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## Letter to the editor Farm Weekly

Injury Matters

It is no great surprise that the Chief Executive of the Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia (SIFA) opposes the current firearm reforms proposed by the State Government (opinion 01/09).

Public discussion about the proposed amendments to legislation is welcomed. But that discussion should be informed by accurate information.

Mr. Walsh has attempted to mislead Farm Weekly readers to believe that the Government is not upholding its commitment to the National Firearms Agreement (NFA) by strengthening firearms legislation in WA. This is simply not the case.

The National Firearms Agreement “sets out minimum requirements in relation to the regulation of firearms. Nothing in this Agreement prevents jurisdictions from adopting additional – including more restrictive – regulations”. This statement included within the NFA clearly shows that the Western Australian Government is entitled to adopt further restrictions.

Mr. Walsh’s claims that the WA Government is ignoring the agreement are false. The National Firearm Agreement affirms that firearms possession is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety. The proposed changes will put public health and community safety at the heart of the legislation in Western Australia.

Although Australia’s strong gun safety framework has improved public safety over the past two decades, the community must remain vigilant when firearms continue to cause unnecessary serious injury and death in Australia by assault, self-harm, and accidents.

The incident at a Perth school earlier this year demonstrates that further action needs to be taken to restrict access to firearms in Western Australia to prevent them from falling into the hands of people with malicious intent (licensed or unlicensed). The overhaul of WA’s outdated Firearm Legislation by the WA Government is critical for improving community safety.

The misrepresentation of WA moving away from a nationally consistent approach is also false. The WA Government has been supportive of the National Firearms Agreement and the proposed National Firearms Register. What SIFA is really concerned about is other jurisdictions following WA’s leadership and undertaking similar reforms.