

Explanatory Statement

FIREARMS AMENDMENT BILL 2026

SERIAL NO. 61

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
MINISTER FOR POLICE

GENERAL OUTLINE

This Bill amends the *Firearms Act 1997*.

NOTES ON CLAUSES

Clause 1. Short Title

This is a formal clause which provides for the citation of the Bill. The Bill when passed will be cited as the *Firearms Amendment Act 2026* ('the amendment Act').

Clause 2. Commencement

This clause sets out how the amendment Act will be commenced. In this case, the amendment Act will commence on the day fixed by the Administrator by Gazette notice.

If a provision of the amending Act does not commence before 30 June 2026, it will commence on that day.

Clause 3. Act amended

This is a formal clause which provides that the amending Act amends the *Firearms Act 1997* ('the *Firearms Act*').

Clause 4. Section 4 amended (Exemptions)

This clause amends section 4(4) inserting new section 61B as a provision which does not apply to exempt persons listed in the subsection.

This clause also inserts new subsection (4AA) to clarify that new section 61B does not apply to a person in exempt purposes who are in possession of digital blueprints for the manufacture of a firearm, or a part of a firearm.

Clause 5. Section 4A amended (Application of Criminal Code)

This clause amends section 4A inserting new sections 61B and 125 as offences to which Part IIAA of the Criminal Code applies.

Clause 6. Section 13 amended (General conditions of licence)

This clause inserts new subsection (2A) which sets out the power for the Commissioner to revoke or vary a condition of a licence that has been imposed under subsection (2)(b). This clause also includes that during the period of a licence the Commissioner may specify further conditions under subsection (2)(b) to which the licence is subject.

Clause 7. Section 14 amended (Period of licence)

The clause amends section 14(1) by extending the period of a firearms corporate licence and a firearms employee licence up to 10 years.

This clause also inserts new subsections (4) and (5).

New subsection (4) 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existing licence, and that licence application has not yet been granted or refused, and the existing licence has not been revoked.

New subsection (5) provides that a licence continued to be in force by new subsection (4), expires on the grant or refusal, unless earlier revoked.

Clause 8. Section 34 amended (general provisions relating to permits)

This clause inserts a new subsection (1A) which sets out the power for the Commissioner to revoke or vary a condition of a permit that has been imposed under subsection (1)(b). This clause also includes that during the period of a permit the Commissioner may specify further conditions under subsection (1)(b) to which the permit is subject.

Clause 9. Section 55 amended (Firearms Advisory Council)

This clause amends section 55(2) to update the membership of the Firearms Advisory Council:

- The Northern Territory Firearms Council Incorporated can nominate up to 4 executive members (subsection (2)(a));
- The Commissioner can nominate up to 2 police officers by name or reference to an office, position or rank (subsection (2)(b));
- The Minister can appoint up to 4 other persons in consultation with the Northern Territory Firearms Council Incorporated and the Commissioner (subsection(2)(c)).

This clause also inserts new subsection (2)(d) to provide that the Chairperson of the Firearms Advisory Council is appointed by the Minister.

This clause also inserts new subsections (3) and (3A).

New subsection (3) specifies that nominations under subsection (2) must be made in writing to the Minister.

New subsection (3A) provides that persons appointed under subsection (2)(c) and new subsection (2)(d) cannot be a police officer or public sector employee employed by the Agency administering the *Police Administration Act 1978* or a member of the Northern Territory Firearms Council Incorporated. This will ensure balance and independence in the Firearms Advisory Council.

This clause also amends section 55(5) to include that the Chairperson, appointed under new subsection (2)(d), may resign by written notice, signed by the Chairperson, to the Minister.

Clause 10. Section 61B inserted

This clause inserts new section 61B to establish the offence of possession of digital blueprints for the manufacture of firearms. A person commits this offence if:

- The person intentionally produces, sells, distributes or possess a thing; and
- The thing is a digital blueprint for the manufacture of a firearm, or part of a firearm, on a 3D printer or an electronic milling machine.

Part of a firearm includes a silencer, or any other article related to a firearm that is prescribed by regulation. This clause also inserts new definitions for 'digital blueprint' and 'possession'.

Clause 11. Section 68 amended (Altering firearms)

This clause makes a minor technical amendment to section 68.

This clause also inserts new subsection (1)(c) and (d).

New subsection (1)(c) provides that a person must not, unless approved, alter a firearm in any way that destroys it.

New subsection (1)(d) provides that a person must not, unless approved, alter a firearm in any way that renders it, or a part of it, inoperable.

This clause also inserts new subsection (2) to provide that a part of a firearm, in subsection (1)(d), includes a silencer, or another item related to a firearm prescribed by regulation.

The amendments in this clause apply prospectively.

Clause 12. Section 68A amended (Sale and purchase of ammunition)

This clause amends section 68A(2)(a) to provide that ammunition can be purchased by a person: who holds a licence, or a corresponding licence, for the category of firearm that takes that ammunition; or who is authorised to buy ammunition by a permit or corresponding permit. This enables interstate licence holders to purchase ammunition in the Territory.

This clause also amends section 68A(2)(b) by removing 'authorisation'. Authorisations are no longer applicable subsequent to the creation of ammunition retail permits.

This clause further inserts new subsection (c) to provide that the person who sells the ammunition must comply with any other requirement prescribed by regulation.

Clause 13. Section 69 amended (Possession of ammunition)

This clause amends section 69(1) to insert new subsection (aa) to provide that a person must not possess ammunition unless the person is the holder of a corresponding licence or permit for a category of firearm that takes the ammunition. This clause also enables interstate licence holders to possess ammunition whilst in the Territory.

Clause 14. Section 90 amended (Matters to be notified)

This clause amends section 90(2) to insert additional matters for the holder of a licence, permit or certificate of registration to notify the commissioner, in writing, not later than 2 working days after becoming aware of the destruction or disposal of a firearm to which the licence, permit or certificate of registration relates.

This clause also amends section 90(4) to insert additional matters to notify the Commissioner, in writing, not later than 2 working days after becoming aware of the destruction, defacing or damage to a licence, permit or certificate of registration.

Clause 13. Section 92 amended (Temporary recognition of interstate licences for shooting competitions)

This clause amends the heading by removing 'for shooting competition'.

This clause also amends section 92 to provide interstate licence holders who travel to the Territory to participate in firearms related activities, including sports shooting, to lawfully purchase ammunition (for category A firearms, category B firearms, category C firearms and category H firearms) while in the Territory. This will ensure equitable access to ammunition for interstate licence holders and supports safe and effective conduct of firearms activities.

Clause 14. Section 103 (Duplicate certificates and licences)

This clause amends section 103(1) by inserting the term 'defaced' to reflect amendments made to section 90(4).

Clause 15. Part 13, Division 5 inserted

This clause inserts a new Division 5 into Part 13 providing for transitional matters.

This clause inserts definitions in new section 122 of the Act to:

- add the definition of **amending Act** as the *Firearms Amendment Act 2026*.
- add the definition of **commencement** as the commencement of the amending Act.

This clause also inserts new section 123 to provide that new section 14(1)(d) and amended section 14(1)(ga) apply to applications lodged after the commencement of the amending Act for a firearms corporate licence and firearms employee licence.

This clause also inserts new section 124 to provide that members of the Firearms Advisory Council holding positions under sections 55(2)(a) and 55(2)(b) immediately before commencement cease to hold office on commencement but are eligible for reappointment subject to the operation of section 55 as amended by the amending Act. A member of the Firearms Advisory Council holding office under section 55(2)(c) immediately before the commencement may continue to hold office until the member's term of office expires and may be eligible for reappointment subject to the operation of section 55 as amended by the amending Act.

This clause also inserts new section 125 to create an offence to reflect amendments to sections 90(2) and 90(4). New section 125 will make it an offence if:

- a person is the holder of licence, permit or certificate of registration immediately before the commencement; and
- a firearm to which the licence, permit or certificate relates was rendered inoperable (in whole or in part), destroyed, defaced, damaged or disposed of, before the commencement, and
- the person fails to notify the Commissioner in writing, within 30 days after the commencement of that circumstance and is reckless in relation to that failure.

This is necessary because these circumstances have not previously required notification to the Commissioner under section 90(2) of the Act nor necessarily been prohibited under section 68 of the Act. This new offence will allow all records of firearm disposals, damage, destruction, defacements, or rendering inoperable to be updated on police systems, allowing for future enforcement of the new statutory requirements.

Clause 16. Schedule 7 amended (Reviewable decisions)

This clause amends Schedule 7 to reflect the amendments to new sections 13(2A) and 34(1A), inserting these sections as reviewable decisions by the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Clause 17. Repeal of Act

This is a formal clause to provide that the Act is repealed on the day after it commences.