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The Hon Will Hodgman MP
Premier of Tasmania
11th Floor
Executive Building
15 Murray Street
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Premier

We write to express our grave concerns about a potential loosening of gun control laws in Tasmania.

The Australian Senate passed unprecedented gun laws in June 1996 just twelve days after Martin Bryant used semi-automatic rifles to slaughter 35 people at Port Arthur. The National Firearms Agreement banning rapid-fire long guns was introduced to reduce the availability of fire-arms and prevent mass shootings. This has proved to be one of Australia's most successful public health measures. The proposed changes by the Tasmanian government to water down the gun control laws contravene the spirit of the National Firearms agreement and legislation which is there to limit access to dangerous weapons in the community.

In the 18 years prior to the introduction of these gun laws, there were 13 fatal mass shootings in Australia – 104 victims were killed. Since their introduction, there has been only the one mass shooting in Margaret River W.A. Australia acted and produced successful legislation to reduce mass killing by firearms. It has worked – and continues to work.

As a College we have a particular affinity with the Port Arthur incident. It was fortunate that a RACS course - Early Management of Severe Trauma (EMST) - had just been held in Hobart days before the massacre and the health professionals at the Hobart Hospital, who received the injured patients from Port Arthur, were grateful to have received such recent and relevant training in caring for trauma patients.

Australians are proud of our strong gun control laws and will not tolerate any watering down of the laws. We live in a society free from the alarming gun violence statistics that is the envy of others and we are grateful to live peacefully without constantly fearing for the safety of our lives – and our children's lives. It has been 22 years since the Port Arthur massacre, if our gun control laws loosen, we will not just go back 22 years but the lives lost will tragically have been in vain.

Yours sincerely

David Penn
Chair RACS Tasmanian Committee

Girish Pande
Immediate Past Chair RACS Tasmanian Committee

2018-07-03 Premier re Gun Laws