

## RESPONSE: WA'S FIREARM REFORM CAN'T COME SOON ENOUGH

Yesterday's fatal shooting at Kellerberrin, coupled with the incident at a Two Rocks School earlier this year is a wake-up call to the Western Australian community that further action must be taken to prevent this happening again.

Injury Matters General Manager – Research Advocacy and Evaluation, Rachel Meade said, “Any firearm in the hands of a person with malicious intent, licenced or unlicensed, can cause harm”. The number of licenced firearms in WA has increased by 60% over the last 13 years, despite the number of WA firearm licensees remaining stable.

The overhaul of WA's outdated Firearm Legislation by the State Government is critical for improving community safety. “Tightening firearms legislation is well overdue. It will reduce access to firearms and ammunition in the community and prevent Western Australia's being seriously injured or killed,” said Ms Meade.

The National Firearm Agreement affirms that firearms possession is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety. The proposed legislative changes including limitations on the number of firearms a licenced owner can hold will put public health and community safety at the heart of the legislation in Western Australia.

“We acknowledge that specific occupations such as farmers require firearms. Despite recent reporting, the proposed changes will not stop this. The proposed limits have been supported by the Primary Producers Firearms Advisory Board which represents the interests of farmers,” said Ms Meade.

A recent study by WA not-for-profit, Injury Matters, found that one-quarter of West Australians are concerned about firearm-related violence. “We expect if we ask that question today it would be higher,” said Ms Meade.

While Australia has a positive global reputation for firearm controls, firearm-related incidents are not uncommon. Work is required at both legislative and community level to improve awareness of safe firearm ownership, firearm safety and community attitudes.

“WA needs additional specialised services to support those impacted by traumatic events like yesterday – we need continued support for children, families, communities and first responders”.

“Injury Matters has historically advocated for firearm safety and continues to advocate for the prevention of all injuries in WA, working alongside the community to support safer people and places.”

-Ends-

For further information, interview, and photo opportunities, contact General Manager – Research Advocacy & Evaluation (08) 6166 7688 or [communications@injurymatters.org.au](mailto:communications@injurymatters.org.au).