



Gun Control Australia

Email: hello@guncontrolaustralia.org

25 February 2026

Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

In March 1996 I, like countless other people across the globe, witnessed on television the anguished faces of the parents outside the Dunblane Primary School. For many of us, those images are etched in our minds forever. In 1996, 2 months after my second child was born, I had been working as part of a gun control group in Tasmania, Australia since 1987. I wrote to the local newspaper, the Hobart Mercury, urging the government to look to the Dunblane example and to ban semiautomatic rifles in Tasmania before the same thing happened to us.

Tragically, only six weeks later, Tasmania had its own mass shooting, at Port Arthur, about one hour's drive south of Hobart. Thirty-five people were killed and many more grievously injured. This time, our governments moved swiftly. A National Firearms Agreement was reached between the State and Territories of Australia and our Federal government. Legislation was introduced over the next two years in each State and Territory to ban semiautomatic rifles, require registration of all firearms, to ensure people who had guns were fit and proper to possess them, and that they had a good reason to own a gun. Tough storage conditions were introduced. These were major reforms, even if long overdue.

Australians were then, and continue to be, very proud of our gun laws. They have clearly been effective at saving many lives in the ensuing 29 years.

In 1997, I travelled to Dunblane. I met the families of some of the children who had been killed. I was inspired by their strength and their courage in the face of an

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unimaginable tragedy. I sat in your House of Lords when the legislation was finally passed to ban handguns of the type used in Dunblane, from Britain.

In Australia, and likely in Britain as well, much water has travelled under the bridge in almost 30 years. Sadly, we have seen a decline in political commitment to firearms reforms and protection of the community. Licencing processes have become lax. Acquiring multiple firearms has become easy. New technology has seen the introduction of guns not contemplated 30 years ago, such as lever action shotguns and rifles with seven round (or more) magazines. Our regulatory systems have been very slow to catch up.

So, on 14 December 2025 a man who legally held six weapons for “recreational hunting” and who lived in suburban Sydney, committed the latest atrocity. And now, the States and Federal Government are scrambling to again review gun laws. That process has commenced. It will inevitably face heavy resistance from the gun lobby in this country, which has opposed every firearms reform since 1987.

We are slow to learn. We need to do better. We need to maintain our approach to gun control as one based on public health. We need to reject any rights-based arguments that originate from the United States. Tasmania, like Sydney, NSW and more recently, Canada, need to learn these lessons and need to act with vigilance and integrity. We must not allow the financial benefits of the sale of guns and ammunition to a small group outweigh the critical need for public safety.

Yours sincerely



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