

Australian Rifle Club Regulations (Repeal) 1997 No. 4

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

STATUTORY RULES 1997 No. 4

Issued by the Authority of the Minister for Defence

Defence Act 1903

Australian Rifle Club Regulations (Repeal)

The Australian Rifle Club Regulations ("the Principal Regulations"), made under the *Defence Act 1903*, prescribed arrangements involving the Defence Organisation in the establishment, administration and control of rifle clubs and associations. Regulation 80 of the Principal Regulations gave members of rifle clubs exemptions from State and Territory liquor and firearms licensing requirements where canteens were conducted by the clubs and firearms owned by members for use on rifle ranges.

For some time now rifle clubs and associations have had no military significance and it was no longer appropriate for the Defence Organisation to be involved in their establishment, administration and control. In practice, the rifle club movement has been self-managing under the authority of the National Rifle Association of Australia Ltd. and Target Rifle Australia Inc. and the Principal Regulations had become obsolete.

The exemptions from State and Territory liquor and firearms legislation did not accord with current Government policy for rifle clubs and associations to operate in accordance with State and Territory laws. In the context of national concerns about firearms control, the Government had given a specific commitment to eliminating the firearms exemptions so that all persons were subject to the firearms laws of the jurisdiction in which they shoot.

The Statutory Rule repeals the Principal Regulations. The intention is that the rifle clubs and associations have a similar status to other sporting clubs and associations: they will be responsible for their own administration and control, within the framework established by their respective national associations.

There will be a continuing association between the Defence Organisation and the rifle club movement, but only on an administrative basis. The Defence Organisation will no longer have a role with respect to the internal affairs of rifle clubs. The continuing association will include Departmental responsibility for rifle range safety and inspection. In this respect, it is proposed that, in association with the repeal of the Principal Regulations, the Minister for Defence make an order under section 123G of the Act. The order will enable clubs to operate their ranges in accordance with safety templates based on Army standards.

This is seen as an interim measure and, after a transitional period, range safety templates would have to be in accordance with the relevant State or Territory laws.

The Statutory Rule comes into operation on the date of gazettal.