

Firearms (Prohibition orders) Amendment Bill - 3 June, 08

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:19): I, too, rise to support the bill. However, I also acknowledge that we must protect the legitimacy of shooting clubs, which have had to comply with many rules and regulations, especially since the Port Arthur incident. They all comply as clubs (especially members of black powder clubs who travel around the country shooting at events) and in terms of keeping their guns and ammunition secure in their vehicles.

How they keep them locked up in cages on their utilities is a quite intricate process. In the electorate of Hammond we have black powder clubs and pistol clubs. As the member for Morphett explained, they have very strict guidelines to keep pistols and it is having an effect on people joining these clubs but, if they are keen enough, I guess they will go through the process to be part of these clubs. There are also rifle clubs and clay target clubs in my area. The Wilkawatt gun club has quite a few members.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, the Murray Bridge rifle club at Monarto has a very professional setup next to the freeway where they hold their events, and I am proud to be a sponsor and patron of that club.

I acknowledge that I am also a licensed gun owner. I have a couple of shotguns in the cupboard. I think it was a mistake to show my wife how to use the .410 to shoot snakes—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: If you don't make it here one day—

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, absolutely. I am a fair sized target, I guess, as the member for Schubert says. But it brings to mind, as the member for Schubert said, the legality of it should my wife need to shoot a snake, and would she be allowed to? I think reality might come to the fore if she had to protect my two young boys, especially if they were home on their own with mum, and she would have to do it.

I note that this legislation will target criminals and the ones who are not tied up with holding legal weapons. It is reasonably common knowledge that criminals import illegal weapons, and I think these prohibition orders will go a long way towards pulling up that practice. I think it would be very tough to pull it up completely, but it is certainly a good move towards that.

I notice the legislation gives clubs the power to evict people whom they believe could be mentally and physically unfit, and to report them.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes; they are compelled to report whether these people are unfit in any way and I, too, share concerns that these people will not be professionals, but I guess they will have to use commonsense and work out who they report and who they do not report.

I notice in the bill that you cannot own a firearm that has had the identification removed, and you can be caught purposefully removing identification. That is a good part of the bill, but I would like to make another personal comment. When I purchased one of my shotguns it was still in the box when I took it straight to the police station and threw it on the counter. It was completely unusable because it was in several sections. I did all the registration process and took it home.

Within a couple of weeks I had a phone call saying that there was a problem. I said, 'What is that?' and they said, 'The numbers do not match.' I said, 'It is not my issue, because that gun was taken straight to the station and put on the counter.' The number had been misread by the officer. So it is a bit of a two-way street. We fixed the problem, and I commend the police for chasing it up, but I completed my obligations. The registration process needs to be completed effectively, otherwise people may find down the track if it is not picked up early in the piece that it is alleged that they had a firearm not appropriately registered.

I note that there are rights of appeal, which I think is a good process. You can appeal interim orders, and there can be a review by the firearms review committee as a second

stage. After that, you can appeal to the District Court if you do not think the prohibition order is applicable.

Obviously, another part of the bill relates to the manufacturing of firearms or firearms parts, which you cannot do unless you are in a licensed business or dealership. That is certainly the right way to go with the legislation. We do not want people making zip guns and the like.

Also, as far as reporting is concerned, employers and medical practitioners must report unsafe situations associated with firearms. This opens up a very broad net so that people who are in an unfit state cannot own firearms. Medical practitioners must report the gunshot wounds of people who may present to a hospital, and if there is some suspicion, such as, obviously, it is not easily explained as a shooting accident—spotlighting on a farm, or something—they need to report it to the appropriate authorities—the police, and so on.

I note that this bill helps address the issue of illegal firearms, and it will make this state a safer a place, but I hope that legitimate gun owners are protected. As other farming members—the members for Schubert and Stuart—have said, guns are an integral part of farming life and are used for vermin control. Farmers do the right thing; they keep them in locked cupboards. They keep ammunition stored in a locked cupboard in a safe place, but they do need to run their daily affairs. With that, I commend the bill.

Farmers and others do not want to see stock in a deplorable state on these trucks. They go through the practice in the yards of emptying out as much as possible all the urine, etc., and loading the stock onto the trucks and delivering them safely, whether they are being delivered to another property or to a saleyard. This practice has been going on for a long time, and I believe that, for the most part, it is done in a very workmanlike manner. As part of freighting stock, electric prodders have to be used at times. As I have mentioned in this place before, if anyone has tried to load four decks of old ewes—

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes; you need a lot of good dogs. It can get very trying, and sometimes you have to give one or two a little help up onto the truck. Prodders have certainly been used in the cattle industry. Obviously, they are not to be used just because you have it in your hand, but sometimes they are needed in loading stock.

In conclusion, I want to talk a little about the Calgary Stampede, which I know the member for Stuart and probably others in this place have attended. I was at that event 24 years ago and know how impressive it was even back then to see how they put on that rodeo show in Canada. When the D9 bulldozers are not being used in the rodeo ring, they are dragging the stage out on to the ring. I am sure they do things in a bigger and better way there. I believe that anyone involved with animal husbandry in the rodeo industry does things in a sustainable way, because they know as well as anyone that people are watching and they need to make sure they do it right, as I believe they do.

One thing we do have to be careful about as a state and a nation is that, if people are going to get so agitated about how we run our livestock, whether it involve piggeries, chicken sheds or how we run our sheep and cattle (either paddock run or intensively), we do not make it so hard that we run the risk that people will not want to produce, because we may end up having to import food from people who have no safe practices.

It will be full of stuff and you will have no idea what is going on, what these stock have been grazing on, how they have been run and how they have been handled, and that is the risk that we run if people want to get down on producers that hard that they make it unviable to produce stock in this country.

We have had a great record of producing stock; we have had a live sheep and live cattle trade that has transported hundreds of millions of dollars worth of stock overseas, and currently we have many people working overseas making sure that people who receive the stock at the other end handle them in the best way possible. Yes, there does need to be constant education in that practice, but it is just the way we have to deal with some countries' religious beliefs. Just in closing, let us just be careful how we handle this debate, because otherwise we will kill off major industry.