



Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Legislative Scrutiny Committee

Inquiry into the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026

April 2026



Inquiry into the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026



Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Parliament House
State Square
Darwin NT 0800

Web: www.parliament.nt.gov.au

Contents

Chair’s Preface	4
Committee Members	5
Committee Secretariat	5
Acknowledgments	5
Acronyms and Abbreviations	6
Terms of Reference	7
Recommendations	9
1 Introduction	10
Introduction of the Bill	10
Conduct of the Inquiry	10
Outcome of Committee’s Consideration	10
Report Structure	11
2 Overview of the Bill	12
Background to the Bill	12
Purpose of the Bill	12
3 Examination of the Bill	14
Introduction	14
Licence Conditions and Permit Provisions	14
Period of Licence	16
Digital Blueprints for Manufacture of Firearms Offence	20
Sale, Purchase, Possession of Ammunition	24
Matters to be Notified	25
Explanatory Statement	27
Appendix 1: Submissions Received	29
Appendix 2: Public Briefing	30
Bibliography	31

Chair's Preface

This report details the Committee's findings regarding its examination of the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026. The Bill amends the *Firearms Act 1977* to implement specific reform proposal 5A of the Approvals Fast Track Taskforce Report, *Saying 'Yes' to Business*, which recommended that the NT Government, as part of implementing the National Firearms Register, work with industry to identify options to allow renewal of commercial (Corporate and Employee) Firearm Licences.

The Committee received 8 submissions to its inquiry, all of which were generally supportive of the policy intent of the Bill. Some concerns were raised and clarification was sought in relation to:

- safeguards to ensure the Commissioner of Police's power to revoke, vary or specify licence and permit conditions is consistent, transparent and accountable
- operational matters relating to licences continuing to be in force beyond their expiry where an application for a new firearm licence of the same type has been lodged
- operational matters relating to the newly inserted provision that makes it an offence to produce, sell, distribute or possess a digital blueprint for manufacture of firearms;
- guidance available to dealers and retail permit holders for the sale of ammunition to interstate licence holders
- guidance available on the Bill's transitional matters.

Following its examination of the Bill, the view of the Committee is that the Assembly should pass the Bill without amendment. However, the Committee made recommendations to ensure the issues raised in submissions are appropriately monitored, and the explanatory materials are detailed and accurate. Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 recommended that the Explanatory Statement be amended:

- to explain how licence applications and renewals will be processed in a timely manner
- to include a general outline of the Bill
- to provide a more comprehensive and accurate explanation of the amendment made by clause 11 to section 68 of the Act.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank all those that provided submissions to the Committee's inquiry. The Committee also thanks the Northern Territory Police Force for briefing the Committee and providing advice regarding issues raised in submissions. I also thank my fellow Committee members for their bipartisan commitment to the legislative review process.



Mrs Oly Carlson MLA
Chair

Committee Members

Chair:	Mrs Oly Carlson, MLA Member for Wanguri
Deputy Chair:	Mr Clinton Howe, MLA Member for Drysdale
Members:	Justine Davis, MLA Member for Johnston Mr Chanston Paech, MLA Member for Gwoja Mrs Laurie Zio, MLA Member for Fannie Bay

Committee Secretariat

Committee Secretaries:	Julia Knight Katie Helme
Senior Research Officer:	Georgia Eagleton
Administration/Research Officer:	Caelan Ikin
Administration Assistant:	Kim Cowcher
Contact Details:	GPO Box 3721 DARWIN NT 0801 Tel: +61 08 8946 1485 Email: LSC@nt.gov.au

Acknowledgments

The Committee acknowledges all those that provided written submissions to its inquiry, and the representatives from the Northern Territory Police Force for briefing the Committee and providing comprehensive responses to written questions.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Act	<i>Firearms Act 1997</i>
Bill	Firearms Amendment Bill 2026
Commissioner	Commissioner of Police
Committee	Legislative Scrutiny Committee
FAC	Firearms Advisory Council
FPRU	Firearms Policy and Recording Unit
Minister	Minister for Police
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTCAT	Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal
NTFC	Northern Territory Firearms Council Inc
NTPF	Northern Territory Police Force
SIFA	Shooting Industry Foundation Australia
Taskforce	Approvals Fast Track Taskforce

Terms of Reference

Sessional Order 14

Establishment of Legislative Scrutiny Committee

- (1) The Assembly appoints a Legislative Scrutiny Committee
- (2) The membership of the scrutiny committee will comprise three Government Members, one Opposition Member and one crossbench Member.
- (3) The functions of the scrutiny committee shall be to inquire into and report on:
 - (a) any bill referred to it by the Assembly;
 - (b) in relation to any bill referred by the Assembly:
 - (i) whether the Assembly should pass the bill;
 - (ii) whether the Assembly should amend the bill;
 - (iii) whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals, including whether the bill:
 - (A) makes rights and liberties, or obligations, dependent on administrative power only if the power is sufficiently defined and subject to appropriate review; and
 - (B) is consistent with principles of natural justice; and
 - (C) allows the delegation of administrative power only in appropriate cases and to appropriate persons; and
 - (D) does not reverse the onus of proof in criminal proceedings without adequate justification; and
 - (E) confers power to enter premises, and search for or seize documents or other property, only with a warrant issued by a judge or other judicial officer; and
 - (F) provides appropriate protection against self-incrimination; and
 - (G) does not adversely affect rights and liberties, or impose obligations, retrospectively; and
 - (H) does not confer immunity from proceeding or prosecution without adequate justification; and
 - (I) provides for the compulsory acquisition of property only with fair compensation; and
 - (J) has sufficient regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tradition; and
 - (K) is unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way.

- (iv) whether the bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament, including whether a bill:
 - (A) allows the delegation of legislative power only in appropriate cases and to appropriate persons; and
 - (B) sufficiently subjects the exercise of a delegated legislative power to the scrutiny of the Legislative Assembly; and
 - (C) authorises the amendment of an Act only by another Act.
- (4) The committee will provide an annual report of its activities to the Assembly.

Adopted 15 October 2024

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly pass the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 without amendment.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Explanatory Statement be amended to explain how licence applications and renewals will be processed in a timely manner.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Explanatory Statement be amended to include a general outline of the Bill.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that clause 11 of the Explanatory Statement be amended to include the change in the section 68 penalty provision and to clarify the rationale for the substantial increase in the maximum term of imprisonment for this offence.

1 Introduction

Introduction of the Bill

1.1 The Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (the Bill) was introduced into the Legislative Assembly by the Minister for Police, Hon Lia Finocchiaro MLA (the Minister), on 18 March 2026. The Assembly subsequently referred the Bill to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) for inquiry and report by 30 April 2026.¹

Conduct of the Inquiry

1.2 On 19 March 2026, the Committee called for submissions by 27 March 2026. The call for submissions was advertised via the Legislative Assembly website, Facebook, and email subscription service. In addition, the Committee directly contacted a number of individuals and organisations. As set out in Appendix 1, the Committee received 8 submissions to its inquiry.

1.3 As set out in Appendix 2, on 24 March 2026 the Committee held a public briefing with representatives from the NT Police Force (NTPF). On 7 April 2026, following consideration of the evidence received, the Committee sought further advice from the NTPF to be provided in writing by 14 April 2026.²

Outcome of Committee's Consideration

- 1.4 Sessional Order 14 requires that the Committee after examining the Bill determine:
- whether the Assembly should pass the bill;
 - (ii) whether the Assembly should amend the bill;
 - (iii) whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals; and
 - (iv) whether the bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament.
- 1.5 Following examination of the Bill, and consideration of the evidence received, the Committee is of the view that the Legislative Assembly should pass the Bill without amendment.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly pass the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 without amendment.

¹ Hon Lia Finocchiaro MLA, Minister for Police, *Draft Daily Hansard – Day 5 – Wednesday 18 March 2026*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/1029229>, pp. 1-2

² Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf

Report Structure

- 1.6 Chapter 2 provides an overview of the policy objectives of the Bill and the purpose of the Bill as contained in the Explanatory Statement.
- 1.7 Chapter 3 considers the main issues raised in evidence received.

2 Overview of the Bill

Background to the Bill

- 2.1 In introducing the Bill, the Minister advised that it amends the *Firearms Act 1997* (the Act) to implement specific reform proposal 5A of the Approvals Fast Track Taskforce (the Taskforce) Report, *Saying 'Yes' to Business*, and for related purposes that support implementation of this recommendation.³
- 2.2 The Taskforce was established in November 2024 to:
- provide expert advice on easing the burden of red tape on business and industry and cutting timeframes for approvals processes. The Taskforce was asked to provide recommendations on how the NT Government can meet its commitment to cut timeframes for regulatory approval by 50% and introduce legislation to remove unnecessary and burdensome regulations.⁴
- 2.3 Noting that, 'a risk-based regulatory policy should reduce compliance burden and unnecessary friction points for business,' the Taskforce recommended extending 'licence renewal periods to reduce unnecessary touch points with government.' The Taskforce's Supplementary Report set out specific reform proposal 5A:
- That NT Government should, as part of implementing the National Firearms Register, work with industry to identify options to allow renewal of commercial (Corporate and Employee) Firearm Licences.⁵
- 2.4 The Taskforce determined this reform proposal to be an immediate priority, recommending it be implemented within 12 months.
- 2.5 The NTPF further advised the Committee that:
- Other key amendments in the Bill address some of the legislative deficiencies and some urgent operational issues that impeded the daily operations of the Firearms Policy and Recording Unit within the Northern Territory Police.⁶

Purpose of the Bill

- 2.6 Amending the *Firearms Act 1997* (the Act), the Committee heard that the key amendments contained in the Bill include:
- (a) implementation of Recommendation 5A of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce Report;
 - (b) inserting the ability for a licence to remain valid whilst an application for the same licence type is being considered by the Commissioner [of Police];

³ Hon Lia Finocchiaro MLA, Minister for Police, *Draft Daily Hansard – Day 5 – Wednesday 18 March 2026*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/1029229>, p. 1

⁴ Approvals Fast Track Taskforce, *Saying 'Yes' to Business*, Northern Territory Government, Darwin, May 2025, <https://cmc.nt.gov.au/media/docs/advancing-industry/saying-yes-to-business-report.pdf>, p. 2

⁵ Approvals Fast Track Taskforce, *Saying 'Yes' to Business Supplementary Report*, Northern Territory Government, Darwin, May 2025, <https://cmc.nt.gov.au/media/docs/advancing-industry/saying-yes-to-business-supplementary-report.pdf>, p. 13

⁶ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p.3

- (c) inserting a power for the Commissioner [of Police] to revoke or vary a firearms licence or permit during its currency;
- (d) amending the membership of the Firearms Advisory Council, including having an independent chairperson, and the Firearms Advisory Council reporting directly to the Minister;
- (e) inserting offences for destroying a firearm and for possessing digital blueprints for a firearm manufactured by a 3D printer; and,
- (f) amending temporary recognition of interstate licensees coming to the Territory to participate in firearms-related activities, including lawful purchase, use and possession of ammunition whilst in the Territory.⁷

2.7 It was further noted that the proposed amendments support the Government's priorities in relation to maintaining the Territory lifestyle.⁸

⁷ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 2

⁸ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 5

3 Examination of the Bill

Introduction

3.1 The Committee received 8 submissions to its inquiry. While the majority of submitters were generally supportive of the policy intent of the Bill, concerns were raised in relation to several of the proposed amendments as currently drafted. Clarification was also sought regarding the intended operation of some clauses and a number of submissions put forward suggestions as to how the Bill might be improved.

Licence Conditions and Permit Provisions

3.2 Clauses 6 and 8 amend sections 13 and 34 of the Act to empower the Commissioner of Police (the Commissioner) to revoke or vary a condition of a licence or permit, and specify further conditions to which the licence or permit is subject during the period of a licence or permit.⁹

3.3 The amendments made by these clauses were partially supported by seven submissions, with a number of submitters suggesting changes to the proposed sections to address their concerns.¹⁰

3.4 Sam Wilks raised that the absence of specific criteria by which the Commissioner may revoke or vary conditions, such as public safety risk, demonstrated compliance failure, integrity concerns or material change of circumstance may lead to uncertainty for businesses, overreach and dispute.¹¹

3.5 The Shooting Industry Foundation Australia (SIFA) noted that while the proposal to provide the Commissioner with this discretion is appropriate, it should have safeguards:

[The Commissioner's direction] should be exercised within clear thresholds and supported by procedural safeguards to ensure consistency, transparency and accountability.¹²

3.6 Several Firearms Advisory Council (FAC) members and the Northern Territory Firearms Council Inc (NTFC) recommended that clauses 6 and 8 be amended to provide that the Commissioner can amend a licence in force in the following circumstances:

1. On application by the holder of the licence, amend the genuine reason(s), firearms categories or conditions of their licence, or
2. In circumstances where a change to the Act or Regulations requires the licence be amended for it to remain compliant with the changes to the Act or Regulations, or

⁹ Explanatory Statement, *Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 61)*,

<https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>, p. 2

¹⁰ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2; Firearms Advisory Council (FAC) members, Submissions Nos. 3,4,5,7; NT Firearms Council Inc (NTFC), Submission No. 6; Shooting Industry Foundation Australia (SIFA), Submission No. 8.

¹¹ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, pp. 2-3

¹² Shooting Industry Foundation Australia (SIFA), Submission No. 8, p. 3.

3. In circumstances where the Commissioner has reasonable grounds to believe that the licence needs to be amended to ensure public safety.¹³

3.7 Submitters noted that this was the wording agreed to and passed as a motion by the FAC in May 2025.¹⁴

3.8 In light of these concerns, the Committee sought clarity and comment from the NTPF regarding:

- the types of circumstances that would trigger a revocation, variation or addition of conditions to a licence or permit
- whether the Commissioner would be able to exercise their discretion on the basis of an application by the licence/permit holder
- grounds for the exercise of the Commissioner's discretion and whether consideration was given to including examples in the Explanatory Statement
- the potential impact of the amendment on licence holders.¹⁵

3.9 The NTPF clarified the intended operation of clauses 6 and 8 and noted that policies and procedures will detail the process for revoking, varying and adding conditions to a licence or permit:

These amendments will enhance the safety of the community by ensuring that the most appropriate conditions are in place for licence and permit holders.

The grounds for exercising this power will vary greatly depending on the circumstances of the individual's licence or permit. Therefore, each licence and permit must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the conditions imposed are the most appropriate. For example, the Commissioner may exercise the power as a result of a compliance check following an intelligence report or a complaint, or where there may be concerns regarding continued suitability to hold a licence or permit. The power may also be exercised to remediate bespoke conditions of a licence or permit holder, such as medical conditions and storage arrangements.

While not expressly required by the Bill, internal NTPF policies and procedures will detail the process for revoking, varying and adding conditions to a licence or permit. The inclusion of a note in the Bill and examples in the Explanatory Statement was considered. However, were not included as the power is inherently discretionary.¹⁶

3.10 FAC members and the NTFC further recommended that:

In circumstance[s] where the Commissioner needs to amend the licence to allow the effective administration of the licence, in accordance with the principles of the Act or Regulations, where:

- The Commissioner advises the holder of the licence of the proposed change and its purpose, and

¹³ Grant Hatcher, Submission No. 3, p. 2; Rodney Roughan, Submission No. 5, p. 2; Phil Duffield, Submission No. 4, p. 1; NTFC, Submission No. 6, p. 1.

¹⁴ Grant Hatcher, Submission No. 3, p. 2; Rodney Roughan, Submission No. 5, p. 2; Phil Duffield, Submission No. 4, p. 1; NTFC, Submission No. 6, p. 1.

¹⁵ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 2

¹⁶ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 2

- Allows the holder of the licence 14 days to make a submission on the change, taken from the day that the notice of change is given, and
- The Commissioner takes into account the holders submission before making a determination to either change the licence, or not proceed with the proposed change.

That the new section provides that where a decision is made to [amend] a licence under part 3 or 4 of these provisions, that the holder, if aggrieved, has the ability to appeal the decision through the provisions of Section 50¹⁷

3.11 This was also the wording agreed to and passed as a motion by the FAC in May 2025.¹⁸

3.12 In response to the Committee's request for comment on this recommendation, the NTPF noted that the inclusion of a 14 day right of reply would create inconsistencies within the Act and that the Bill affords licence and permit holders natural justice by way of administrative review for decisions made under sections 13 and 34:

Consideration was given to the Firearms Advisory Council's ('FAC') 14 day right of reply proposal. However, it was not incorporated as it would create inconsistencies with the operation of the Act. For example, as the regulator, the NTPF must act promptly to provide for the regulation and control of firearms. The safety and protection of licence and permit holders and the community is paramount. The inclusion of any right of reply period would impede the regulator's function.

The Bill provides the same review process as set out in the Act. This process affords all firearms licence and permit holders with natural justice by way of administrative review. Therefore, decisions relating to the imposition or variation of firearms licence or permit conditions will be reviewable decisions by the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal ('NTCAT').¹⁹

Committee's Comments

3.13 The Committee notes the NTPF's advice that, as licensees' circumstances vary widely, individual assessment is required to determine what license conditions are appropriate, with detail on the process for revoking or varying a licence to be included in internal policy. The Committee agrees with the NTPF that a 14 day right of reply would impede the regulator's function, noting that decisions relating to the imposition or variation of a firearms licence or permit conditions will be reviewable by NTCAT. In light of this, the Committee considers the provisions to be appropriate as drafted.

Period of Licence

3.14 Section 14 of the Act specifies the licence period applicable to each of the 10 specified licence types. The following categories currently have a licence period of 5 years under section 14(1):

¹⁷ Grant Hatcher, Submission No. 3, p. 2; Phil Duffield, Submission No. 4, p. 2; Rodney Roughan, Submission No. 5, p. 2; NTFC, Submission No. 6, p. 2.

¹⁸ Grant Hatcher, Submission No. 3, p. 2; Phil Duffield, Submission No. 4, p. 2; Rodney Roughan, Submission No. 5, p. 2; NTFC, Submission No. 6, p. 2.

¹⁹ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 3

- (a) shooter's licence that authorises the possession or use of:
 - (i) category C firearms
 - (ii) category D firearms (in force for 5 years or a shorter period as determined by the Commissioner and specified in the licence)
 - (iii) category H firearms
- (c) a firearms armourer licence, firearms dealer licence and firearms corporate licence
- (f) a firearms club licence
- (g) a firearms instructor licence
- (ga) a firearms employee licence (in force for 5 years or the shorter period specified in the licence)
- (h) a paintball operator licence
- (i) a paintball employee licence

3.15 Clause 7 amends section 14(1)(c) and 14(1)(ga) of the Act to extend the period of a firearms corporate licence, a firearms armourer licence, a firearms dealer licence and a firearms employee licence from 5 years to up to 10 years, or a shorter period if specified in the licence.²⁰

3.16 As the Committee heard, this amendment implements specific reform proposal 5A of the Approvals Fast-Track Taskforce Supplementary Report which noted that:

1. the lack of renewal opportunities for commercial firearms licences can cause delays for businesses in the agriculture and aquaculture sectors; and
2. the Act could provide an option to extend corporate and employee licence renewal periods for a further five years. This will lessen the administrative burden and time delays. Longer licence periods will also provide increased business certainty. This reform should be considered as part of the government's implementation of the National Firearms Register.²¹

3.17 While supporting the proposed amendment, SIFA noted that:

it is unclear why firearms corporate licenses are set at ten years while other business-related licences remain at five years. In our view, there should be consistency across business-related licensing categories. ... This would better align the licensing framework with contemporary regulatory practice, support long-term investment, and maintain appropriate oversight through existing compliance and enforcement mechanisms.²²

3.18 The Committee sought clarification from the NTPF as to the types of entities or business operations corporate licences encompass, and the reason why licences for

²⁰ Explanatory Statement, *Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 61)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>, p. 2

²¹ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 3

²² SIFA, Submission No. 8, p.3

other commercial ventures, such as paintball operators and associated employees for example, remain at 5 years. The NTPF advised that:

Clause 7 of the Bill formalises Recommendation 5A of the Approvals Fast Track Taskforce Report. This is achieved by amending section 14(1) of the Act to extend the period of a firearms corporate licence and firearms employee licence from 5 years to 10 years (or a shorter period if specified in the licence). This amendment gives effect to existing NT Government commitments relating to the accepted recommendations of the Approvals Fast Track Taskforce Report.

The rationale for increasing the period of a firearms corporate licence and firearms employee licence was determined by Recommendation 5 of the Approval Fast Track Taskforce Report which sought to '[e]xtend licence renewal periods to reduce unnecessary touchpoints with government'. This recommendation included a specific Tranche 1 reform proposal for the NTPF namely "5A. That NT Government should, as part of implementing the National Firearms Register, work with industry to identify options to allow renewal of commercial (Corporate and Employee) Firearm Licences".

The Approvals Fast Track Taskforce Report also highlighted that:

- i. The lack of renewal opportunities for commercial firearms licences can cause delays for businesses in the Agriculture and Aquaculture sector; and,
- ii. The Act could provide an option to extend corporate and employee licence renewal periods for a further five years. This will lessen the administrative burden and time delays. Longer licence periods will also provide increased business certainty. This reform should be considered as part of the Government's implementation of the National Firearms Register ('NFR').

The Approvals Fast Track Taskforce Report specifically addressed the Agriculture and Aquaculture sector. Other firearms licence types were not within the scope of the Approvals Fast Track Taskforce Report.

3.19 To support implementation of Recommendation 5A, clause 7 also inserts new subsection (4) that:

allows for a licence to continue to be in force beyond its expiry, as long as an application for a new firearm licence of the same type has been lodged before expiry of the existing licence, and that licence application has not yet been granted or refused, and the existing licence has not been revoked.²³

3.20 The NTPF noted in the public briefing that:

new subsection (5) will provide that, where those requirements under new subsection (4) apply, the original licence will continue to be in force until: the new licence is granted, or the new licence is refused, or the existing licence is revoked. This will ensure licence holders are not adversely affected if there are delays in any administrative process.²⁴

3.21 Sam Wilks raised concern that, in the absence of appropriate documentation, implementation of proposed subsections (4) and (5) could prove problematic:

A licence can be "in force" under NT law while looking expired on its face to everyone else.

²³ Explanatory Statement, *Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 61)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>, p. 2

²⁴ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 3

That creates real and foreseeable disputes in:

- employment and contractor compliance;
- corporate security engagements;
- client warranties and procurement terms;
- insurer disclosure and indemnity disputes;
- audits and on-site access approvals;
- interstate counterpart dealings; and
- Commonwealth or national contracting environments that ask for proof of a current licence rather than a legal argument about deeming.²⁵

3.22 Sam Wilks also questioned the extent to which it was appropriate to use a legislative fix to address what would appear to be an administrative issue.²⁶ Furthermore, as drafted, there would not appear to be any limit on how long a licence can continue to be in force following expiry.²⁷ In conjunction with the proposed increase in the licence period for corporate and employee licences, Sam Wilks expressed the view that clause 7 creates public safety consequences and weakens practical scrutiny:

Extending employee and corporate licences to 10 years reduces the frequency of full reapplication scrutiny. Letting expired licences continue in force during undetermined applications further softens the discipline of renewal. A system that was meant to test ongoing fitness can quietly become a system that tolerates pending status for months while people continue operating. That may help the registry. It does not help public safety.²⁸

3.23 Given the above, Sam Wilks suggested that clause should be amended such that:

- a pending application does not automatically continue a licence by default;
- instead, the Commissioner must issue a written temporary continuation notice or extension certificate;
- the notice must state the exact end date, conditions, and the fact that it applies; only for the purposes of the *Firearms Act*;
- the Act should impose a hard outer limit, such as 60 days, unless extended by written reasons;
- there should be statutory processing timeframes for complete applications; and
- refusal to recognise or certify continuation should be a reviewable decision.²⁹

3.24 Taking into consideration the concerns raised, the Committee sought clarification from the NTPF as to the rationale for proposed subsection 14(4) and the intended operation of the new subsection. The NTPF responded that:

New subsections 14(4) and (5) introduce the ability for a licence to remain valid whilst an application for the same licence type is being considered by the Commissioner. This amendment essentially enables licence holders to continue to possess and use their firearm, as authorised, after the expiry of their licence with no disruptions until their new licence is granted. It also supports

²⁵ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, p. 4

²⁶ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, p. 4

²⁷ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, p. 4

²⁸ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, p. 4

²⁹ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, pp. 4-5

Recommendation 5A of the Approvals Fast Track Taskforce Report by ensuring business certainty, namely in the Agriculture and Aquaculture sector.³⁰

3.25 The Committee also sought advice on what consideration had been given to establishing a statutory processing timeframe for licence applications. The NTPF subsequently advised that:

Processing timeframes are subject to the volume of applications and operational availability. For this reason, a statutory processing timeframe is not suitable. As previously mentioned, the Bill sets the parameters for how long a licence can continue in force beyond its expiry under new section 14(4). A licence will no longer be in force when the licence is revoked or the application for licence, under section 9 of the Act, has been granted or refused, under section 10 of the Act.³¹

Committee's Comments

3.26 The Committee accepts the response from the NTPF that a statutory processing timeframe for license applications is not suitable in this instance. However, the Committee finds that the Explanatory Statement should be amended to explain how licence applications and renewals will be processed in a timely manner to address stakeholder concerns regarding potential public safety risks associated with licences continuing to be in force beyond their expiry.

3.27 The Committee finds that the NTPF's advice that this amendment specifically implements the *Saying 'Yes' to Business Supplementary Report* specific reform proposal 5A, noting the Report focused on the agriculture and aquaculture sectors, satisfactorily addresses stakeholder concerns regarding the scope of this amendment.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Explanatory Statement be amended to explain how licence applications and renewals will be processed in a timely manner.

Digital Blueprints for Manufacture of Firearms Offence

3.28 Proposed section 61B provides that it is an offence for a person to intentionally produce, sell, distribute or possess a digital blueprint for the manufacture of a firearm or part of a firearm, on a 3D printer or an electronic milling machine. Clause 4 amends section 4 of the Act to provide an exemption in relation to a person who is in possession of a digital blueprint where the following circumstances exist:

- the person possesses the blueprint for a purpose connected with a law enforcement function; or
- the person possesses the blueprint for the preparation or conduct of criminal proceedings; or

³⁰ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 4

³¹ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, pp. 5-6

- the person who possesses the blueprint is authorised by a licence or permit to manufacture a firearm, or part of a firearm, based on the digital blueprint.
- 3.29 This clause was not supported by Ed Leibrick who found that:
- The offence provision is not necessary as there are already pre-existing legal constraints on manufacturing a gun without a licence.
 - The definition of digital blueprint and possession is vague.³²
- 3.30 Sam Wilks and SIFA partially supported the clause.
- 3.31 Sam Wilks also raised concerns that the definition of ‘digital blueprints’ and ‘possession’ are very broad and noted that this may invite technical litigation.³³
- 3.32 SIFA found that the definition of ‘digital blueprints’ could be misinterpreted:
- Many firearms are supplied with user manuals that include exploded technical diagrams to assist with cleaning, maintenance and safe handling. These materials are commonly available in digital format. While such diagrams illustrate component relationships, they do not contain the dimensional specifications, tolerances or machine instructions required to manufacture a functional firearm.
- Without clear legislative and regulatory boundaries, there is a substantial risk that these materials could be misinterpreted as “digital blueprints” and inadvertently captured by the offence provisions.³⁴
- 3.33 SIFA proposed that digital blueprint should be defined as ‘files that contain sufficient technical data to enable the manufacture of a functional firearm or firearm part’.³⁵ SIFA further proposed that to ensure the provisions in the Bill are proportionate, enforceable and do not unintentionally capture lawful and widely available materials, the Bill be amended to include a ‘clear exclusion for illustrative, instructional or non-dimensional materials, such as user manuals and maintenance diagrams’.³⁶
- 3.34 The Committee wrote to the NTPF to seek clarification on:
- whether user manuals that include exploded technical diagrams would be captured by the proposed definition of digital blueprint
 - consideration of inclusion of a note in the Bill or Explanatory Statement to clarify the intended operation of the definition of digital blueprint
 - consideration of an exemption for the possession of illustrative, instructional or non-dimensional materials, such as user manuals and maintenance diagrams.³⁷
- 3.35 The NTPF responded that:
- Digital blueprint means any type of digital (or electronic) reproduction of a technical drawing of the design of an object. For a diagram to be captured by the

³² Ed Leibrick, Submission No. 1, p. 1

³³ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, p. 6

³⁴ SIFA, Submission No. 8, p. 2

³⁵ SIFA, Submission No. 8, p. 2

³⁶ SIFA, Submission No. 8, p. 2

³⁷ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 6

definition of a 'digital blueprint', under the new section 61B, the diagram must be reproduction of a technical drawing in a digital or electronic form.

The Act provides various exemptions in relation the offence in new section 61B, including new subsection 4(4AA)(b) which provides an exemption for the possession of a digital blueprint if the person is authorised by a licence or permit to manufacture a firearm, or part of a firearm, based on a digital blueprint.

The inclusion of a note in the Bill and examples in the Explanatory Statement were considered, however a broad scope of the definition is required to ensure there is no inadvertent limitation imposed on the application of the Act with new and emerging technologies. Further to this, notes are often used to draw attention to other relevant statutory provisions, or to insert layman terms that may assist with interpreting legal definitions (for example, the note for 'firearm related item' in section 49C(c) of the Act includes lay terms such as 'breach block' or 'magazine'). In the context of a digital blueprint, neither were considered relevant or useful for the interpretation of this definition.³⁸

3.36 The Committee notes that the proposed definition of digital blueprint is the same as, or very similar to, that used in other jurisdictions including New South Wales (NSW), South Australia and Tasmania.³⁹

3.37 Additionally, the Committee queried with the NTPF whether an offence, similar to an offence in the NSW legislation, that sets out specific defences for a person accused of possessing a digital blueprint, including if a person did not know they possessed the blueprint or they took steps to get rid of it, was considered in drafting of the Bill. The NTPF advised:

The *Firearms Act 1996* (NSW) ('the NSW Act') provides three categories of defences:

- Innocent production, dissemination or possession
- Public benefit
- Approved research

Innocent production, dissemination or possession

The construction of the offence under section 51F of the NSW Act is different to the offence proposed at clause 10 of the Bill.

A unique aspect of criminal law in the Northern Territory is that there are two separate streams of criminal responsibility. Offences proposed in the Bill are drafted in accordance with Part IIAA of the Criminal Code, which is the modern style of criminal drafting. Part IIAA of the Criminal Code requires all applicable offences to consider the fault elements attached to each physical element (conduct, circumstance or result) of an offence (noting in some cases the fault element for a physical element or the entire offence may be 'strict liability' or 'absolute liability').

In order for the offence proposed at section 61B to be established, the person must 'intentionally' produce, sell, distribute or possess the thing (i.e. the digital blueprint). The fault element of 'intention' is defined at section 43AI of the Criminal Code. An equivalent to section 51G(1) of the NSW Act is not required as the

³⁸ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, p. 6
https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 6

³⁹ *Firearms Act 1996* (NSW) s 51F(3); *Firearms Act 2015* (SA) s 37A(9); and *Firearms Act 1996* (Tas) 119A(8).

offence cannot be established unless there is evidence to establish that the person meant to produce, sell, distribute or possess the digital blueprint.

The fault element of intention attached to the conduct of possession in new section 61B requires the person to 'mean' to possess the digital blueprint. In circumstances where a person does not intend to possess a digital blueprint, later realises that a thing in their possession is a digital blueprint, and then takes steps to get rid of the blueprint – the initial possession of the digital blueprint would not be intentional. An equivalent to section 51G(2) of the NSW Act is therefore not required.

However, if a person does not take steps to delete or destroy a thing after they realise that the thing is a digital blueprint, the ongoing possession of the digital blueprint would be intentional. The offence would exist at that point in time.

Public benefit

Part 1 of the Firearms Act 1997 (NT) ('the Act') sets out Preliminary matters including statutory exemptions. Specifically, section 4 of the Act sets out circumstances whereby the operation of the Act, or specific Parts or sections of the Act, do not apply.

Clause 4 of the Bill inserts an exemption specifically related to the proposed new offence at section 61B.

The three circumstances of 'public benefit' as defined under section 51G(4) of the NSW Act are covered by the new exemption proposed in clause 4 of the Bill, specifically new section 4(4AA)(a) of the Act.

Approved research

The 'approved research' defence at section 51G(6) of the NSW Act fall into five (5) categories:

1. Scientific research,
2. Medical research,
3. Educational research
4. Military research
5. Law Enforcement research.

The Northern Territory Police Force does not consider a defence for scientific, medical or educational research to be warranted. However, in the event that a future research proposal is presented and the Commissioner considers possession of digital blueprints for the purpose of that research to be warranted, the Commissioner can exercise their power to issue an amnesty under section 4(6)(b) of the Act. Any such amnesty would be issued with relevant and appropriate conditions for the authorisation of possession of digital blueprints.

The Northern Territory Police Force does not consider a defence for 'military research' to be required. The Defence Force operates under Commonwealth jurisdiction. Under section 123 of the Defence Act 1903 (Cth), members of the Defence Force are immune from any state or territory law requiring regulation or permissions (whether by licence or otherwise).

'Law Enforcement research' is a law enforcement function covered by the exemption discussed above in relation to clause 4 of the Bill.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Questions Taken on Notice – 24 March 2026, [NT-Police-Force-Answers-to-Questions-Taken-on-Notice-Public-Briefing-24-March-2026.pdf](#), pp. 1-2.

Committee's Comments

3.38 Per advice from the NTPF, the Committee finds that a broad definition of digital blueprint is required to ensure the Act remains effective as technologies evolve, noting the exemptions provided for in relation to the offence of intentionally producing, selling, distributing or possessing a digital blueprint. In light of this, the Committee considers the provisions to be appropriate as drafted.

Sale, Purchase, Possession of Ammunition

3.39 Clauses 12, 13 and 15 amend existing provisions of the Act regarding the sale and purchase of ammunition (section 68A), possession of ammunition (section 69), and the temporary recognition of interstate licences (section 92) to enable interstate licence holders to purchase, use and possess ammunition in the NT.⁴¹

3.40 Noting that these amendments are administrative in nature, the NTPF advised the Committee that:

the current legislation does not allow interstate licence holders to purchase ammunition. As a result, individuals with interstate licences are required to bring their own ammunition, which presents logistical and safety challenges.⁴²

3.41 The Committee heard that, following a review of the operations of the firearms legislation by the Firearms Policy and Recording Unit and the NT Police Legal Branch, in May 2025 the Commissioner:

issued a temporary exemption to allow interstate firearms licence holders to purchase and possess ammunition in the Northern Territory under certain conditions.⁴³

3.42 The Committee understands that the proposed amendments in the Bill reflect and formalise the temporary exemption which is due to expire on 30 June 2027.⁴⁴

3.43 In support of the amendments, SIFA pointed out that 'the mutual recognition of equivalent interstate licenses is an important element in achieving the consistency sought by the National Firearms Agreement.'⁴⁵ Further, it was noted that the change in relation to the possession of ammunition 'reduces ambiguity for licence holders and assists in ensuring that lawful possession is clearly defined and understood.'⁴⁶ Similarly, SIFA stated that expanding the temporary recognition of interstate licences

⁴¹ Explanatory Statement, *Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 61)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>; and Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 2.

⁴² Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 4

⁴³ Northern Territory Police Force, *Purchasing ammunition & firearm use interstate licence holders*, May 2025, <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/police/firearmsweapons/licence-and-permit-information>, p. 1

⁴⁴ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, p. 4; and Northern Territory Police Force, *Purchasing ammunition & firearm use interstate licence holders*, May 2025, <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/police/firearmsweapons/licence-and-permit-information>, p. 1

⁴⁵ SIFA, Submission No. 8, p. 5

⁴⁶ SIFA, Submission No. 8, p. 5

to include firearms related activities as opposed to restricting it to approved shooting competitions, 'reduces unnecessary administrative barriers for competitors.'⁴⁷

- 3.44 While acknowledging the practicality of the proposed amendments, Sam Wilks expressed the view that:

Dealers and staff will need clear guidance on what counts as a 'corresponding licence' or 'corresponding permit' across jurisdictions, particularly where the interstate categories, endorsements or documentary formats differ ... The Commissioner should be required to publish a current verification guide for dealers and ammunition sellers identifying corresponding interstate categories and acceptable documentary proof.⁴⁸

- 3.45 While noting that the exemption has been in place for almost 12 months, the Committee sought the advice of the NTPF regarding the development and publication of a verification guide for dealers and ammunition sellers. The NTPF responded that:

The FPRU are in constant communication with firearms dealer licence and ammunition retail permit holders in relation to the sale of ammunition to corresponding licence or corresponding permit holders.

Section 68A of the Act provides the process which the holder of a firearms dealer licence or ammunition retail permit must comply with when selling ammunition. That is, the holder of a firearms dealer licence or ammunition retail permit must sight the purchaser's licence or permit (including a corresponding licence or permit). It is anticipated that the [Licence and Permit Verification Service], developed and delivered as part of the [National Firearms Register], will streamline the current process so that it is easily identifiable who can and cannot purchase ammunition.⁴⁹

Committee's Comments

- 3.46 The Committee notes the NTPF's advice that the Act already provides the process that a firearms dealer licence or ammunition retail permit holder must comply with when selling ammunition, with the NTPF's Firearms Policy and Recording Unit maintaining an open line of communication with dealers and permit holders. In light of this, the Committee considers the provisions to be appropriate as drafted.

Matters to be Notified

- 3.47 Clause 14 amends section 90(2) of the Act to provide that, in addition to the loss or theft of a firearm, holders of a licence, permit or certificate of registration must notify the Commissioner, in writing, of the destruction or disposal of a firearm to which the licence, permit or certificate relates no later than 2 working days after becoming aware of the matter.⁵⁰
- 3.48 To facilitate enforcement of this amendment, clause 17 inserts new section 125 to create a transitional offence whereby people who hold a licence immediately prior to

⁴⁷ SIFA, Submission No. 8, p. 6

⁴⁸ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, p. 6

⁴⁹ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, p. 7
https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 7

⁵⁰ Explanatory Statement, *Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 61)*,
<https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>, p. 4

commencement of the Bill will be required to notify the Commissioner, within 30 days, if the firearm was, before the Bill's commencement:

- rendered inoperable, in whole or in part; or
- destroyed, defaced, damaged or disposed of.⁵¹

3.49 As the NTPF advised, this transitional provision will 'address the historical deficiencies of insufficient reporting obligations' and 'ensure all firearm records are up to date, with a goal to ensure firearms in the community are traceable.'⁵²

3.50 Noting that 'better records support better enforcement, and better enforcement supports public safety', Sam Wilks sought clarification as to what public education strategies would accompany the transitional provision to ensure that 'the change is used to clean records rather than to catch unaware holders on technicalities.'⁵³

3.51 SIFA sought clarification regarding the operation of proposed section 125(b)(i) noting that firearms may become inoperable or altered in minor and often temporary ways through ordinary use or as part of standard work by licensed gunsmiths, and finding that, as drafted, it is unclear whether such circumstances are intended to trigger notification requirements. SIFA recommended:

Given the penalties attached to non-compliance, including the potential for imprisonment, it is important that the provision is clearly targeted toward material and permanent changes that affect the status of a firearm, rather than temporary, minor or routine circumstances.⁵⁴

3.52 The NTPF subsequently advised the Committee that:

A Communication Strategy is being developed which will deliver key messages targeted to licence and permit holders, stakeholders and the community. Following passage of the Bill, the Communication Strategy will utilise numerous platforms e.g. social media, email, newsletters and face to face communication based on established mechanisms that ensure broad demographic coverage.⁵⁵

Committee's Comments

3.53 The Committee recognises the justification for including transitional provisions in the Bill to enable all records of firearms disposals, damage, destruction, defacements, or rendering inoperable to be updated in the police systems.

3.54 It stands to reason that proposed section 125(b)(i) refers to permanent inoperability when read in the context of clause 11 of the Bill. Clause 11 amends section 68(b) to make it an offence to, unless approved, alter a firearm in a way that destroys it or renders it, or a part of it, inoperable. This is in addition to existing provisions that make it an offence to, unless approved, alter a firearm in a way that affects its safe operation or converts it to another category of firearm.

⁵¹ Explanatory Statement, *Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 61)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>, pp. 5-6

⁵² Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, p. 4

⁵³ Sam Wilks, Submission No. 2, p. 7

⁵⁴ SIFA, Submission No. 8, p. 6

⁵⁵ Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf, p. 8

- 3.55 The Committee finds that the planned communication strategy is sufficient to address concerns about public awareness and clarity of the transitional provisions.

Explanatory Statement

- 3.56 The Explanatory Statement that accompanies a Bill is designed to assist both Members of the Legislative Assembly and members of the public to gain a thorough understanding of the legislation. As stated in the *NT Government Legislation Handbook*:

The Explanatory Statement explains the general intent of the Bill and describes the purpose of each clause of the Bill. It is to more than merely paraphrase the clauses of the Bill; it should explain the policy purpose of each clause and what the effect of the Bill would be if passed. ... The sponsoring Minister uses the Explanatory Statement as a reference document in the Consideration in Detail Stage debate on the Bill. ... the courts may refer to the Explanatory Statement to help ascertain the intent of the legislation in the event of related litigation or prosecution action, so it is critical the material in the Explanatory Statement is clear and comprehensive.⁵⁶

- 3.57 The Committee identified the following issues regarding the quality, utility and accuracy of the Explanatory Statement that was tabled with the Firearms Amendment Bill 2026:

- Apart from advising the reader that “this Bill amends the Firearms Act 1997”, the Explanatory Statement fails to include any explanation as to the general intent or purpose of the Bill.
- For the most part, the Explanatory Statement fails to explain the policy purpose of each clause and simply provides a plain English version of the Bill.
- In relation to clause 11, the Explanatory Statement notes that it makes a minor technical amendment to section 68 (Altering firearms). However, it fails to mention the substantial increase in the associated penalty provision from a maximum of 4 years imprisonment to 14 years imprisonment.
- Clauses 15 to 17 have been misnumbered.

- 3.58 During the public briefing, the Committee queried the absence of a general outline of the Bill in Explanatory Statement and sought clarification as to whether perhaps the version that was tabled was, in fact, a draft. The Committee was advised that there was no reason why a general outline of the Bill was not included and that the copy that was tabled in the Assembly was the final version.⁵⁷ However, in relation to the misnumbering of clauses 15-17, the Committee was advised that this had been corrected and an updated version would be tabled.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Northern Territory Government, *Northern Territory Government Legislation Handbook*, (unpublished), Northern Territory Government, Darwin, December 2024, pp. 14-15

⁵⁷ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 8

⁵⁸ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 8

Committee's Comments

- 3.59 While the Committee acknowledges that minor drafting errors are inevitable from time to time, it is expected that agencies have processes in place to ensure that the content of the Explanatory Statement complies with the requirements set out in the *Legislation Handbook*.
- 3.60 In this instance, the Committee is particularly concerned that while the NTPF advised that they would be tabling an amended Explanatory Statement to correct the clause numbering, it was noted that they had no intention of including a general outline of the Bill in the updated version.⁵⁹
- 3.61 As recommended below, given that Explanatory Statements can be referred to in a court, the Committee is of the view that as a minimum the Explanatory Statement for this Bill should be amended to include a general outline of the Bill, and a more comprehensive and accurate explanation of the clause 11 amendment to the section 68 penalty provisions.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Explanatory Statement be amended to include a general outline of the Bill.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that clause 11 of the Explanatory Statement be amended to include the change in the section 68 penalty provision and to clarify the rationale for the substantial increase in the maximum term of imprisonment for this offence.

⁵⁹ Committee Transcript, Public Briefing – 24 March 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1604405/Corrected-Transcript-Public-Hearing-Serial-61-Tuesday-24-March-2026.pdf, p. 8

Appendix 1: Submissions Received

Submissions Received

1. Ed Leibrick
2. Sam Wilks
3. Grant Hatcher
4. Phil Duffield
5. Rodney Roughan
6. Northern Territory Firearms Council
7. Tony Chalker
8. Shooting Industry Foundation Australia

Note: Copies of submissions are available at:

<https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>.

Appendix 2: Public Briefing

Public Briefing – Darwin, 24 March 2026

Northern Territory Police Force

- Travis Wurst: Acting Deputy Commissioner
- Beth Nolan: Acting Executive Director, Police Legal
- Jess Readman: Acting Director, Police Legal
- Kirna McLaren: Senior Lawyer

Note: Copies of the public briefing transcript and answers to questions taken on notice are available at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>

Bibliography

Approvals Fast Track Taskforce, *Saying 'Yes' to Business*, Northern Territory Government, Darwin, May 2025, <https://cmc.nt.gov.au/media/docs/advancing-industry/saying-yes-to-business-report.pdf>

Approvals Fast Track Taskforce, *Saying 'Yes' to Business Supplementary Report*, Northern Territory Government, Darwin, May 2025, <https://cmc.nt.gov.au/media/docs/advancing-industry/saying-yes-to-business-supplementary-report.pdf>

Explanatory Statement, *Firearms Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 61)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/61-2026>

Firearms Act 1996 (NSW)

Firearms Act 1996 (TAS)

Firearms Act 1997 (NT)

Firearms Act 2015 (SA)

Hon Lia Finocchiaro MLA, Minister for Police, *Draft Daily Hansard – Day 5 – Wednesday 18 March 2026*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/1029229>

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026*, https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_73940

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026, Explanatory Statement and Human Rights Compatibility Statement*, https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_73940

Northern Territory Government, *Northern Territory Government Legislation Handbook*, (unpublished), Northern Territory Government, Darwin, December 2024

Northern Territory Police Force – Answers to Written Questions – 14 April 2026, https://parliament.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1607514/Northern-Territory-Police-Force-Responses-to-Written-Questions-Firearms-Amendment-Bill-2026-Serial-61-14-April-2024.pdf

Northern Territory Police Force, *Purchasing ammunition & firearm use interstate licence holders*, May 2025, <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/police/firearmsweapons/licence-and-permit-information>