

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green


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SUBJECT: (no subject found)

MEMBER: Mrs LAUGA

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 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill that is before the House. In doing so I want to particularly draw to the attention of the House the provisions which amend the Weapons Act. The bill proposes to expand the period for which a weapons licence can be suspended from 30 days to 90 days. The Weapons Act currently allows an authorised officer to suspend a person's weapons licence where they suspect the licence holder is no longer a fit and proper person.

The suspension period is designed to provide the licensee more time in which to demonstrate that they are in fact a fit and proper person. When a person's licence is suspended because they may no longer be a fit and proper person on the grounds of mental or physical health, the licensee may engage the services of a psychologist or a medical practitioner to demonstrate their fitness. Sometimes it can take several weeks to get in to see a psychologist or other specialist who can provide that evidence that the licence holder needs to support their case. I think that this makes good sense. The statutory window of 30 days disadvantages licensees, and additionally it is administratively burdensome for the police and QCAT. I support the amendment in the bill to the Weapons Act to extend the time for which a licensee can be suspended to 90 days.

I met local grazier Russell recently who has a property at Farnborough and also at Stanage. Russell uses guns on his property to kill feral pigs and dogs. The amendments in this bill will help people like Russell. If they are notified that their gun licence has been suspended, they will have more time now to put their case together with the supporting evidence that they need. I was pleased to read in their submission that the Firearm Dealers Association of Queensland supported this amendment for the proposed suspension notice extension. The Firearm Dealers Association said—

On the basis that there are safeguards and reasons for licence suspension and there is an ability for the Authorised Officer to lift the suspension earlier than the 90 days proposed, we support the amendment, which apparently seeks to assist licensees in establishing or re-establishing their eligibility for licence.

I think the amendments to the Weapons Act are common sense. They are good for farmers and graziers, they are good for gun licence holders and they are good for the police and our courts. I commend the bill to the House.