

The Prime Minister moved on Wednesday that the Arms (Prohibited Firearms, Magazines, and Parts) Amendment Bill go to its third reading before becoming law.

"We are here just 26 days after the most devastating of terrorist attacks created the darkest of days in New Zealand's history. We are here, as an almost entirely united Parliament," she said.

"There have been very few occasions in my history when I have seen Parliament come together in this way, and I cannot imagine circumstances where that is more necessary than it is now."

After more than 13,000 submissions, the parliamentary select committee supported the Government's gun law reforms announced in the wake of the March 15 Christchurch terror attack.

The gun law reforms received bipartisan support from across Parliament - except for ACT Party's David Seymour - and the Prime Minister thanked her fellow MPs on Wednesday for their support in moving ahead with the legislation.

"I want to acknowledge therefore as I begin my contribution here in this third reading debate by acknowledging those Parliamentarians who have worked so constructively in this discussion and debate."

She paid particular tribute to the Opposition, "who from the moment this issue around the use of these particular weapons in this terrorist attack arose, I have found to be nothing but constructive".

Seymour opposed the reforms because he felt the Government acted too quickly without proper public consultation. But in an opinion piece on Wednesday, he said Ardern had recognised the "common humanity of all New Zealanders".

In her speech to Parliament, Ardern reflected on the March 15 attack that left 50 dead after a gunman opened fire on two mosques in the Canterbury city. She struggled to hold back tears as she recalled visiting survivors in hospital.

"We are here because of the victims and families," Ardern said, adding that when she visited hospitals and met with victims, she noticed that "none of them had just one gunshot wound".

"I struggled to recall any single gunshot wound," she said, reflecting on how the victims had "multiple injuries" and will "carry disabilities for a lifetime".

"We are here because of them."

Ardern said she met with Police Commissioner Mike Bush after the attack and he described the nature of the weapons that had been used in the terror attack, and told Ardern that they had been obtained legally.

"I could not fathom how weapons that could cause such destruction and large-scale death could have been obtained legally in this country," she said.

"Yes, it is true, that those weapons were modified. That meant they were held in form against the licence that that individual in question had. But they were modified easily."

Ardern said she could not believe the ease of which a magazine could hold not just 30 bullets, but could be extended to hold upwards of 60 bullets, and "rained terror on a group of people gathered together in worship and in peace".

She said it was appalling that military-style semi-automatics weapons had been available in New Zealand to that degree as well as assault rifles - the weapons on which Ardern announced a ban the week after the attack.

"And today, that anomaly ends," she told Parliament.

"I could not go down and, not just face the media, not just the public, but the victims that had been left behind from this terror attack, and tell them hand on heart that our system and our laws allow these guns to be available, and that is okay."

The Finance and Expenditure Select Committee has recommended that semi-automatic firearms should be allowed for pest control on farms, but that they should be restricted to specialised.

It also recommended that collectors that firearms could be collected - but only if a gun part is removed to ensure the firearm is inoperable, and that part is stored at a separate address.

The committee received more than 13,000 submissions in the 48-hour period that they could be received, with over half - about 60 percent - supporting the reforms, 26 percent opposed, and the rest holding another view.

Newshub.

Reporter: Zane Small, April 11 2019