



# **Rapid Review of Victoria's Firearms Laws**

Victorian Government Response

**May 2026**

## Introduction and background

Victoria's focus following the abhorrent anti-Semitic terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025 was clear – we must do whatever we can to keep our state safe, strong, proud and united.

This vile and tragic incident reinforced that we must never rest from our work to eliminate the scourge of anti-Semitism from our society.

Following the attack, National Cabinet agreed that strong, decisive and focused action was needed on firearms law reform immediately. This includes renegotiating the National Firearms Agreement (NFA), first established after the 1996 Port Arthur tragedy, to ensure it remains robust and addresses the realities of the current and changing security environment.

At National Cabinet, First Ministers agreed to strengthen gun laws across the nation and commissioned their Police Ministers and Attorneys-General to develop reform options.

At the same time, the Victorian Government took strong action to address and counter violent extremism, vilification and antisemitism. As part of the Five Next Steps to Combat Antisemitism and Keep People Safe, the Victorian Government committed to reviewing its firearms laws.

Victoria has a long and proud history of tough gun laws – but they can be stronger.

This is why the government commissioned former Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Ken Lay AO APM to undertake a Rapid Review of Victoria's Firearm Laws (Rapid Review). The objective of the review was to support the national approach and bring Victoria's firearms laws up to date with the risks of today.

The Rapid Review was tasked with examining Victoria's current laws, considering recent legislative reforms in New South Wales and across other Australian jurisdictions, and consulting with Victoria Police and other key stakeholders and community groups to develop recommendations to the government about what changes are needed and how they can be achieved.

Our response to the Rapid Review builds on Victoria's proud history of tough gun laws by making it harder for the wrong people to get guns. It does this by toughening sentences for a range of firearms offences, making licensing decisions stricter, and giving Victoria Police more powers. Victoria will be safer thanks to these reforms.

## The Rapid Review

The Victorian Government thanks Mr Lay and the Rapid Review team for their comprehensive work and acknowledges the contributions of all stakeholders, including firearms groups, firearms licence holders, law enforcement, victims' advocates, community leaders, and regional and rural communities who shared their views.

The Rapid Review undertook extensive public engagement, with over 19,000 survey responses submitted through Engage Victoria as well as more than 500 written submissions. The Rapid Review also conducted 40 face-to-face consultation sessions with key stakeholders.

The Rapid Review final report makes 16 recommendations around firearms laws and regulation for government's consideration, informed by extensive stakeholder consultation and analysis from the Rapid Review team.

The Victorian Government response to these recommendations is below.

## **Victorian Government Response to the recommendations**

The Victorian Government's Response to the Lay Rapid Review builds on Victoria's proud history of tough guns laws.

The Victorian Government accepts 15 of the Rapid Review's 16 recommendations.

Keeping Victorians safe is the Victorian Government's number one priority. The response to the Rapid Review achieves this by toughening sentences for a range of firearms offences, making licensing decisions stricter, and giving Victoria Police more powers to reclassify weapons.

This response makes Victorians safer while recognising the legitimate need for sectors of the community, such as primary producers, professional and recreational hunters, and sports shooters, to lawfully possess, carry and use firearms.

Our response supports National Cabinet's commitment to take strong, decisive, and focused action on gun reform, by renegotiating the National Firearms Agreement (NFA).

This includes the requirement to make Australian citizenship a condition of holding a firearms licence, strengthening intelligence sharing between the Commonwealth and states and territories, and further restrictions on the manufacturing of 3D-printed firearms.

The Victorian Government will not be introducing a cap on firearms ownership.

### **Immediate legislative reforms**

Consistent with commitments made through National Cabinet, the government will immediately introduce legislative amendments to strengthen firearms regulation in Victoria, to acquit the following Rapid Review recommendations:

- Recommendation 2 – relating to updating existing firearms classifications and strengthening the powers of Victoria Police
- Recommendation 4 – relating to introducing a citizenship requirement for firearms licence holders
- Recommendation 8 – relating to strengthening laws related to the management of illicit firearms to address unlawful use and firearms trafficking, and
- Recommendation 10 – relating to how intelligence is protected and used in licensing reviews and appeals.

These immediate legislative reforms include:

#### **1. Enhanced firearm reclassification powers**

Victoria Police's existing firearm reclassification powers will be enhanced to provide the Chief Commissioner of Police more scope to temporarily recategorise firearms.

These enhanced powers will enable timely and risk-based responses to emerging firearm technologies and modifications, ensuring the Chief Commissioner can temporarily recategorise all firearms.

Aside from these changes to the Chief Commissioner's powers, Victoria will not be making any immediate changes to firearm classifications in these reforms. The Victorian Government continues to engage with the Commonwealth and states and territories to deliver strong, contemporary, and evidence based firearms laws.

## **2. More reliable background information through citizenship requirements**

Victoria will apply a citizenship requirement to holding a firearms licence to ensure any background information provided as part of the application is reliable and accurate. This will restrict eligibility for firearms licences to Australian citizens, New Zealand citizens who are permanent residents of Australia, or non-citizens who require a firearms licence for occupational purposes.

## **3. Tougher penalties for firearms trafficking**

Amendments will introduce more serious, graduated penalties for firearms trafficking. The change will see penalties increase depending on the number of firearms a person unlawfully possesses.

## **4. National background checks to ensure firearms users are fit and proper**

Amendments will ensure national criminal intelligence is central to Victorian firearms licensing decisions by making a non-adverse firearms background check through the Commonwealth's AusCheck scheme a requirement for holding a licence. This will not only apply to the firearms licensing and renewal process, but to any point in the licence lifecycle.

## **5. Strengthening Firearm Prohibition Orders to crack down on criminals**

These legislative reforms will also strengthen Firearm Prohibition Orders (FPOs). This reform makes every Victorian safer by keeping firearms out of the hands of the wrong people. FPOs are orders issued by Victoria Police prohibiting individuals from acquiring, possessing or using firearms or related items for a certain period. The changes to the current FPO scheme will include:

- Increasing maximum penalties for people who acquire, possess, carry or use a firearm or firearm-related item in contravention of an FPO, and
- Removing the 10-year sunset provisions, making the FPO scheme permanent in Victorian law.

Strengthening FPO penalties will enable Victoria Police to better target serious and organised firearms-related crime.

## **Further reforms and development**

Victoria will continue to actively engage with the Commonwealth and other states and territories to renegotiate the NFA, ensuring national standards remain strong, contemporary, and evidence based.

While several of the policy areas agreed by National Cabinet will be directly addressed through immediate legislation, the government will consider the Rapid Review's other recommendations requiring legislative change. Continued engagement with Victoria Police and other stakeholders will be central to this work.

The Victorian Government will proceed with the work to acquit the recommendations that do not require legislative reform.

The Victorian Government's response to each recommendation is provided below.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Government Response</b>
Recommendation 1 - Introducing a cap of up to four firearms (per individual category A & B) license holder.	Do not accept

Recommendation 2 – Consider legislative change to the Firearms Act 1996 (Vic) to update existing firearm categories so that higher-risk firearms are appropriately classified, with sufficient flexibility to accommodate emerging technologies and future developments in firearms manufacture	Accept
Recommendation 3 – Consider further work to examine the scope of the Firearms Act 1996 and related legislation	Accept
Recommendation 4 – Consider limiting eligibility of firearm licences to Australian citizens, or New Zealand citizens with permanent residency in Australia	Accept
Recommendation 5 – Consider reviewing the Firearms Regulations 2018 to modernise permit fee arrangements	Accept
Recommendation 6 - Retaining the existing overall duration of firearm licences	Accept
Recommendation 7 – Consider strengthening oversight across the full licence lifecycle	Accept
Recommendation 8 – Consider strengthening laws relating to the management of illicit firearms to address unlawful use, trafficking and transport risks	Accept
Recommendation 9 – Consider strengthening the regulation of imitation firearms	Accept
Recommendation 10 – Consider strengthening the use of criminal intelligence in firearms licensing and prohibition decisions	Accept
Recommendation 11 – Consider strengthening how intelligence is protected and used in licensing reviews and appeals	Accept
Recommendation 12 - National information-sharing arrangements for firearms licensing and monitoring.	Accept - reform already underway
Recommendation 13 - State-based information-sharing and systems to support risk-based decision-making.	Accept - reform already underway
Recommendations 14–16 – Consider strengthening the evidence base for firearms policy, advisory governance arrangements, and community engagement and public communication	Accept

## Conclusion

The Rapid Review and the Victorian Government’s Response provide a clear foundation for strengthening Victoria’s gun laws and will make Victorians safer. The Government will now take time to implement these reforms effectively and consider the Review’s recommendations that government has accepted.

The Victorian Government will always closely consider advice from Victoria Police to ensure our firearm laws keep Victorians safe and are responsive to new threats.

The Victorian Government would again like to thank Mr Lay, the Rapid Review team, and all stakeholders who contributed to this report.

