



March 30, 2020

Gun shop closures an overreaction

Shooters, Fishers and Farmers MP Rick Mazza says the move to close gun shops as part of the State of Emergency directive is an overreaction that unnecessarily impacts small business across the State, many in regional Western Australia.

Mr Mazza said that he was contacted on Friday by businesses that had been ordered to close without notice, prompting owners to lay off staff even where firearm and ammunition sales were only one component of their core business operation.

“Rural suppliers, camping or general stores are often the only source of product supplies for many regional people and they have been unnecessarily impacted,” Mr Mazza said.

“I do appreciate that my concerns were promptly acknowledged. A second directive issued last week made some allowances for discretion by Police which suggests that the original directive was rushed and lacked due consideration.”

“I understand that everyone needs to pull their weight in combating COVID-19 as the state locks down on many industries to stop the spread of the virus, gun shops generally are not an issue for social distancing.

“A considered approach is needed to minimise the economic impact on businesses particularly in regional and rural communities.”

Mr Mazza said that the sale of firearms in WA is stringently controlled, Police have full control over the number of applications they approve as part of that vetting process and firearms cannot be obtained until that process is finalised.

“If there are concerns over ammunition stockpiling then sale limitations can be imposed in a similar manner as that for liquor and toilet paper, without the need to shut down an entire industry resulting in business income and job losses that go with it,” Mr Mazza said.

“With primary producers having to battle the scourge of foxes and other pests with lambing season approaching this will severely impact them.

“Although there is now some discretion allowed, where the substantial activity of a store is as a gun shop they will remain closed.

“Farmers and gun shop owners will find it difficult to negotiate a service on an individual occasional basis, especially if this directive remains in force for some time to come,” he said.