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AMENDMENTS TO CUSTOMS (PROHIBITED IMPORTS) REGULATIONS REGARDING FIREARM CONTROLS

Following the Port Arthur tragedy, a special meeting of the Australasian Police Minister's Council (APMC) adopted a number of resolutions aimed at effective national firearm controls.

The Prime Minister announced on Friday 10 May 1996 that the Commonwealth Government would introduce a total ban on the importation of automatic and semi-automatic weapons. The importation of fully automatic weapons is presently prohibited under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations. While the importation of semi-automatic weapons was already subject to some controls under these Regulations, the Regulations have been amended to tighten these controls in accordance with the APMC Resolutions.

The Australian Customs Service is enforcing these new controls in addition to the controls on the importation of firearms already contained in the Regulations.

Statutory Rule No. 59, gazetted in Special Gazette No. S165 of 14 May 1996, amended the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations to implement changes to the controls on firearms. As a consequence the importation of self-loading and pump action longarms is now prohibited except for certain types and under limited circumstances.

The following additional categories of firearms are prohibited absolutely except when imported for official purposes:

- all semi-automatic centre fire rifles;
- semi-automatic or pump action shotguns fitted or capable of being fitted, with a magazine having a capacity of more than 5 rounds;
- semi-automatic rimfire rifles fitted or capable of being fitted, with a magazine having a capacity of more than 10 rounds.

The following additional firearms are prohibited unless an importer has obtained a statement in an approved form (B709A) issued by a Commissioner or Chief Commissioner of Police in a State or Territory to the effect that the importer holds a licence or authorisation in accordance with the law of that State or Territory to possess a firearm of that kind. State and Territory Police Ministers have agreed that the approved form will only be issued if the firearm is intended for specific occupational purposes.

- semi-automatic rimfire rifles fitted or capable of being fitted, with a magazine having a capacity no greater than 10 rounds;
- semi-automatic or pump action shotguns fitted or capable of being fitted, with a magazine having a capacity no greater than 5 rounds.

In addition an amendment to Schedule 3 of the Regulations prohibits the importation of detachable magazines having a capacity of more than 10 rounds, for semi-automatic rimfire rifles, unless imported for official purposes.

Further information regarding the amended Regulations may be obtained from:

Australian Capital Territory:
Assistant Director, Commerce Prohibitions and Restrictions
Cargo Facilitation Branch,
Customs House, 5 Constitution Avenue, Canberra
Telephone (06) 275 6571, Facsimile: (06) 275 6997

New South Wales:
Chief Inspector, Commerce Prohibitions and Restrictions
Level 3, ACS Link Road Office, Mascot
Telephone: (02) 317 7020, Facsimile: (02) 317 7150

Victoria:
Inspector, Commerce Prohibitions and Restrictions
10th Floor, 414 La Trobe St, Melbourne
Telephone: (03) 9244 8423, Facsimile: (03) 9244 8440

South Australia:
Inspector, Commerce Prohibitions and Restrictions
Customs House, 220 Commercial Rd, Port Adelaide
Telephone: (08) 47 9378, Facsimile: (08) 47 9349

Western Australia:
Inspector Commerce Prohibitions and Restrictions
Customs House, 2 Henry St, Fremantle
Telephone: (09) 430 1405, Facsimile: (09) 430 1751

Northern Territory:
Inspector, Cargo Facilitation
Customs House, Harry Chan Drive, Darwin
Telephone: (089) 46 9851, Facsimile: (089) 46 9953

Queensland:
Inspector, Import Clearance
Australia House, 363 Adelaide St, Brisbane
Telephone: (07) 3835 3291, Facsimile: (07) 3835 3337

Tasmania:
Inspector Exports and Entry Processing
25 Argyle St, Hobart
Telephone: (002) 30 1201, Facsimile: (002) 30 1262

(J. M. Drury)
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CANBERRA

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