

# ***SEPP (Infrastructure) Amendment (Shooting Ranges)***

## ***2013***

### ***Submission by Robert Borsak, MLC***

This amendment to the SEPP is a positive step forward to protect shooting ranges in this State. It has been too easy for too long for ranges to be closed. The use of land as approved shooting ranges is essential to provide licenced firearms owners with appropriate venues for them to pursue their chosen sport. It is important that there are clear and consistent planning controls for these venues. I am aware, through various submissions made to me by constituents, that currently the planning controls applied to shooting ranges are a mishmash. Currently the only way of dealing with clashes between zonings of Ranges and Range Danger Areas is on a case by case basis. For example in the Hornsby area when the Hornsby LEP applied an incompatible zoning to the Range Danger Area of the Hornsby Rifle Range, the only way of fixing the problem was to change the zoning for that area. If this amendment to the SEPP is successfully introduced, then similar problems in the future would be resolved under the SEPP.

The current draft amendment does not cover land zoned E1 and RU4. There are existing ranges that either include or are adjacent to land zoned E1 and RU4, and inclusion of these two additional zones would benefit planning around these ranges.

The proposed amendments to the SEPP would have the benefit of acting as a strong reminder for Councils to take existing shooting ranges into account when considering the approval of developments in the area.

I am aware of concerns over the inclusion of a definition of Range Danger Area as part of a range. This concern arises because of the way that the Firearms Registry establishes and defines Range Danger Areas. For ranges that are designed and established to have either no Range Danger Area, or a limited Range Danger Area, the area within which a person is at significant risk is clearly defined. However where the Firearms Registry has established a Range Danger Area purely on the basis of a template overlaid on a map, no objective determination of the area within which a person is at significant risk has been made. The solution is not to remove the reference to Range Danger Area from this SEPP, but instead is to change the way the Firearms Registry determines a Range Danger Area. This matter was addressed in my submission to the Review of the Firearms Registry which has just closed. Firstly a decision needs to be made as to what level of risk is acceptable – whether it is a risk of say 1 in a million of being injured – and then objective methods need to be applied to determine the area for each individual range where the risk is greater than the agreed limit.

I strongly support the introduction of this amendment to the SEPP. The only improvements that I would suggest to the amendment as drafted would be to include E1 and RU4 zones, and to consider the inclusion of indoor ranges in the SEPP as well.

Robert Borsak, MLC