, they will all have a different opinion. If we use discretion and it is that person's discretion, there needs to be an understanding of the methodology behind the examination and the use of that discretion, otherwise different types of decisions will be made by different people. That is one of the fundamental things we are trying to get away from. We are trying to add certainty to the decisions that are made around the ownership and use of firearms and other matters related to their storage, sale, and places where they can be used. Those matters need to be clarified, which this bill does not do.

We know that the regulations are going through a massive rewrite. The old regulations will be repealed and new regulations will be introduced. Here is the twist: the new regulations will be gazetted in December, after Parliament rises, and they will come into operation in March, before Parliament will have an opportunity to move any disallowance measures against those regulations. I have looked at the bill and tried to find the section that outlines that disallowance matter, but it does not. A whole set of regulations that are critical to the operation of this bill will be gazetted in December, after Parliament rises, and will come into operation in March, presumably before Parliament sits after the 2025 election. Effectively, there will be no opportunity for Parliament to disallow the regulations. Once the legislation comes into operation, it would be irresponsible to disallow them because firearms could not be regulated. No-one would want that outcome. I do not think the government has even thought of that matter. Maybe it is so used to overriding the thoughts of Parliament, it does not even consider those matters anymore. That might be the nub of it. It has not even thought that the timing of the introduction of the regulations and the beginning of their operation will occur throughout the election period. There will be no ability to disallow or examine those matters. Presumably after 2025, the composition of both houses will change. To what level that change determines whether a disallowance will be successful, we do not know, but there should be an opportunity for Parliament to have a meaningful look at the regulations that surround the legislation and decide whether they should be disallowed. That will not be allowed.

I turn to what has been achieved by this legislation. A lot of the matters that we discussed have their foundation in the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia's report that was commenced in 2014 and completed in 2016. Recommendation 2 states —

The Firearms Legislation should be redrafted from the ground up and be re-enacted.

That is a check; that has happened. Paragraph 2.2 states —

Any new firearms legislation should be restructured in order to improve clarity of parts such as the administration and licensing process, law enforcement, police powers and offences, and taking into account other structural recommendations in the Report.

From what I have seen and what I have just outlined, I do not think that is obvious; I do not think that clarity is there. So much is filtered out of regulations that the Parliament will not have an opportunity to examine or disallow. The final part of recommendation 2, paragraph 2.3, states —

Provisions in any new firearms legislation should be worded to provide greater clarity than is provided under the current Firearms Act 1973 ... and Firearms Regulations 1974 ...

That is contestable. The very foundation of what we were trying to get at may not be achieved. I believe that a committee of this house should be looking at these matters to try to get an understanding of that.

We highlighted many other matters throughout the debate about which we might have differences with the government. I will not suggest that they all form the basis of what I am calling for here. I am trying to ensure that there are no unintended consequences and that a parliamentary committee looks at this legislation carefully. It needs a second set of eyes. I do not wish to throw any sort of cloud over the people who have drawn up the legislation but, surely, given such a complex piece of legislation like this, the very limited opportunity we were offered to scrutinise it and the government's refusal to send it to the Standing Committee on Legislation, it should send it to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee.

I presume it probably will not want to send it to that committee because it does not like transparency. We know that it does not like its legislation to be scrutinised, yet it does not seem to learn from its mistakes. It had not learnt from what happened with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, which caused a furor. The government had to withdraw that legislation and repeal it, yet we still saw tens of millions of dollars in the Treasurer's advance authorisation bill to pay for the mess that had to be cleaned up.

It is in everyone's interests to get this right and to ensure that the timing of the regulations will allow for Parliament, this Parliament or the next, to properly scrutinise those regulations and, if required, exercise its right of disallowance. That has not been addressed. It is not provided for in the bill. It should be.

I will sit down now and allow others to have a say. But I urge all members of this house to support this motion. We have nothing to fear. Government members are in fierce majority in that committee. The government's own members will go through this legislation to ensure that it is making the changes that are appropriate and that there are no unintended consequences. But importantly, please look at the timing matter around the regulations and the introduction of the bill.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [11.20 am]: I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Firearms Bill 2024. I will be paired very shortly, so I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which is to refer this legislation for consideration by the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. The Liberal opposition has raised a number of concerns about this bill. I have also flagged that our shadow Minister for Police will move a number of amendments to this bill in the Legislative Council. As I have stated in this house, we are not opposed to the bill or the general objectives of the bill, but it is important to ensure that this legislation is as good as it can be and there are no unintended consequences for lawful licensed firearm owners. That is our position.

We certainly support further scrutiny to ensure, as I have stated, the legislation does not have any unintended consequences. Mental health checks were a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission and have merit at the outset, but a number of concerns have been raised about the implications for the general mental health of lawful firearm owners. We certainly support the objective of what the mental health checks are about in terms of the ensuring that people are of good health when they utilise firearms, but we also want to ensure that such checks are accessible and that these reforms in no way will dissuade somebody from seeking mental health support. That is just one example. A number of issues have been raised about the workings of this legislation.

I know that the government has worked with some of the farmers groups in relation to some amendments that have been made, and even made on the floor in relation to the primary producer licence and a range of other matters. The Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia, and the Western Australian Farmers Federation in particular have been quite engaged with the government in relation to this legislation, which is also why we support this motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I also understand that our shadow for police in the other place is not only flagging a number of different amendments to this legislation but also a motion to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Legislation in the Legislative Council. That committee can look beyond just the scope of the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review and, more broadly, the policy and how it will work to ensure that this legislation can be as good as it can be.

I will leave my comments there and leave it to others to provide additional support.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.24 am]: I also rise to support the Leader of the Opposition in his motion —

That the Firearms Bill 2024 be referred to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee for consideration and report to the house by 20 June 2024.

I think it is an appropriate motion because, as has been pointed out many a time, for some reason this government does not want to use these legislation committees to scrutinise its legislation. We had a perfect example. The Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2024 is the one and only bill that this government, in three years, has sent to the Standing Committee on Legislation and, lo and behold, what happened? I will just read the first few lines of the second reading speech of Minister Templeman in the draft *Hansard* —

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2024. In doing so, I acknowledge the work of the Standing Committee on Legislation in the other place for its inquiry into the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2023, and I thank the committee for its work. The committee considered the bill and found that none of its clauses unjustly offend against fundamental legislative principles. It noted, however, that for constitutional reasons, the bill ought to have been introduced in the Legislative Assembly. This is due to clause 56 ... I thank the committee for bringing this oversight to my attention and now rectify it.

There is the example. That is the one bill that this government has referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation and the committee found that it was introduced into the wrong house.

The Firearms Bill 2024 has 492 clauses and 237 pages, and this government refuses to let it go across to legislation committee. I think it would be appropriate if today the government and members of this chamber took the opportunity to look at their conscience and say this bill —

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, member. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Government members should look at their conscience and take the opportunity to send this bill across to the Standing Committee on Legislation. I have already done my piece on the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill, but here I am. We will be back here again discussing that bill once more because it was referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation. That opportunity was taken up and it was found that this government was lacking and we have to go through the whole package again. From my perspective, this is an opportunity.

Certainly, elements of the bill concern me. As I have said, it has 492 clauses. We have been on it all week. Some of the issues that concern me include the lack of communication and transparency. Obviously, we have spoken about that at length. More than 12 000, nearly 13 000, people signed the petition and wanted a lengthier consultation period. There is also a lack of clarity with the regulations that will be appearing down the track. We saw this scenario play out with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill. When the regulations came in, we found that they were inappropriate in many forms and, eventually, the government withdrew that legislation. The challenge for us is trying to scrutinise this legislation with regulations that are down the track and on which we cannot get clarity. Some of the elements that are concerning include storage—we are still waiting for regulations on that—and the mental health assessments in relation to capacity.

I spoke of my concerns about the commissioner's ability to make decisions about a person's views or integrity. The commissioner will be able to assess a person's views and opinions. With regard to freedom of speech, the commissioner will be able to assess what people may have said on Facebook or other social media platforms. The commissioner will have the ability to cancel someone's licence on the basis of a person's views and the commissioner's assessment of that person's integrity. We have spoken about the mental health assessments and the potential of the commissioner or the minister to bring in 1 500 people a month to self-report to have a mental health assessment. Those assessments will be merged into the mental health system and the health system despite their lack of capacity under the stewardship of this government. We have question marks about the number of firearms and the lack of clarity for landholders about hunting. How many property letters can they provide, and how many per hectare? We did not get any clarity on that from the minister because, once again, it will be in the regulations.

We have some concerns over trade licences. I spoke to small businesses in regional areas, including those hardware businesses and the like that may have a small section for the sale of firearms and ammunition. My overriding concern, of course, is about the resources of the police department and the challenges that it will have because it is spread-eagled far and wide throughout the state. As I said in my contribution to the second reading debate, the firearms register will move to a digital platform. It asks people to update their details. I rang three times and there was no answer, and I left a message and there was no call back.

They are the concerns that I have and they are the types of things that the Standing Committee on Legislation could look at. We may find, as we did with the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill, that there is a problem. I think it was very appropriate for the Leader of the Opposition to speak about the timetable for the legislation, which will be gazetted in December. There will be no ability prior to the March 2025 election to work through a disallowance motion or the like. They are the challenges that we are putting up. I think this motion is very appropriate.

On the positive side, I agree with the minister about a couple of elements of the bill that I think are important, such as the transportation of firearms. I think that is a real improvement. I also agree that the property letter system was getting out of hand because of the trading of property letters and the like. That is not appropriate. I agree with some elements of the bill. However, I think the Leader of the Opposition was spot-on that the government's timetable does not allow any scrutiny of the regulations or an ability to disallow them. Now is the opportunity for government members in this place to stand up and be counted and support this motion in light of the fact that the one and only bill that this government has sent to the legislation committee in three years has to start again. It is not good enough.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [11.34 am]: I say at the outset that we will oppose the motion to refer the bill to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, and I will seek to amend it shortly. In reference to the justifications put by the opposition on this motion, the Firearms Bill 2024 is progressing through this place and the other place in the normal course. In fact, it has been afforded a very large amount of time in the chamber. We have been talking about it for four days, including in this place this week until past 1.00 in the morning and eight o'clock in the evening last night. At no time has there been any effort by the government to restrict the opposition's opportunity to respond or make amendments to it. I point out that despite the National Party and, on occasions, the Liberal Party voting against individual clauses throughout the bill, not once did they move an amendment. If members opposite had concerns about the legislation, they could have moved an amendment. If they believed that the limits being proposed were too onerous, they could have proposed an alternative, but they did not. If they believed that the concept of a health check with a mental health component was not right, they could have moved an amendment, but they did not. If they believed that the property letter reform was not appropriate, they could have moved an amendment, but they did not. I also make the observation that we will forward this legislation to the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review for three months.

Mr R.S. Love: No, for five days.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will be for the normal amount of time for that process in the other place. We are not constraining it in any way. It will go there and be afforded all the normal practices and processes of that place, and it will be debated in that place. Both houses of Parliament, as is the normal practice, will debate the bill. Normally, the bill would pass and the regulations would be developed, but we have brought that forward. We are trying to draft the regulations in advance of that process so that the stakeholders, individuals and interested parties can contribute to the shaping of the regulations and ensure that they meet their requirements when possible. That is what is happening. As I said throughout the debate, I encourage all interested parties, stakeholder groups and peak bodies to make a contribution. Get in touch with the police and talk about the specific elements of the regulation that will affect them and that they are interested in.

I will reflect a little bit on the justification that the Leader of the Opposition gave for delaying this entire process and his claim that somehow the regulations would not be subject to a disallowance motion and that at some future point the new Parliament might seek to disallow the regulations and we have to consider that that might leave the firearms legislation without any regulations. That is not true. As was indicated last night, a transitional licence and approvals process will be in place from the passage of the bill until the new regulations are in effect. That means there will be a regulatory process in place. Essentially, that means that the 1973 regulations will be extant until the new regulations come into effect.

Mr R.S. Love: But they come into effect in March. That is what you said last night.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member knows that there will be a transition process. Different elements of the bill will come into effect at different times. The opposition's proposal is intended to delay the process. I understand that. Let us get on with the process. Let us let the other place go through its analysis of the bill in the same way as this place has. I indicated that I would ask the police to assess one of the opposition's areas of concern and consider whether there might be an alternative to amend that part of the bill. Beyond that, as I said, the Leader of the Opposition did not move any amendments. All he did was oppose things.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you —

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is undeniable that there has been adequate time for debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister. Just one moment. Members, please respect the word and direction of the chair. All members here will be heard in a sensible and positive environment.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Thank you, Acting Speaker. That is fine; I am wrapping up.

No, we do not accept the Leader of the Opposition's proposal. I want the bill to go on in the normal course and be debated in the other place and for us to move forward with reforming the legislation.

Finally, I will say one other thing. The Leader of the Opposition read part of recommendation 2 in the Law Reform Commission report, which we are complying with entirely. This bill will bring clarity to the legislation. The other thing it will do, which I note the Leader of the Opposition omitted to make any reference to, is implement recommendation 3, which will have a far more profound effect on the legislation and the regulation of firearms in Western Australia.

That recommendation says —

The *Firearms Act 1973* (WA) should contain a statement as to the purpose of the Firearms Legislation that confirms:

- a. the primary principle is the need to ensure public safety;

Mr Shane Love; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Paul Papalia; Ms Mia Davies; Ms Merome Beard

- b. the possession and use of firearms is a privilege that is always conditional on that need to ensure public safety; and
- c. public safety can be improved by requiring strict controls on the possession, use, dealing and manufacturing of firearms and requiring the safe and secure storage and carriage of firearms.

It is noteworthy that the Leader of the Opposition did not even bother to refer to that part of the Law Reform Commission recommendations.

Point of Order

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a point of order.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I want to now move an amendment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Lilburne): Minister, can you please resume your seat. There is a point of order and the point of order will be heard in silence. Thank you for resuming your seat.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I believe the minister is misleading the house. I clearly said that the purpose of the referral was to balance the stated objective with the imposition that will be imposed on the community. That is the whole point of the referral.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Noting that that was not, and never could have been, a point of order —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, minister. Just one moment. In relation to the point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition, there is no point of order. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to please allow the minister to continue providing his response in good faith. Minister for Police, please continue.

Amendment to Motion

Mr P. PAPALIA: I move —

That all words after “That the” be deleted and the following be inserted —

house notes the government’s existing commitment to refer the Firearms Bill 2024 to the Legislative Council’s Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [11.42 am]: I want to speak very briefly on the amendment. The minister is seeking to make an amendment that will essentially mean that the bill will not be referred to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee of this house, which is directly contrary to the motion, and, furthermore, will be referred to the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review of the other place. It is my understanding that that is an automatic referral. I think it is a misleading amendment because the bill will already be referred because of its relationship to the National Firearms Agreement. We note that that referral has a narrower nature and the committee will not look at the policy objectives so much as the effect of having a piece of legislation that is required to reflect the National Firearms Agreement. I point out that the amendment is fundamentally flawed and should be rejected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have been informed that the minister does not have a right of reply on the amendment. The question is that the words to be deleted be deleted.

Division

Amendment (deletion of words) put and a division taken, the Acting Speaker (Mr P. Lilburne) casting his vote with the ayes, with the following result —

Ayes (41)

Mr S.N. Aubrey	Ms E.L. Hamilton	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms J.J. Shaw
Mr G. Baker	Ms M.J. Hammat	Mr D.R. Michael	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Ms L.L. Baker	Mr T.J. Healy	Mr S.A. Millman	Dr K. Stratton
Ms H.M. Beazley	Mr M. Hughes	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr W.J. Johnston	Ms L.A. Munday	Ms C.M. Tonkin
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr H.T. Jones	Mrs L.M. O’Malley	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms C.M. Collins	Mr D.J. Kelly	Mr P. Papalia	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr R.H. Cook	Ms A.E. Kent	Mr S.J. Price	Ms C.M. Rowe (<i>Teller</i>)
Ms L. Dalton	Dr J. Krishnan	Mr D.T. Punch	
Ms D.G. D’Anna	Mr P. Lilburne	Ms M.M. Quirk	
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mrs M.R. Marshall	Mr D.A.E. Scaife	

Noes (6)

Ms M. Beard	Mr R.S. Love	Mr P.J. Rundle
Dr D.J. Honey	Ms L. Mettam	Ms M.J. Davies (<i>Teller</i>)

Amendment thus passed.

Amendment (insertion of words) put and passed.

Motion, as Amended

Question put and passed.

Third Reading

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [11.51 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [11.51 am]: I would like to make a contribution to the third reading debate on the Firearms Bill 2024, and, in doing so, reflect a little on the discussions that we have had over the last days in consideration in detail. The minister advisers are not here, but I would like to thank them for their attendance at Parliament quite late on Tuesday—it was Wednesday morning by the time we finished—and for another evening contribution on Wednesday. I thank them for their service and attendance here and the advice that they have provided to the Parliament. It is always important to note the work of the ministerial advisers and the knowledge that they bring to this place.

I want to run through some of the issues that we considered. First, I will refer to those matters where it is clear there is a difference of opinion and an understanding needs to be brought to the situation. The National Party has a different view as opposed to the Liberal Party on the bill, and we will oppose the bill at its various stages. Of course, if our concerns had been addressed, that would not be the case. As we pointed out throughout many of the clauses that we went through, there is support for those changes. In fact, numbers of my colleagues agitated for a review of the legislation by the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, because the existing legislation is clunky and very old-fashioned and needs to be reviewed in many areas. Some of those areas that have manifested over the years include concerns over the time required to go through some of the processes; the cost of the processes; and existing arrangements making it very hard for the transport of firearms, ammunition and parts, which has led to dealers across the state not having reasonable access to those things. It has been pleasing to see that some consideration has been given to that last matter in the legislation and that a transporter will no longer need to be authorised to be in possession of a firearm, a part or ammunition, as was the case before. No doubt that led to Australia Post being very reluctant to be involved in the transportation of firearms around the state, which made it very difficult for members of the public and dealers. This is something that we had been seeking to have addressed for some time, so it is good to see, but with other matters there were clear differences.

There was a division on clause 29, “Firearm to which Individual Licence applies”. We felt that consideration should have been given to an amendment so that a situation would not arise in which a person would require two firearms licences to use a gun for two different purposes, but, rather, they could use the one firearm for two purposes. We divided on that clause because we were not satisfied with the explanations.

There was also disagreement and a division on clause 30, “Limit on number of firearms under Individual Licence”. We have always taken the view that the Law Reform Commission’s position was that the way to limit the number of firearms was to establish the genuine need criteria, and, through that, a person would be able to have the appropriate number of firearms.

We also divided on clause 32, “Minimum activity requirements for Individual Licence”, and will be seeking to amend it in the other place. We have not moved amendments here because, unlike the government, we do not want to bring in ill-considered amendments and have to make more amendments on the floor of the chamber. We would like parliamentary counsel to look at the amendments and write them formally so that they are effective and do what we would like them to do. With regard to the requirements for individual licences, the minister made it quite clear that will be no intention for the minimum activity requirement to relate to hunting licences, and he refused to consider removing the term “individual licence” and replace it with “competition licence”, because that is actually the licence that will be monitored for the minimum activity test. The concern is that if we have a hunting activity test, how will that be done; and will that become an unnecessary burden on the property owners who gave the hunting authority in the first place to those who are accessing their land? We divided on that clause and we will seek to amend it in the other house.

The Nationals also opposed and divided on clause 40, “Suitability of land for hunting using firearm”, because of those concerns around clause 32, as much as anything else, albeit there were a few other concerns.

Finally, clause 90, “Licence must be for genuine business”, requires that a dealer, trader or repairer must establish that they are a genuine business. We expressed the concern that there is a disparity in the scale and operation between smaller regional operators and larger specialist metropolitan operators. In many towns, communities and areas, someone will be capable of providing a valuable service in the area. They can provide the serviceability certificates for firearms and the storage capacity for people. If people are going away or going to hospital or whatever, and need to put a firearm into storage somewhere, they can utilise that facility in a nearby community. Ammunition can be bought from those dealers. Perhaps firearms can be bought; sometimes the dealer may not directly sell them.

Perhaps that will be somewhere people can go to get their firearms repaired. As we know, a firearm owner who holds a hunting, competition, primary producer or any other licence will not really have the ability to do any repairs themselves. As we learnt in the consideration in detail stage, the limitations around what will be considered a repair and what will just be maintenance are still a bit grey, but the legislation is very restrictive on repairs or maintenance and what is actually manufacturing. We learnt that, for instance, a firearm owner will not be able to screw anything into the stock of a rifle that might enable them to carry it with a strap. To me, it seems a bit of an overreach that they cannot go to Bunnings, get a couple of screws and put them in the stock of the gun to make it easier to carry, but that is the case. That means it is important that we have these local businesses where a firearm owner can easily go to do things legally, because everyone wants to do the right thing by the law. We do not know how the minimum trade tests will be formed. We are told that our concerns will be listened to, but we seek to amend the legislation so that there will be no disadvantage for regional communities due to the imposition of this provision.

A lot of other discussion took place. As I said, I think that the people providing the advice provided answers as best they could, but it is very clear that there is a lot to come in this space with the regulations and also the discretion of the police. I asked in consideration in detail for there to be some sort of list provided on how the delegations would work within the department, how many people would be making these decisions and at what level. I got an answer from the minister that certain decisions would be made at inspector level, I think some decisions will be made at commander level, and other matters would be handled by sergeants et cetera. But when we have many people acting under delegation who are all decision-makers exercising their own discretion and there is not a clear outline of how that discretion needs to be considered, we get decisions that are unpredictable and not always consistent. That is one thing we are trying to get away from and one of the reasons I felt it appropriate to refer this to be looked at by the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. I believe that there is still a high degree of uncertainty and an application's eventual outcome will be based upon who assesses the application.

We saw that earlier. If we go back to when we were assessing whether a person could come through the borders when the police had hundreds of people assessing all those matters during the COVID pandemic, many members of this place know that frequently people who were ruled out resubmitted the same application two or three times and were eventually accepted. There was no difference in the information; it was just a different person assessing the application. I know that happened on several occasions that I am personally aware of. We will always have unpredictable outcomes when various people are making decisions. That is why we need more clarity and direction around what is being assessed and the criteria for the assessment. Through this process, we have not had the opportunity to do that, and many issues are then left unanswered.

I return to the discussion on the regulations. In making the now failed referral to the standing committee, I pointed out that last night, the minister revealed at the very end of the consideration that the regulations were expected to be gazetted in December. I point out that Parliament rises in November, so there will be no sitting days of Parliament between the regulations being gazetted and the legislation coming in in March. At that time, there will have been a repeal of the old regulations. I do not know whether there will be an opportunity for Parliament to repeal a matter that is already in operation. Typically, Parliament does not sit until about April, which will be a good month after the commencement of all the changes, and the other place will not change over until May. The only realistic opportunity for a disallowance would be if the government realised that there was a mess, as happened with the Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation. If the numbers in the Legislative Council change significantly, I think it is 14 days of sitting—I am not sure of the Council's standing orders—before a disallowance would be possible. Also, the other place may not have an opportunity to meet before that deadline occurs. Realistically, there will not be a chance for Parliament to look at the regulations. I think that really needs to be addressed. It can be addressed in the bill. I am told by people who know more about these things than I do that it is possible for a bill to have a disallowance procedure within it, but, also, if the government were to reconsider the timing of the commencement and make it maybe April or May, there would be an opportunity for the new Parliament and new members to come together and discuss it. The old Parliament will not have an opportunity as in the ordinary operation of things it will not sit during that period. I put on the record that I think there is justification for a re-examination of those commencement and disallowance procedures.

I am sure that many other members want to make contributions and go through the various matters that are of concern, but, broadly, we know that this mandatory health assessment document was tabled during discussions yesterday. It formed part of the discussion because it was raised and tabled by the minister during the discussion, so it is fair enough to look at that. People have been informed of some issues in this document. I take the view that the minister said that this is a working document. It was true at a certain time; maybe the figures have moved on. But we know that the document has a number of options for the transition requirements and the physical and mental health assessments that will need to be done. Options 1 and 2 were considered to be the best scenarios to prevent the health system from being overwhelmed upon proclamation. Within the department's own document, there is concern about the effect of this measure on the health system and the ability of the general health system to provide those 90 000 assessments in a timely manner. That is something we have been at pains to point out, especially in regional areas, where there are already severe shortages of medical practitioners. This measure will add hugely to the burden

in those areas. Option 1 is a one-to-five-year implementation of the requirement. That would mean approximately 1 500 people a month going through the process. Option 3 is that upon proclamation, all licence holders would be required to undertake a health assessment immediately upon renewal of their licence. That would mean approximately 7 000 to 8 000 health assessments a month, because all existing licence holders would need to renew their licence within 12 months. We know that will be a huge burden on the medical system. The Minister for Police, or the police, have apparently chosen to have the five-year transition in the legislation.

In the general information, the medical practitioner is not the decision-maker about a person's suitability. The medical practitioners will not make the decision; the police will make the decision, based on the evidence that the medical practitioner provides. How will the police make that decision, given the delegations and somewhat subjective nature of the matters? That is a concern and is something that needs further examination.

There is an example of a Western Australia police health assessment form, as part of the document, and a checklist of things to go through. It goes through a person's medical history, including: high blood pressure, physical injuries, diabetes—those are only some of the things—hearing loss, any mental health issue, sleep apnoea et cetera. People have a range of medical fitness. The minister has advanced that the tests are well-known, because we have them for driving heavy vehicles or flying an aircraft. However, this is a different matter.

If someone wants to go to the Morawa gun club and shoot a shotgun—I could think of an example that I used in my second reading contribution—however, they may have a heart condition; they may have some of the other matters; they may have diabetes or they may have hearing loss. They may have. I am not sure that that should necessarily rule them out from having a firearm licence. They can drive a car out there—they can drive two tonnes, or if it is a Dodge Ram ute, it might be three tonnes of lethal weapon—the weapon that claims nearly 200 lives every year on Western Australian roads. They can take one of those out there and apparently they are not a threat; however, if they walk over to the standing point and shoot at clay pigeons, apparently there is an amazing risk that we all face if this person has diabetes or hearing loss.

The matters of concern in that are: who is the decision-maker; what are the requirements and how far into a person's medical records can the commissioner or delegates go? We know that they can now seek information and by virtue of the fact that someone wants a firearm licence, they have to give up their right to any privacy if they have medical records. That is a significant impost on people that needs to be considered. I get the whole thing about elevated public safety, but there are other principles in civil society around protections of privacy and rights that people have to their privacy. The minister said that, for instance, there is no right to freedom of expression in Australia. That is not necessarily the case, because we are signatories to many international agreements, which carry that requirement; therefore, yes, there may not be a bill of rights that says that, but there are plenty of implied or expressed freedoms of speech, which are carried out throughout those agreements as well as the implied rights under the High Court's rulings over the years.

We know there is worry about opinions people have had at some point in their life. We do not know how long that will affect them. Many people say silly things over their life and in this day and age, of course, because of social media and the internet, things are there forever. There is concern about how much time will be spent trying to find what a person's opinion might be. Obviously, there will be signals that someone might be a risk and that procedure has always been there. If someone is an obvious risk because of their associations and the like—yes, there are opportunities. We do not believe that that has been adequately explained and, of course, we know through the discussions we have had over the past couple of days that there are a number of other issues that other members have expressed concern about.

I am conscious of the time and I know there are other members who would like to speak on this third reading; therefore, I will conclude my contribution and allow others to rise with their specific concerns or views following the consideration in detail.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt) [12.15 pm]: I will not take too much of the house's time; however, I do want to rise and speak to the third reading. I note that the Leader of the Opposition has been very consistent and detailed in the analysis that has occurred through consideration in detail. I add my thanks to the Minister for Police and his staff. There were a couple of late evenings required to get through what is a significant piece of legislation.

I do not want to add to what the Leader of the Opposition has said about the matters that the National Party has raised about its concerns with the current legislation. I want to raise a matter that the minister spoke to as part of the referral debate and the unwillingness of the government to consider referring the bill to a Legislative Assembly committee or to the Standing Committee on Legislation, which we have heard from other members has only had one piece of legislation in this term of Parliament. Using the minister's argument, committees are superfluous. We should only use the consideration in detail process through Parliament, and there is no need for our committees to look at the detail, the policy, and to be able to call experts to provide advice. That is the purpose of the committee system. This government has a number of committees, which it has members assigned to them—many more members

of the government, and I suggest that the work that the member for Willagee, Hon Peter Tinley, is doing on domestic gas policy is something that is of great interest and is very useful. However, according to the Minister for Police, there is no purpose in using any of the committees that are designed to look at particular issues related to justice, or seeing whether the legislation delivers as it is intended and written. I was a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation, which I raised in my second reading contribution. There is merit in having one committee go through the process outside consideration in detail. It speaks volumes about this government's commitment to transparency and willingness to deviate from its position. It is very disappointing. It is disappointing for the thousands of people who have contacted us or tried to participate in this process and who did not feel that their views had been adequately heard during consultation. I think there have been enough issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition, other members and me during consideration in detail that show it is not a perfect piece of legislation; yet, when we come to the management of this, the Western Australia police and those who will be required to interpret it, we need to have it as clear as possible.

I return to one of the matters that I raised concerns about, which was the very subjective and, I think, ill-defined process in which someone is determined to be a fit and proper person. There is no question that someone should be, but it is how we arrive at whether someone is a fit and proper person. When we have words like, "views, opinions and attitudes", or a "person's way of living or domestic circumstances"—there may be a particular interpretation of that, but that could be interpreted differently by subsequent commissioners or those who were not involved in the writing of the legislation. In relation to the physical and mental health checks, again, concerns have been raised about potential unintended consequences. They are real. No-one is saying that there is not some desire to make sure that people who hold a licence are mentally and physically well but there are many permutations of what that may look like and how the legislation will be applied. As I said before, that determination is largely subjective if we look at it on face value—in black and white—in the legislation. I think a number of people in the community will be concerned, and probably the police at some stage, because a broad interpretation factor will still come into play.

The minister continues to say that this is a binary argument, and if members do not support the legislation, they are essentially promoting a culture in which everyone can have an unlimited number of guns. I absolutely reject that. At present, someone requires a genuine reason to hold a firearms licence. Clearly, some people have managed to get around that under the current licensing laws.

Although we are creating new legislation, we should be mindful of the fact that even though the Law Reform Commission did not recommend setting limits, it was very clear about the fact that people should have a genuine reason to seek and hold a firearms licence. We agree that it is a privilege, not a right. I disagree with the characterisation of those who are questioning the number, the limits and the process and that it necessarily follows that we think everyone should have unlimited access to firearms. We do not, I have not, I never have and I do not want the community to think that. That would probably put me at odds with some people in the community but I think a vast majority of people think that we need some robustness in the approach given to licences. We have never had a gun culture like the one we have seen in the United States. That is not something that we would support.

The last thing I wanted to touch on is the discussion that the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Nationals WA raised around regulations. There are unknowns. Sadly, we have been burnt on this front with the experiences we have had with this government over other legislation. We have already heard lines such as "Just trust us", "We're working through it", "We're talking" and "We're consulting" from this government. I am afraid that the horse has bolted in terms of our trust in that circumstance. The committee and the committee process would have given us some comfort that others would delve into this bill in depth, not just this Parliament. This Parliament has a role. We have done our job. We have sat through consideration in detail. Committees have a process and a purpose. This government chooses to use them when it suits and chooses to ignore them or diminish their responsibilities and value when it suits, and I think that is very disappointing.

With that, I will sit and allow others to make their contribution. I simply say that I think the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Nationals WA have done their very best, along with our colleagues, to interrogate the legislation before us. I stand with our colleagues in the National Party in saying that I cannot support the legislation in its current form.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.23 pm]: I also rise to contribute to the third reading debate on the Firearms Bill 2024. From the outset, as many members would be aware, we have raised a number of issues on this bill. As I have also stated, our shadow Minister for Police in the upper house intends to move a number of amendments to this bill.

During this debate, we urged the government to refer this piece of legislation to a number of committees to ensure that it does not have unintended consequences and that it is the best piece of legislation it can be. We know that there is a need to reform the gun laws in Western Australia. Apart from the amendments to legislation that were made following the tragic incident in Port Arthur, it has been some time since firearms laws were upgraded. It is certainly important that we consider reforms on a number of different matters, in particular, the property letter

system, which I know had the support of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, the Western Australian Farmers Federation, the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association, vegetablesWA and Wines of Western Australia. We also need a number of other reforms that have the objective of ensuring that we have sensible, accessible and safe policy on the management of firearms in this state.

We have flagged that the shadow Minister for Police in the other place will move an amendment relating to the scope of the committee that we hope the legislation will be referred to in order to ensure that it not only looks beyond uniform legislation, but also at the policy and intent of the legislation to ensure that there are no unintended consequences. We also support the move to refer this legislation to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. We support the intent of the legislation, which is to reduce the stockpiling of firearms but, as I stated in my second reading contribution, if that is the intention, I would again question why there has not been a move to strengthen the genuine need test and the approach the government has taken on limits. As I have stated, an amendment relating to that will be moved.

In relation to a fit and proper person and mental health checks, although we support the recommendation of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia that those who have firearms are of sound mind and not a danger to themselves and others, which has obvious merit, it is vitally important that there are no unintended consequences and that it has no negative impact on the mental health of lawful firearm owners in this state and the accessibility of mental health support. We certainly would not like to see people dissuaded from seeking the support that they require.

As I stated in my second reading contribution, the long-term view of the PGA and WAFF is that any changes to existing firearms legislation should include a separate category for primary producers. We are pleased that that is supported by the government. We intend to ensure that this legislation does not have unintended consequences for lawful firearm owners in this state.

As I stated, this legislation will now go through a process in the Legislative Council where our shadow Minister for Police, who has engaged with the lawful firearm community, including many stakeholder groups, will move a number of amendments.

I will leave my comments there as I understand other members would like to speak.

MS M. BEARD (North West Central) [12.28 pm]: I rise to speak on the Firearms Bill 2024. I want to say from the outset that I understand and recognise the enormous amount of work that everyone has undertaken to update the bill and implement necessary changes. I also want to point out that I understand the importance of this legislation—it is incredibly important—and the need to update it. I also understand that public safety should be paramount. However, given the importance of this bill and the significant changes that it poses, coupled with calls from thousands of people who have suggested they need more time to consider it, I do not think that is unwarranted.

There are still many unanswered questions. Everyone understands the devil is in the detail and many people in my region are scarred by what happened when the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill went through. There has been a strong call from my constituents who are nervous about what this bill will mean and its interpretation. I understand the minister has acknowledged that he has spoken with many different groups. I am not sure whether it is because of the remoteness of my area, but many people are only just finding out about the buyback scheme and the bill. They are quite removed from what happens in Parliament and they are concerned by that.

I also want to make the point that the intention of the bill is good and everyone would agree with it. Nobody wants to see firearms running rampant throughout the state. That is not anyone's intention, but it is shrouded in subjectivity. It is clear from debate that improvements to the bill and consultation are still needed. A review by the committee, in my view, can be seen only as a positive. We are here with the same objective, which is to make the bill as robust, watertight and workable as it can be. I think the unintended consequences with some of these issues raised still have not been fully explored. From my interpretation of what we went through at the consideration in detail stage, a lack of historical information has been cited. I understand that we have substandard systems, but I do not think it has allowed for a comparative analysis as to how we have arrived at some of the decisions in this bill.

Some of the things raised in my patch include the reform of the property letter system. That is absolutely necessary. I come from a pastoral background, and I understand that and agree it needs reform. I am a bit concerned about the consequences of that when we do not have the detail on how many letters and how many acres per letter will be involved. I know the Minister for Police said there will be a limit on the number of authorisations a person will be able to give for the purpose of genuine reason for the licence in the first place. Firstly, there needs to be a genuine reason—absolutely. But I think we do not know what the impact will be for some of these properties, such as the million-acre blocks in the north that need a great deal of vermin control. They are often left to do it on their own and dozens of shooters go through properties at any one point in time in a year, and that is the only way they can control vermin. Without being able to get any clarity on what types of properties are able to issue, what kinds of letters and how many, and what impact that will have, it is difficult for people to understand what the devil in the

detail will be. We also have the issue I raised in relation to people who shoot on these properties for sustenance versus people who shoot these properties for the eradication of pests. There are two different purposes. That issue with the property letters is raised with me regularly. There is definitely a need for the scrutiny process to happen and I think this is what I am trying to demonstrate in terms of drilling down and the magnitude of what might happen.

I will summarise this issue very quickly because many people have raised this. There are people who seemingly are not aware of the compensation buyback scheme. Not everyone belongs to the groups that have been consulted. Not everyone is a member of these groups. The adequacy of the compensation also has been raised with me, and whether it is near market value or not at market value is concerning people. The word “voluntary” concerns people because they believe the scheme is not voluntary and they are law-abiding owners of these firearms. The issue of inadequate health services in regional areas to undertake health assessments has also been raised with me. Doctors have contacted me saying they are unsure what it will mean to them and what the ramifications will be. The large number of people, particularly in regional areas, and the lack of healthcare workers is a concern for some people.

The storage requirements issue has been raised with me. I refer also to the impact on trade for rural supply shops and small businesses. Some supply shops are within hardware stores and people are concerned that the standards around the dealerships might disproportionately affect regional and rural shops, particularly through limiting their ability to provide essential services for regional communities. Another issue that has been raised is the licence types and limits. The bill will introduce various types of licences with specific purposes, but people are saying the removal of recreational shooting is not aligned to the National Firearms Agreement. This is the issue that I raised in relation to people shooting for sustenance. Where do they fit in, and will that diminish the number of letters a property owner can give to someone to eradicate their pests? I refer to security and storage and the capacity around that.

I go back to the health assessments. The consensus is that there is an overreach. People who have disabilities are concerned about where they fit within this and what will and will not be allowed and how they might be granted or not granted a licence. The digital licence has been raised with me. It was raised because of not only the lack of Telstra lines and access to the digital space at times in the north, but also security and concerns about where that data might end up. People have cited ending up in *The West Australian* as an example. They are concerned and want confidence that that is not going to be an issue going forward. People want to know what will be in the regulations. The point the Leader of the Opposition made is relevant because there will not be any time to disallow or review the regulations. That is of concern to a lot of people.

I will end there. I want to say thank you again to everyone who has contributed to this bill. It was an arduous task. I believe it needs further scrutiny. I acknowledge that everyone has a differing view on this, but I think everyone in general wants the same outcome, which is public safety. I think that a large number of people are doing the right thing. I would be keen to understand how the illegal guns are being dealt with in terms of sourcing those and reining them in, because there is no data, as the minister said, to find out which offences were committed with illegal guns and which were committed with licensed guns. It is difficult to make that comparison. Also, I am very conscious of unintended consequences, which worry me a lot. That is a reason for it to go to the committee. In good conscience, in this instance, in alignment with my community and their views, I will not be able to support the bill as it stands rights now in its current form.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.37 pm]: I want to make a brief contribution. First, I want to thank the advisers who were here late at night and for several hours this week, so thank you to them. I acknowledge our many primary producers around the state, many of whom are in my electorate of Roe. Many of them have raised some excellent points about this bill. We had the Wagin Woolorama a couple of weeks ago and many people filed into the Nationals WA stand and spoke to us about things concerning them. I acknowledge them along with the many other people—recreational shooters, hunters and others—who have contacted us over the past weeks and months. I acknowledge that.

I will restate the case for what I thought was a lack of consultation. A 62-page document in October proposed significant changes to all aspects of licensing and the regulatory regime for firearm owners and a very brief period of consultation. Of course, as previously stated, nearly 13 000 Western Australians petitioned the government. As we have pointed out, we are very concerned about the scenarios of the health system being overwhelmed upon proclamation and potentially 90 000 health assessments being submitted. The minister has explained how health assessments will be spaced out over time, but we are talking about potentially 1 500 health assessments per month, which will put a lot of stress on our currently undermanned and overworked health system. I, along with the Leader of the Opposition, have question marks over those disorders and some of those health items mentioned such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes or alcohol intake. According to the Western Australia Police Force, 1 500 mandatory health assessment will be required every month, yet the Minister for Police claims that he does not want to overload the health system. That is a concern to me.

The category on which the Commissioner of Police will have the ability to decide whether someone is fit to have a licence is subjective. The minister may not be aware that Australia is party to seven core international human

rights treaties, including the right to freedom of opinion and expression as contained in articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Department of the Attorney-General of Australia states —

The right to freedom of opinion is the right to hold opinions without interference, and cannot be subject to any exception or restriction.

That is my concern with these subjective provisions.

The other thing, of course, is the implementation of arbitrary caps on firearm ownership that are contrary to the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission's 2016 *Review of the WA Firearms Act 1973(WA)* and WA police. I have concerns that WA police have been well and truly involved in the writing of the legislation and now its enforcement. As was said earlier today, we wanted to refer this legislation—490-odd clauses—to the Standing Committee on Legislation, but this government does not seem to want to go down that path. I think that is a mistake, as we saw with the approach taken with the Sports and Entertainment Trust Bill 2023. I support the Leader of the Opposition, and the Nationals WA certainly oppose this bill.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Police) [12.42 pm] — in reply: I thank members for their contributions. I will address a couple of things. Firstly, the suggestion from the Leader of the Opposition that it is ill considered to make amendments on the floor is a bit contradictory considering there are amendments from the floor that the member commends. The amendment suggested by the members for Collie–Preston and Vasse, and which had been raised just prior to the legislation entering Parliament by the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board, related to allowing more than one primary producer licence to a property. The Leader of the Opposition applauded that. The concept and the suggestion of that amendment was brought to us too late to include in the drafting. Were we to not consider it on the floor of the Parliament, we would be ignoring that opportunity to correct and improve the bill—which we did. The Leader of the Opposition was supportive of that process. There is a purpose to the debate and the consideration of issues raised in this house and the other place. I look forward to that process playing out.

In the course of the debate, the Leader of the Opposition and a range of people identified that the current law prevents competition shooters from utilising their competition firearms for hunting and asked whether they would be able to seek a hunting licence under the new legislation. That is an interesting observation. The reasoning behind the law is that the police do not believe that some competition firearms should be allowed for hunting. At the moment, that is the rule. The regulation is that people cannot use a competition firearm for hunting.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1312.]