



30 September 2019

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The Secretary  
Legislative Council, Legal and Social Issues Committee  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
**MELBOURNE VIC 3002**

Dear Secretary

## Re: Inquiry into Firearms Prohibition Legislation

On behalf of Ambulance Victoria (AV) I would like to thank the Legal and Social Issues Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry to strengthen effectiveness of reducing illicit or illegal firearms within the community.

AV is committed to the safety and welfare of all its staff. Given the role of the paramedic workforce in the wider community and the exposure to a variety of unsafe scenarios, AV support legislative reform that continues to provide improved safety for staff in their workplace.

AV, like other emergency services respond to a number of incidents in the community, some that are a result of the use of firearms. In 2018/19, AV attended 1002 cases involving gunshots which is 0.15% of emergency cases attended. Whilst the proportion may be considered small, it still represents a portion of the community that have access to and utilise firearms resulting in harm and requiring a response from the paramedic workforce, resulting in an unsafe work environment.

It is impossible to know for every case resulting from a gunshot, if there is further danger to staff in attendance from other firearms in situ at a particular location. Occupational violence is an increasing issue for our staff to manage on a daily basis. AV data indicates that approximately 50% of gunshot events recorded in our patient care records relate to psychiatric and suicidal cases. Whilst these cases can also be due to a number of factors including the influence of alcohol and other drugs, psychiatric issues or members of the community who are known to be violent, coupled with access to firearms can increase the risk to paramedic staff entering private residences. These cases create an unacceptable risk for staff entering a scene, where the threat of use of a firearm when in attendance may be unknown.

Thank you for the opportunity to indicate our support for any legislative reform that improves safety in the workplace for our workforce and that of the wider community.

Yours sincerely

**Assoc Prof Tony Walker ASM**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

