

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Police

Minister for Water



Tuesday, 7 September 2021

GUN THEFT TARGETED IN PROPOSED CHANGES TO FIREARMS LAW

The Victorian Government is strengthening laws around the safe use of firearms with the introduction of the *Firearms and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2021* to Parliament today.

The Bill proposes a number of amendments to the *Firearms Act 1996*, including changes that will reduce the incidence of firearm thefts, enhance firearms storage requirements and tighten regulatory standards for when licensed dealers hire, loan, send and dispose of firearms.

Firearm theft remains an ongoing concern in Victoria, with stolen firearms representing a significant community safety risk if they enter the unregulated market and come into the possession of organised crime groups. The proposed changes will ensure appropriate regulations are in place to prevent misuse within the community.

The Bill also introduces amendments to the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004* to ensure greater consistency with Commonwealth legislation relating to child abuse material. It will also reduce the time that a registrable offender has to notify police of their return to Victoria from interstate travel – from 14 days to 7 days after return.

The Bill is also designed to support victim survivors of family violence, with proposed amendments to the *Criminal Procedure Act 2009*.

The changes extend the availability of Digitally Recorded Evidence in Chief (DREC) statements for a further two years, to 3 October 2024, to enable an expanded phased trial and evaluation of their use and impacts to be conducted.

In addition, proposed amendments to the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958* will enable the Magistrates' Court to direct an accused adult to appear at a first remand hearing by audio visual link.

This will occur where the court is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist, such as if a State of Emergency or State of Disaster has been declared in Victoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police Lisa Neville

"It's crucial that our firearm laws safeguard the use of firearms by responsible, law-abiding owners and allow for strict controls and safety measures that reduce risks to the community and minimise harm from deliberate or accidental misuse of guns."

"These changes will ensure Victoria Police have the powers they need to keep the Victorian community safe while ensuring our justice system can continue to respond and adapt during times of emergency."