Dear Premier,

**Closure of gun shops and firearm dealerships in Western Australia**

On behalf of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), we are writing to commend you on your decision last week to close gun shops and firearm dealerships in Western Australia, and to offer our full support to the WA Government on this issue.

PHAA strongly supports action taken by the Government to protect the public and ensure community safety. We have no doubt that there will be significant benefits to the community through reducing the availability of firearms and ammunition, including reductions in gun-related crime, firearm related deaths and gun-related suicides.\(^1\)

In addition, and of particular importance in the context of our current social distancing and isolation regulations with COVID-19, we are starkly aware of the value in ensuring that perpetrators of intimate partner/interpersonal violence do not possess firearms. There have already been reports of increased family and intimate partner violence in the context of COVID-19 in Australia,\(^2\) and we are grateful that the gravity of this situation is being acknowledged and acted upon by the WA Government.

PHAA was appalled and disappointed by the advertisement issued by the Shooting Industry Foundation Australia (SIFA) in The Sunday Times over the weekend. We commend your firm and resolute response to the advert, and again align ourselves with your position on this issue. PHAA has today issued a media release in support of your decision, as well as that of other State Governments, and we hope that this will help to silence the insensitive response of SIFA and any supporters they might have. Thank you for leading the way on this issue, especially in these trying times.
We would also like to offer our support for your management to date of the COVID-19 response in Western Australia, recognising the immense effort that this involves. With the dynamics of the situation changing every day, we acknowledge and commend the efforts of yourself, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, the Chief Health Officer, and the health workforce and all other contributors throughout the government and the state. If PHAA can do anything to support these efforts, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you again for acting in the best interests of the Western Australian community.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Pierce
President, Public Health Association Australia (WA Branch)

Terry Slevin
CEO, Public Health Association Australia

CC: Hon Roger Cook MLA, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health

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