

HIDDEN SHIELD

A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Community Safety

A proactive, community-led anti-terrorism strategy — redirecting resources from symbolic prohibition toward trained, vetted, and accountable community protection.

Submission to the
Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion

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Version 2.0 — June 2026
(supersedes Version 1.14, January 2026)

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Note on this Submission

This document is respectfully submitted to the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion to assist its inquiry into the prevalence, nature, causes and effects of antisemitism in Australia and into how community safety and social cohesion may be strengthened following the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025.

The author understands that the Commission's formal public submission period closed on 14 June 2026. This material is therefore offered as correspondence to assist the Commission's continuing work toward its final report, due 14 December 2026, and the author would welcome the opportunity to provide it formally should the Commission be willing to receive a late submission.

This submission deliberately confines itself to policy, legal and governance questions: the rationale for change, the safeguards that would make change responsible, and the legislative amendments proposed. It does not set out operational or tactical procedures. Matters such as use-of-force technique, firearm selection and carriage, and training delivery are properly the province of police, accredited firearms instructors and the relevant regulators, and should be settled by them within the safeguards described here. The author and his colleagues are willing to provide further detail to those authorities on request.

Foreword — A Personal Statement

I write as a retired Queensland police officer. My views on the protection of innocent people were not formed in theory; they were formed on the job, and before it.

As a young beat officer I was offered a revolver and I declined it. On foot, among the public, I judged that a notebook, handcuffs and a baton were the right tools. Later, when I rode in mobile patrol cars where the chance of encountering serious armed violence was real, I did carry a revolver — not to escalate, but because the situation could demand the means to protect myself and the innocent. The principle I learned then is the principle behind this document: protection should be proportionate to the threat, carried by trained and accountable people, and never an instrument of escalation.

A true story from the beginning of my journey

In 1979, near the end of my cadetship, I took a trainee nurse to the Oxley Police Academy dance. Her father asked one thing of me: that I return his daughter home safely before midnight. My own car would not start, so I borrowed a friend's older Ford station wagon. He warned me it had a slow leak in a tyre, which I changed, and in my hurry I threw the wheel brace and the long-shaft jack into the back.

A few miles from the academy I noticed a car following us. On an isolated stretch of bush road it pulled alongside. A passenger held up a black card and ordered, "Pull over, driver." The car looked something like a police vehicle but had no lights or siren, a dent in the rear door, and four men inside. It did not feel right. I told her I would not stop. Twice they pulled ahead of us, and twice I left the road through small trees to get back in front, remembering my father's advice from his own years in the police: in the heavier car, slow down, manoeuvre, and do not let them past.

We reached her father's bush driveway. The car's horn was useless. The four men stopped at the turn-off and began walking up toward us in a line. In the dim light I took the long-shaft jack from the back; against my shoulder it had the rough shape of a rifle. I racked the mechanism and it gave a solid double click. One of them shouted, "He's got a gun." They stopped, retreated, and as they drove off I raised the jack as if to aim. "He's going to shoot," one called, and they sped away.

Only later did I understand who they likely were. Women leaving work late at night had been disappearing in that area, their cars abandoned by the roadside. The man behind much of that terror, Vincent O'Dempsey, embraced a dark creed often attributed to such figures: that two men can keep a secret only if one of them is dead.

If you asked me whether that bluff would work today, I would say almost certainly not. There has been so much civilian disarmament that no offender would seriously believe an ordinary citizen might be armed. The deterrent that

once protected a young man and his companion on a dark road has been legislated away — and the people it protected are not safer for its loss.

Why I am qualified to raise this

This is not the first Royal Commission to which I have contributed. I appeared as Witness 51 before the Fitzgerald Inquiry — the landmark Queensland Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct of the late 1980s — where my evidence concerned armed gang conflict. That inquiry reshaped policing and public integrity in this State, and it taught me that hard truths, plainly told, are exactly what a Commission needs. My own account of those events is published as “The Joke” (2010), available at thejoke.com.au.

The thesis of this submission

The argument that follows rests on a single contention drawn from a lifetime in and around policing: legislation that is excessively restrictive, and that drifts toward an authoritarian posture, tends to produce more violence, not less. When the law disarms and alienates the law-abiding while doing little to disarm the violent, it does not remove danger; it redistributes it onto the defenceless. The answer to the Bondi Beach atrocity is not a further round of symbolic prohibition. It is a measured, accountable, community-led capability that closes the gap between the moment an attack begins and the moment police can arrive.

Executive Summary

This document presents the Hidden Shield strategy: a community protection framework developed in response to the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025, in which two attackers opened fire on a Hanukkah gathering of roughly one thousand people, killing fifteen and wounding around forty. The attack was assessed as antisemitic and inspired by the ideology of the Islamic State. Among the first to fall were citizens who tried to confront the attackers. Their courage exposed a hard reality: at the decisive moment, our communities had no trained, lawful, on-site capability to protect themselves, and police — however fast — could not be present at the instant the shooting began.

Hidden Shield proposes to close that gap. It calls for a measured redirection of resources away from symbolic prohibition and toward a practical, accountable protective capability: a Community Protection Volunteer Service (CPVS) drawn from retired police officers, Australian Defence Force veterans and former security professionals who already held lawful firearm authority, vetted afresh, retrained to a defined standard, and licensed under a new and tightly conditioned category of “genuine reason.”

The strategy rests on the principle of operational uncertainty. If an attacker cannot know whether a gathering is quietly protected, the calculus of attack changes: soft targets become harder, planning becomes riskier, and lives are saved by deterrence before a shot is ever fired. The Commission’s own interim report supports the case for reinvestment, finding that counter-terrorism funding across Australia’s intelligence agencies declined significantly between 2020 and 2025, and that a Jewish security group warned police an attack was likely only days before Bondi Beach.

This is not a proposal for vigilantism. Every element is built around restraint, consent and accountability: protection only at pre-approved venues with the written consent of organisers; a role strictly limited to responding to an imminent, lethal threat; immediate deference to police on arrival; full legal responsibility under existing law; and independent oversight. The sections that follow set out the context, the rationale, the safeguards, the proposed legislative amendment, and the duties and oath that would bind every licensee.

Introduction and Context

Australia has invested heavily in firearm prohibition. The framework argues that a substantial share of resources directed to prohibition measures — buyback and surrender schemes prominent among them — would deliver superior public-safety outcomes if redirected toward genuine protective capability: training, coordination, and community resilience against demonstrable extremist violence.

Prohibition spending addresses a symbolic concern while leaving real vulnerabilities unaddressed. It reassures the public that something has been done, but it does little for the synagogue, the festival, the place of worship or the open gathering that an ideologically motivated attacker selects precisely because it is undefended. The events at Bondi Beach demonstrated the cost of that gap in the most painful possible terms.

Hidden Shield operates on the principle of operational uncertainty: a potential attacker cannot predict where trained, organised protection might be present. That uncertainty is itself a deterrent, and where deterrence fails, it is also a practical means of saving life in the minutes before police arrive. The remainder of this submission explains how such a capability can be created responsibly — lawfully, proportionately, and under strict accountability.

A Proactive Approach to Community Defence

Hidden Shield reflects a shift from reactive response to proactive protection. Rather than only responding after an incident, the framework seeks to complicate the attacker's calculus beforehand, to integrate communities, and to draw on professional expertise that already exists within them. Resources are concentrated where demonstrated threat is greatest, so that effort follows evidence rather than symbolism.

At the centre of the strategy is the Community Protection Volunteer Service (CPVS), composed of eligible personnel such as former law-enforcement officers, ADF veterans and retired security professionals who previously held lawful firearm authorisation. Operating under clearly defined parameters, the CPVS would provide discreet, professional protection at pre-approved venues and only with the written consent of event organisers. The model is volunteer-based, which limits institutional cost, and it is explicitly cross-community and interfaith, fostering a united front rather than division. It empowers experienced citizens to play a constructive, accountable role in safeguarding their neighbours.

Targeting Doctrines — Understanding the Threat

Effective protection begins with an honest understanding of why and whom attackers choose. This section is analytical: it examines the ideologies that drive targeted violence so that protection can be matched to demonstrated risk. It is not, and must not be read as, operational guidance.

Modern terrorist violence is overwhelmingly ideological. The attacker is typically not mentally disordered in the manner of a random offender but is acting on a doctrine of hatred that supplies, in the attacker's own mind, a justification for atrocity. It is a sober truth that ordinary people are turned toward extraordinary evil far more readily by an ideology of hate paired with a justifying narrative than by any other single factor. At Bondi Beach that ideology was antisemitism, expressed through an Islamic-State-inspired narrative that cast Jewish Australians as legitimate targets. The choice of a Hanukkah gathering was not incidental; it was the doctrine made manifest in a target.

Such doctrines have a long lineage — from charters and manifestos that explicitly dehumanise a people, to the online ecosystems that today accelerate radicalisation. The Christchurch mosque attack of 2019 is the mirror image of Bondi Beach: a different hatred, the same logic of selecting a vulnerable, identifiable community at prayer. The lesson common to both is that communities defined by faith or ethnicity are selected precisely because they gather predictably in places known to be undefended. Protection, therefore, should be concentrated on those demonstrably at risk, and should be designed to remove the very predictability the attacker relies upon.

Implementation Pathway

Hidden Shield is designed to be introduced cautiously and in stages, with consultation at every step and the ability to halt or revise at each gate.

1. Legal and regulatory foundation: enactment of the proposed “genuine reason” category and supporting eligibility, conditions and oversight provisions, developed with state and Commonwealth authorities.
2. Standards and training development: an accredited curriculum and qualification standard agreed with police and recognised firearms-training bodies, including legal, de-escalation, threat-recognition and supervised proficiency components.
3. Limited pilot: a small, closely monitored pilot at a defined set of consenting venues, with mandatory incident reporting and independent evaluation.
4. Evaluation and refinement: independent review of the pilot against safety, accountability and community-acceptance measures before any expansion.

5. Scaled implementation: measured expansion only where evidence supports it, with continuing oversight and the power to suspend or withdraw the scheme.

Deterrent Principle

The core of the strategy is uncertainty. A potential attacker cannot determine which gatherings may have qualified protection present. This “guardian uncertainty” complicates attack planning and can deter it altogether, by encouraging an attacker to abandon a plan, to divert to a target less likely to be protected, or to invest additional surveillance time — itself an activity that increases the chance of detection by police and the community.

The effect is to harden potential victim groups while leaving their civilian character entirely intact. A protected community does not look like a fortress; it looks like a community, which is precisely the point. Carefully vetted volunteers operating under the CPVS framework would form the foundation of this capability, providing discreet, professional protection only at pre-approved venues and only with the explicit written consent of organisers.

Applied to places of worship and cultural gatherings, the benefits are tailored to the setting: security arrangements designed with respect for religious observance; personnel who understand and honour the customs of the community they serve; a presence discreet enough to preserve the atmosphere of worship; protectors who are trusted members of the community rather than strangers; a volunteer model that does not burden congregations financially; coverage that scales from weekly services to major celebrations; and, by drawing across faiths, a genuine spirit of interfaith cooperation and mutual support.

Community-Based Protection and Reducing the Risk of Detection

There is an important reason to draw protectors from within the very communities they protect. Outside personnel placed into an unfamiliar religious or cultural setting can struggle: without authentic understanding of a community’s practices, they may appear out of place, which both undermines the trust on which protection depends and, paradoxically, makes them easier for a hostile observer to pick out. The deterrent value of guardian uncertainty is preserved only if protectors are indistinguishable from the community itself.

Volunteers drawn from within a community integrate naturally. They understand its norms and observances, they are trusted, and they do not stand out. The point is not concealment for its own sake but authenticity: a protector who genuinely belongs preserves both the trust of the community and the uncertainty that deters an attacker. This is why Hidden Shield is built on community-sourced volunteers rather than outsiders, and why cultural competency is treated as a core qualification rather than an afterthought.

The deeper principle is that durable security arises from collaboration, not isolation. Law enforcement remains essential and primary; but it cannot, on its own, replicate the trust and cohesion that a community generates from within. Hidden Shield is designed to complement police, never to substitute for them.

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HIDDEN SHIELD
COMMUNITY PROTECTION
FRAMEWORK

Summary Approach Doctrines Implementation Equipment Legislation Tenets Oath

Appendices **Support**

A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK · V1-14 · JANUARY 2026

Hidden Shield

A proactive, community-led anti-terrorism strategy for enhanced community safety — redirecting resources from symbolic prohibition toward trained, vetted, and accountable community protection.

Developed in consultation by retired Australian police, defence, and security professionals. This document invites public discourse and stakeholder input as we work collectively toward enhanced community protection capabilities.

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Financial Incentives

Beyond public safety, there is a practical economic dimension that encourages adoption. As concern about domestic terrorism has grown, insurers have intensified their risk assessment of public events, weighing venue, attendance and event type, and adjusting premiums and security requirements accordingly. Demonstrating proactive, professional risk management — including the presence of trained protective personnel — can help event organisers meet insurers' expectations and may improve the terms on which cover is offered.

Professionalising protection in this way can also reduce the frequency and severity of incidents, which over time benefits insurers through improved loss experience. This aligns community protection with mainstream risk-management practice and gives organisers a tangible, lawful reason to participate.

Clarifying the Role of Hidden Shield Licensees

It is essential to be precise about what a licensee is and is not. Licensees do not perform security work or crowd control. Their sole function is to provide a protective response in the narrow circumstance of a serious and imminent threat to the security of persons — the active, lethal attack. They are not guards, marshals or enforcers, and they have no role in routine order-keeping.

The model harnesses a deep pool of experienced professionals as a sustainable community-safety resource at a time when police are stretched by conventional crime. Modest financial allowances for travel, accommodation and incidentals would enable these volunteers to participate without personal cost, but the role is fundamentally one of voluntary public service, not employment.

Mandatory Equipment

The framework contemplates that a licensee performing volunteer duties would be required to carry prescribed equipment, the precise specifications of which would be set by the relevant regulators. In summary form, the proposed amendment provides:

Sub-regulation [X] — Mandatory equipment for community protection volunteer licensees. A licensee under the genuine-reason community protection volunteer service must carry the following prescribed equipment when performing volunteer duties: (a) an approved firearm as specified; (b) approved restraint equipment as specified; and (c) a dedicated emergency-alert communication device as specified.

Consistent with the scope of this submission, the category, type, calibre, carriage and storage standards of any authorised firearm are not proposed here. They should be prescribed by the relevant firearms regulator, consistent with the principles of the National Firearms Agreement and equivalent to a defined professional standard, and settled in consultation with police. What follows develops the two elements that are distinctive to this proposal and least contentious in principle: the communication device and the lawful basis for restraint.

Emergency Alert Communication Device

In the author's view the single most important piece of equipment is not a weapon but the communication device. It is the element that binds a licensee to the police, guarantees accountability, and ensures that any response is immediately visible to, and absorbed by, the formal emergency-services system. It is what most clearly distinguishes a Hidden Shield licensee from a self-appointed vigilante.

The device would operate independently of personal phones, so that it neither distracts the licensee nor depends on congested consumer networks during an emergency. It would function without reliance on cellular infrastructure — with satellite backup — so that it remains usable when mobile networks are overwhelmed or unavailable, a failure mode well documented in major Australian emergencies. It would carry government-grade encryption to Australian Signals Directorate standards, and integrate GPS location compatible with emergency-services dispatch systems, including the relevant Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority arrangements.

A dead-man's-switch capability would allow the device to activate automatically if a licensee is incapacitated. On activation, a defined protocol would run in sequence: the alert is raised; precise GPS coordinates are transmitted to state police dispatch; the licensee's status is automatically verified; a priority emergency response is initiated; the licensee's location is tracked in real time; and the incident is documented automatically for evidentiary purposes. The effect is that the moment a licensee acts, police know who they are, where they

are, and what is happening — turning an individual act of protection into a coordinated, accountable, system response.

Approved Restraint Equipment

The lawful basis for any physical intervention by a licensee is the ordinary citizen's power of arrest, not any special authority. It is worth setting out plainly what that power involves, because clarity here is the best protection against misuse.

- Immediate necessity: a citizen's arrest is justified where a serious offence is occurring or has just occurred and the person has witnessed it or has reasonable grounds to believe the individual is the offender.
- Reasonable force only: a citizen may use force that is reasonable, proportionate and necessary to prevent escape or further harm — no more.
- Duty to notify police: after detaining a person the citizen must contact police as soon as possible; the arrest is lawful only until police arrive and take over.
- Legal risk: a citizen who acts unlawfully — by using excessive force or wrongly detaining a person — may face civil or criminal consequences.
- Jurisdictional variation: the detail of citizen's-arrest law varies between states and territories, and licensees must be trained in the law of their own jurisdiction.

Approved restraint equipment would be limited to items meeting recognised standards — for example, handcuffs meeting Australian Standard AS/NZS 4760:2006 or equivalent, approved flexible-restraint devices, and soft-restraint options for medical or mental-health situations — with the specifics prescribed by the relevant authority. The legal framework around citizen's arrest exists to balance public safety with the rights of the person restrained, and Hidden Shield treats that balance as binding.

Prohibition

There is a long-running tension in Australian law between prohibition and the moral imperative to preserve life. Extraordinary situations blur the line between a strict reading of “genuine reason” and the instinct of an ordinary person to protect those in their care. Documented cases recur in which a citizen who used a firearm purely as a deterrent — displaying an unloaded weapon to repel an armed intruder, for instance — has had that firearm seized because deterrent use is treated as prohibited, only for courts later to acknowledge that self-defence may be justified on the facts.

This cycle — punitive measure followed by judicial reaffirmation of the basic right to preserve life — has a further, corrosive effect. Because deterrent use is prohibited, people who have lawfully and successfully deterred a violent offender stay silent about it. The true prevalence of such defensive events is therefore hidden from the very data on which policy is built. Prohibition, in this sense, does not only restrict conduct; it obscures the evidence that would allow the conduct to be fairly assessed. A policy that suppresses its own evidence base cannot honestly claim to be evidence-led.

National Security

There is also a national-security dimension that the Bondi Beach attack should prompt us to confront. Senior defence figures have publicly warned that Australia could be drawn into major conflict within a few short years, and that modern conflicts offer little of the lead time that earlier generations relied upon to raise and train a force. Historically, civilian proficiency with arms — through sporting and disciplined community use — served as a reservoir of national resilience, allowing a nation to deter aggression without maintaining a vast standing army.

The framework contends that the wholesale disarming of the very citizens who would, under another name, form part of a civil-defence capability in support of the ADF, weakens rather than strengthens national security. A measured, trained, accountable and lawfully licensed cohort — created for community protection in peacetime — is also a cohort of disciplined, vetted citizens whose existence contributes to national resilience. This is offered not as a militarisation of civil life but as a recognition that responsible capability, held under strict accountability, is an asset to the nation rather than a danger to it.

“Genuine Reason” Amendment

The legislative change at the heart of this submission is the creation of a new, tightly conditioned category of “genuine reason” for the possession of a firearm: community protection volunteer service. The following is offered as a drafting basis for consideration by the relevant authorities.

Amendment of the genuine-reason provisions

After the existing genuine-reason provisions, insert: “(x) Community Protection Volunteer Service. A person has a genuine reason to possess a weapon under this paragraph if the person: (a) is a former member of (i) a law-enforcement agency; or (ii) the Australian Defence Force; or (iii) a security service, who held lawful authority to carry firearms in the course of official duties; and (b) seeks to possess the weapon for the purpose of providing voluntary protection services at community events; and (c) meets the eligibility criteria specified in section [X].”

Eligibility criteria

A person would be eligible for a licence under this category only if the person meets the service-background requirement and, in addition:

- passes enhanced background checks as prescribed;
- completes approved training programs;
- maintains current certification; and
- holds membership of a community pistol club and maintains proficiency.

Conditions of licence

A licence under this category would be subject to strict, non-negotiable conditions:

- the weapon must be carried concealed at all times;
- the licensee may attend only pre-approved community events;
- the licensee must coordinate with event organisers;
- the licensee must immediately defer authority to police upon their arrival;
- the licensee must maintain training currency; and
- the weapon must be stored in accordance with prescribed requirements.

These conditions are deliberately demanding. The category is narrow by design: it is open only to people who once held lawful armed authority in public service, it is conditioned on continuous vetting and training, and it is confined to consenting venues and to the single purpose of protecting life against an imminent, lethal threat.

The Twelve Tenets — General Duties

Every licensee would be bound by twelve general duties that define and constrain the role. They are reproduced here because the safeguards are the substance of the proposal, not an addendum to it.

1. Scope of authority. Licensees act solely for community-protection volunteer purposes. They are not police officers and hold only the legal authority of an ordinary citizen under citizen's-arrest law.
2. Primary mission. Licensees exist to provide an emergency response to a serious threat to life at a pre-approved event. They are not general security and not crowd control.
3. Activation criteria. Capability is deployed only in defined circumstances: an immediate threat involving dangerous weapons; clear danger of death or serious harm to multiple people; a confirmed terrorist attack or mass-casualty situation; intervention to save life.
4. Pre-event preparation. Coordinate with organisers beforehand, verify event approval, conduct equipment checks, maintain a low profile, and review threat assessments.
5. Emergency response. On activation, immediately use the emergency communication device, maintain GPS tracking, operate strictly within citizen's-arrest limits, use only minimal necessary force to stop the threat, provide medical aid if trained, and remain on-site until police arrive.
6. Police interaction. On police arrival, identify as a Hidden Shield licensee, transfer authority for the scene without resistance, comply fully with police instructions, and provide incident details as requested.
7. Equipment maintenance. Keep all equipment serviceable, conduct monthly tests, report malfunctions within 24 hours, store equipment securely, and comply with operational standards.
8. Prohibited activities. Licensees must not act as general security, intervene in minor disputes, pursue suspects beyond an immediate threat, operate outside authorised areas, or display a weapon except in a genuine emergency.
9. Training requirements. Maintain valid certification, participate in regular training, demonstrate proficiency through assessment, update qualifications as required, and complete training for evolving threats.
10. Incident reporting. Every activation must be reported within 24 hours, detailing the circumstances, the actions taken, the coordination with police, and the outcome.
11. Legal considerations. Licensees act under citizen's-arrest authority and bear full legal responsibility for their actions. Misuse may result in criminal charges, civil liability, and suspension or revocation of licence.

12. Confidentiality. Maintain strict confidentiality regarding the identities of licensees and operational details, including event-security arrangements and communication protocols.

A supporting set of general instructions would expand each of these duties into detailed policy and procedure for adoption by the oversight body.

Oath Adaptation Framework

Because threats so often arise from ideological and religious division, the strategy deliberately seeks support across faith communities and civic organisations, and it asks every licensee to take an oath. The oath is offered in several forms so that each volunteer may affirm it sincerely. Each version commits the licensee to the same core duties: honour, restraint, the protection of innocent life, discretion, and action always within the law.

Secular

I, [name], as a volunteer dedicated to my community, hereby pledge to act with honour and restraint, guided by reason and humanistic principles. I commit myself to the unwavering protection of innocent lives, operating discreetly and always within the bounds of the law, serving humanity with compassion and ethical responsibility.

Jewish

I, [name], as a volunteer dedicated to my community, hereby pledge to act with honour and restraint in accordance with the principles of tikkun olam, the repairing of the world. I commit myself to the unwavering protection of innocent lives, operating discreetly and always within the bounds of the law, with the guidance of the Almighty and in service to justice.

Christian

I, [name], as a volunteer dedicated to my community, hereby pledge to act with honour and restraint as a servant of God's love. I commit myself to the unwavering protection of innocent lives, operating discreetly and always within the bounds of the law, guided by Christ's teachings and in faithful stewardship of the gifts entrusted to me.

Islamic

I, [name], as a volunteer dedicated to my community, hereby pledge to act with honour and restraint, mindful of my duty to God. I commit myself to the unwavering protection of innocent lives, operating discreetly and always within the bounds of the law, seeking guidance and serving in accordance with the principles of justice and mercy.

Additional forms may be adapted in consultation with other faith and community leaders, so that no volunteer is asked to affirm a pledge inconsistent with their conscience.

Appendices

The following appendices summarise the evidence base, the equipment and training standards, the legal precedent, and the community-endorsement mechanism that underpin the strategy. Consistent with the scope of this submission, they are presented at the level of principle and standard; operational and tactical detail is reserved for development by police, accredited instructors and regulators.

Appendix A — Threat Assessment and Evidence Base

Australian and international research supports the central claim that trained, culturally competent community members can play a constructive role in preventing and mitigating terrorism, provided they are integrated with professional emergency services and bound by oversight. The Department of Home Affairs' counter-terrorism strategy emphasises community engagement in threat identification; Cherney and Murphy (2019) show that community trust and cooperation are fundamental to effective counter-terrorism; and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute has mapped domestic extremist networks and radicalisation pathways.

Documented Australian incidents illustrate both the threat and the value of civilian action: the Lindt Café siege (2014), in which hostages and nearby personnel acted to steady the situation and assist police; the Bourke Street vehicle attack (Melbourne, 2017), in which bystanders attempted to intervene and rendered immediate first aid; and community early-warning in other incidents where residents reported concerning behaviour before official action. Research on community resilience (for example Bouhana and Wikström; Grossman and colleagues) consistently finds that cohesive communities with trusted networks are better at recognising warning signs. The literature is equally candid about the limitations — the risk of vigilantism and misidentification, the potential for division and suspicion, and the need for professional training, oversight and clear legal limits — each of which Hidden Shield is expressly designed to address.

Appendix B — Equipment Specifications (Standards and Principles)

This appendix sets the principles for equipment; detailed specifications are matters for the regulators. The lawful basis for restraint is the citizen's power of arrest, supported in the various jurisdictions by provisions such as the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW), the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), the Criminal Code (Qld) and Commonwealth provisions. Restraint equipment would be confined to items meeting recognised standards (for example AS/NZS 4760:2006 for handcuffs), with training in restraint application, de-escalation and legal liability, and annual recertification.

The communication system is treated as essential equipment in its own right: a dedicated device, separate from personal phones, with satellite backup, encryption to Australian Signals Directorate standards, GPS integration compatible with emergency-services dispatch, and dead-man's-switch

activation, operating to the protocol described earlier. On firearms, this submission proposes no specific weapon: the authorised category, standard, carriage and storage should be prescribed by the firearms regulator, consistent with the National Firearms Agreement and equivalent to a defined professional benchmark, and settled with police. Oversight and accountability are integral: an independent oversight board with police and community representation, mandatory incident reporting to state police, regular equipment inspection, clear use-of-force protocols under existing law, a legal-representation framework for justified interventions, and defined victim-support procedures.

Appendix C — Training Curriculum Framework

Training would be delivered to an accredited standard by recognised providers and licensed firearms instructors, with police consultation, and would be a precondition of licensing and of its renewal. The curriculum is described here at the level of competencies, not techniques. It would comprise: a legal foundation (citizen's-arrest authority, proportionate use-of-force principles under Australian law, liability and accountability, and incident documentation); de-escalation and threat-recognition; emergency-communications and the alert-device protocol; trauma first-aid to a recognised standard until emergency services arrive; and community-integration and cultural-competency training across diverse faith and cultural settings.

Firearms competency would be assessed and certified to a defined professional standard by accredited instructors at licensed ranges, with periodic recertification, a wellness and psychological evaluation on entry, and written and practical assessment. The detailed conduct of firearms instruction is a matter for those accredited bodies and is not specified here. An independent quality-assurance framework would monitor delivery, track individual competency, and require remediation where standards are not met.

Appendix D — Legal Precedent Analysis

Australian law contains substantial precedent for organised, trained, lawfully authorised civilian protection during periods when police resources are stretched. Historically, the Volunteer Defence Corps and civil-defence wardens of the Second World War operated under lawful authority; post-war legislation recognised that civilian-defence service as legitimate. Contemporary frameworks — protective-services and security-licensing categories under the state Firearms Acts and the security-industry legislation — demonstrate that Australia already licenses civilians for defined protective roles.

The common law supports defensive action for the protection of others. Authorities including *Zecevic v DPP (Vic)* (1987) recognise that self-defence extends to the defence of others where there is a reasonable belief that unlawful violence threatens life or serious injury; *Palmer v The Queen* (1971) recognises that a person defending themselves or another cannot weigh to a nicety the exact measure of defensive action; and the necessity principle supports action to prevent greater harm to the innocent. Constitutional authority (for example *Australian Communist Party v Commonwealth* (1951))

and the division of responsibility recognised in cases such as *Gratwick v Johnson* (1945)) indicates that a state-based licensing scheme operating within existing police-power frameworks is the constitutionally appropriate vehicle. Good-Samaritan provisions, such as section 57 of the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW), provide a model for protecting those who act reasonably to protect others. Taken together, this body of law provides a robust foundation for a carefully limited civilian-protection licence.

Appendix E — Community Endorsement (Privacy-Compliant)

Demonstrating community support strengthens any submission, but it must be done lawfully. The collection of personal information — and especially sensitive information such as religious affiliation or firearm-licence status — is regulated in Australia by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles, which require that sensitive information be collected only with consent and only where reasonably necessary, that collection be minimised, and that individuals be told how their information will be used. For that reason this version deliberately replaces any broad data-harvesting model with a privacy-by-design approach.

Under this approach, an endorsement mechanism would collect the minimum information necessary, would obtain explicit, informed consent for any sensitive information, and would default to anonymity. Each supporter would receive a unique identifier, and supporters would choose their level of disclosure — full, partial, anonymous, or private. Only aggregate, de-identified statistics (such as the number of supporters by broad category and region, and the availability of relevant expertise) would be reported to the Commission; no individual's personal information would be included without that individual's explicit authorisation. Information would be encrypted and securely stored, used only for the stated purposes, never disclosed to unauthorised third parties, and deleted on request. Presenting endorsement this way is not only lawful; it is more credible, because it demonstrates that the people advocating for a protective capability also understand and respect the limits the law places on them.

For further information, see hiddenshield.info. Submitted respectfully by Lawrence Lyons, retired officer, Queensland Police, on behalf of an informal collective of retired police — June 2026.