

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

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Firearm restrictions no help in stopping swine fever

WILD pigs potentially carrying the deadly African Swine Fever will be left free to roam on properties without exemptions for two key firearm license code variants, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said today's announcement that Biosecurity Queensland was accelerating critical preparedness activities following the detection of swine fever in the southern highlands of Papua New Guinea was another reminder of the need to give shooters the access they need to firearms and ammunition.

"The State Labor Government's current trading exemptions for licensed firearms dealers have failed to include the popular RE and OC license codes held by many rural property owners, leaseholders and those who work or undertake pest management on properties," Mr Dametto said.

"That means a majority of licensed firearms owners in this situation would be powerless to manage wild pigs potentially infected with swine fever should they run out of ammunition. While there are currently no recorded cases of infected pigs in Australia, the fact that swine fever has been detected on our country's doorstep is incredibly worrying for Queensland's pork industry which would be devastated by a potential outbreak."

African Swine Fever is an infectious viral disease that can affect domestic and feral pigs of all ages. Forms of the disease range from severe to very mild. In its most severe form, up to 100 per cent of pigs may be affected and die. There is no treatment or vaccine available.

Pigs usually become infected through direct contact with infected pigs, fomites, such as contaminated equipment, or through ingestion of material containing infected pig meat or pig products. Biting flies and ticks can also spread the virus.

Mr Dametto said he had written to the Premier, Police Minister, Health Minister and Agriculture Minister last week expressing his concerns about the current firearms dealer exemptions and the urgent need to exempt holders of the RE and OC license codes.

"Our landowners and pest shooters should not be prevented from gaining access to firearms and ammunition because of some bureaucratic red tape. The State Government was quick to backflip when they initially announced their complete ban on trade for licensed firearms dealers and armourers but have completely bungled their list of exemptions in a rush to fix their own stuff up," he said.

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"Now is the time for the government to properly consult with our firearms industry and put in place exemptions that are workable for licensed firearms owners who need access to firearms and ammunition in order to carry out their essential role.

"Together with my colleagues Hill MP Shane Knuth and Traeger MP Robbie Katter, Katter's Australian Party will continue to stand up for the rights of law-abiding firearms owners."

—ENDS—

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Photo caption

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto is concerned after key firearms license codes were left out of the State Labor Government's list of exemptions, which could impact pest management on properties.

Media Enquiries

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