

**NICK DAMETTO**  
Member for Hinchinbrook

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## MEDIA RELEASE

24/4/2020

### Gel blaster owners treated with contempt by Labor

STATE police minister Mark Ryan is facing a major backlash from thousands of law-biding gel blaster owners after he dismissed a petition to stop the toys being over-regulated.

Started by Silkwood man Craig Bainbridge and sponsored by Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto, the parliamentary e-petition attracted more than 11,000 signatures from Queenslanders and called on the House to reject a proposal for the regulation of gel blasters and that the "toy" exemption remains in the Weapons Categories Regulation 1997.

But in his letter of response to the petition, Mr Ryan wrongly claimed that "the petition may have arisen out of a misunderstanding on social media around the differences between Category R weapons and restricted weapons" and "as a result of this government's extensive consultation in relation to planned changes to enhance safety around the use of gel blasters, the concerns have since been addressed to the satisfaction of the gel blaster industry".

Mr Dametto said the only confusion seemed to be coming from the Minister himself, "who had failed to understand far-reaching impacts the reclassification of gel blasters as replica weapons would have on the industry".

"What the petition asked for was very clear – to keep gel blasters classified as toys, and rightly so," Mr Dametto said.

"Just because a few idiots have misused gel blasters in public doesn't mean the government should come after the thousands of law-abiding owners by re-classifying a toy under the Weapons Act. The intent seems to be to regulate this industry out of existence. Classifying gel blasters as anything but a toy is completely wrong. For God's sake, they fire a harmless gel pellet."

Mr Dametto said Minister Ryan had claimed that the gel blaster industry and associations were happy with the "extensive consultation" his government has undertaken but this has been disputed.

"After being contacted by hundreds of gel blaster enthusiasts, retailers and industry leaders, it's clear they are not happy with what the government is proposing to do. I find it very hard to believe that all of a sudden their concerns have addressed," he said.

"As far as I understand, the government is still planning to go ahead with changes that will see this pastime over-regulated which is exactly what the industry doesn't want."

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Mr Dametto said gel blaster clubs and associations were providing an organised sport that helped people to stay active, cope with conditions like PTSD and socialise in a safe and controlled environment”.

“People are enjoying themselves so here comes the fun police. Is the Government trying to find a way to cash in on this exploding industry or is there something more sinister at play here? It’s hard to believe this is all about public safety. The Labor Lefties would be losing their mind knowing that your kids were having fun while playing with toy guns,” he said.

“The public has been well educated that there are already tough penalties in place for misuse of a gel blaster, so the push to regulate doesn’t make sense to me. Most people are doing the right thing.

“The Palaszczuk Government needs to stop treating Queenslanders like children.”

—ENDS—

*Photo captions*

*Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto with One Shot Gel Blasters co-owner Drew Stark.*

*One Shot Gel Blasters’ skirmish arena in Garbutt, Townsville.*

### **Media Enquiries**

Michael Serenc – 0423 108 848