

# Media Release

**The Hon Lisa Neville MP**

Minister for Water

Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Tuesday, 31 March 2020

## RESTRICTIONS ON THE SALE OF FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

The sale of firearms and ammunition for sporting or recreational purposes will be temporarily banned, following deliberations by the National Cabinet.

The new measures are designed to protect licensed firearm owners and dealers as well as the broader community.

We know that licensed firearm owners and dealers exercise a high degree of care when complying with their obligations, however, there has been an increase in firearms permits to acquire applications and additional ammunition in recent times, increasing the risk that firearms and ammunition may not be stored safely.

To prevent potential stockpiling, and the risk that firearms and ammunition could fall into criminal hands or dealers could be targeted by organized crime, licensed dealers will now be prohibited from selling firearms and ammunition for sporting or recreational purposes for the duration of the coronavirus outbreak.

Those with a need to access firearms and ammunition for essential services, like farmers and rural landholders, professional vermin control and armed guards will still be able to access them for these purposes.

It comes as Victoria Police has undertaken 1,225 spot checks in the past 24 hours at homes, businesses and non-essential services across the state as part of Operation Sentinel.

This includes a \$9,913 on-the-spot fine of a Fitzroy licensed restaurant for failing to adhere to directives designed to slow the spread of coronavirus. Police visited the restaurant and observed alcohol being served to patrons inside.

If people breach these directions, they face on-the-spot fines of \$1,652 for individuals and \$9,913 for businesses. Larger fines can also be issued through the courts.

Victoria Police has established a coronavirus enforcement squad of 500 officers, coordinated through the Police Operations Centre, to ensure that measures that have been put in place to combat coronavirus are followed.

The Government's message to all Victorians is clear: if you can stay home, you must stay home.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville**

*"We're responding to an increase in demand for firearms and ammunition across the country by doing what we can to protect licensed firearm owners and dealers as well as the broader community."*

*"We sincerely hope that Victoria Police does not have to issue one of these on the spot fines, and people do the right thing. But for those that don't, they will be dealt with."*