

# ASJ

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

*The political voice of the SSAA*

# Self DEFENCE-

how far  
can you  
go



*Britain's  
handgun  
farce  
continues*

March 2001 Vol. 3 Issue 2  
Members-only insert to the *Australian Shooter*





# In this issue

The political voice of the SSAA

**Editorial policy:**

To create a better environment and community understanding of all forms of hunting and shooting sports.

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# A word from the President

Unfortunately, as this editorial is being prepared, the ongoing problems surrounding the new Customs Regulations are no closer to being solved. The recent changes introduced late last year are proving to be a major headache for dealers and shooters alike. Under the rules, all new handguns coming into the country remain with Australian Customs authorities until a dealer can provide a 'B709D' form that sets out an end-user's details. However, some dealers have had trouble obtaining the forms and this has led to added delays in getting pistols through the licensing process. The SSAA is still trying to negotiate some sensible changes to the new arrangements and we will keep members posted with any new developments.

On a brighter note, the St Marys Shooting Complex in Sydney should be back to normal within the next couple of months. While every effort is being made to keep administrative delays to a minimum, under the circumstances some problems are inevitable. On behalf of the

Association's staff, I would like to thank all members for their patience and support during the restoration work.

In closing, I would urge readers to take a few minutes to read the latest up-date on firearm imports contained in this issue. While John Howard's 'buy-back' may not have done much as far as crime is concerned, it has certainly had an impact on legitimate shooters.

Remember there is strength in numbers and while we have 130,000-plus members, there is still room for growth. Take this membership form below, keep it available at short notice, and make your Association even stronger.

*Bill Shelton*

Bill Shelton  
National President

## NEW APPLICATION FOR SSAA MEMBERSHIP

MAIL TO: MEMBERSHIP OFFICE, PO BOX 906, St Marys, NSW 1790 Phone 02 9623 4900

STATE	BRANCH	
SURNAME OR FAMILY NAME		
CHRISTIAN OR Mr GIVEN NAMES Ms Mrs		
ADDRESS		
SUBURB	P/C	
PHONE PRIV	BUS	
DATE OF BIRTH	E-MAIL	

This application is made in full recognition of the Association's requirement for responsible and ethical behaviour. I undertake to do all in my power to preserve the good image of the sport and the Association. I understand that the members breaking the code of ethics and or Association regulations will be subject to suspension or expulsion. I certify that I am not a member of any organisation which may have as any part of its program the overthrow of the government by force or violence. I certify that I have not been convicted of any crime, felony or offence or am, or have I been, subject to any order that would preclude me from legally owning a firearm. I certify that I do not now, and have not in the past, suffered from any mental or any other disorder that would prevent me from using a firearm legally and safely.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Processing timetable: If this application, completed and accompanied by the correct fees, is received at the membership office by the 15th of the month, it will then be processed early the following month and your first Shooter will be delivered the month after.

CODES: OFFICE USE ONLY

### MEMBERSHIP TYPE - Place X in appropriate square

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ADULT \$60</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>JUNIOR \$18</b> Under 18	Parent's or Guardian's Signature
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>OVERSEAS \$65</b>	With a parent's consent. Please tick box if you require a copy of the Australian Shooter.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>5-YEAR ADULT \$300</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>FAMILY \$45</b>	Membership ID No.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>MEMBER FOR LIFE \$1200</b>	Family membership is available to each immediate relative of an adult membership provided the address is the same.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>PENSIONER \$45</b>	Pensioner membership is available upon production of medical entitlement or a photocopy of the same.	

### ATTENTION NSW MEMBERS

Complete this section ONLY if you wish to use your membership of the SSAA to support your 'genuine reason' for having a shooters licence. Please register me as an affiliate member of SSAA (NSW) Inc and register my SSAA club activities as follows (by indicating in which capacity your SSAA activities relate by ticking one or more of the following boxes):

**TARGET SHOOTING**  **HUNTING**  **COLLECTING**

Note: Under NSW legislation, shooter's licence holders who use club membership to support their 'genuine reason' must fulfil the minimum attendance requirements below:

Target shooters – pistols – 6 range attendances each year.  
long arms - 4 range attendances each year.  
Hunters – attendances at 2 club activities each year.  
Collectors – attendance at one club meeting a year.  
Once the issuing club or dealer's stamp has been affixed, this form may be used as proof of membership to satisfy the 'genuine reason' requirements of the Firearms Act 1996.

PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED PAYMENT FOR THE AMOUNT OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE TICK ONE  BANKCARD  MASTERCARD  VISACARD with \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRY DATE \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

# Self DEFENCE-

how far  
can you  
go



by SSAA National Junior Vice President Tony Warner

**W**hen it comes to gun ownership, nothing is guaranteed to spark debate like the question of self-defence. Under the 1996 Australasian Police Ministers' Council arrangements, all states and territories effectively banned self-defence as a 'genuine reason' for licensing a firearm. But as many people pointed out at the time, the right to protect yourself and your property, especially in your own home or place of business, is fundamental. Even the much-vaunted United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims in Article 4: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"<sup>1</sup> - unfortunately,

someone forgot to tell John Howard. While the law may say you can't license a firearm for self-defence, in most jurisdictions you can nevertheless use one to protect yourself. Doing so, however, often leads to a legal minefield where you can end up in more hot water than the person attacking you. The recent case of WA businessman Charlie Puglia provides a good illustration.

Last year Mr Puglia's engineering firm was broken into and robbed three times in the space of a week. He lost thousands of dollars worth of equipment and the police seemed powerless to stop the burglaries. Several days later he decided to work back late, secure in the knowledge that he

had his licensed shotgun with him at the factory. At about 9pm two men smashed their way through an office window and confronted him. He subsequently fired several warning shots and the would-be thieves beat a hasty retreat. Then Mr Puglia made a catastrophic mistake - he called the police and reported what had happened.

Mr Puglia could be forgiven for thinking the law would be on his side. After all, he had been the victim of a series of robberies; his business had suffered and working alone in the factory at night carried some real dangers. He had been confronted by two men who burst into his premises and he had tried to avoid unnecessarily injuring

anyone by deliberately firing at the wall. Unfortunately, like many people who've landed in the same predicament, Mr Puglia discovered just how quickly the police can react when it comes to people trying to protect themselves. The authorities promptly confiscated his shotgun and booked him for discharging a weapon. The burglars were never caught.

The charge was eventually dismissed when a magistrate decided that under the circumstances Mr Puglia didn't have a case to answer. However, the police subsequently announced they were unhappy with the court's ruling and would begin moves to have the decision overturned. Mr Puglia is still waiting to get his shotgun back and his licence reinstated.

The case highlights an important point. In most instances the law is effectively weighted against people who try to defend themselves, especially with a firearm. However, the concept of 'reasonable force' as the yardstick for judging someone's reaction when confronted by an attacker is ridiculous.

The fact is when you're faced with a potentially life threatening situation you don't have time to offer a home-invader a multiple choice questionnaire - Are you (a) armed with a club (b) a knife, or (c) a gun? Do you intend to (a) beat me to death (b) stab me and rape my wife, or (c) steal my VCR? If you're lucky, you'll have a few moments to size up the situation and react - that's all. If running away isn't an option, and it usually isn't, then a firearm offers the most effective and efficient way to level the playing field - that's why police officers carry guns instead of sharp sticks. But are the chances of a policeman being killed or injured by an attacker really any greater than the risks average citizens face in their own homes? Yet policemen are allowed to be armed for their protection, but ordinary folk are not.

A more realistic approach would be to do away with all the uncertainties by clearly spelling out that a person may use any means at their disposal to defend their home or business. While recent initiatives such as the New South Wales Home Invasion Bill and amendments to Western Australia's Criminal Code certainly help, they nevertheless leave homeowners hamstrung if they cannot license the most effective means of defending themselves and their property, namely a firearm.

<sup>1</sup> (1968), Treaties and Alliances of the World: A Survey of International Treaties in Force and Communities of States. Bristol: Keesing's Publications Ltd, p. 12.

# Arming yourself WITH WORDS

by Gary Fleetwood

The following are reproductions of quotations that have been collected and placed on our web site at [www.ssaa.org.au/quotes.html](http://www.ssaa.org.au/quotes.html)

Quickly identifying the source of any quotation you use is paramount and it is far better not to say anything than be found wanting when those you speak to demand a source. It is all about credibility.

## Health quotations

"I wake up every day and hope I don't kill someone today," said registered nurse Kathy Cloninger.

Report on deaths of patients in the USA - *Chicago Tribune* 9/9/2000

On ABS figures released 23/12/98 -

The spectre of suicide is hanging alarmingly over young Australians with new figures revealing youth suicide rates have increased more than 50 per cent in some states.

*The Australian* 24/12/98

The editor of one of Britain's leading medical journals has castigated the quality of scientific papers...saying only 5 per cent of published articles reached minimum standards of scientific soundness and clinical relevance.

*Medical Observer* - UK - 24/7/98

"Anything that kills 500-plus people a year is a very legitimate cause for doctors to be involved in."

AMA South Australia President John Emery - *The Advertiser* 5/96

(The doctor was talking about guns - not the 18,000 plus deaths a year in hospitals.)

Between 10,000 and 14,000 Australian patients died in hospitals from preventable causes each year, a leading intensive care physician said yesterday.

Professor Ken Hillman - Liverpool Hospital, Sydney - *The Advertiser* 25/5/96

"There is clear worldwide evidence if you reduce the access to the means of suicide you reduce significantly the rate of suicide."

Professor Yellowlees - QLD Uni Psych Department - 23/5/96

"If you get rid of the means, you get rid of some of the suicides."

Jan Shield - Australian Forum to control Guns - *The Age* 22/8/95

A secret report on road fatalities in Victoria has found that 30 per cent of the deaths that occur while an accident victim is undergoing medical treatment may be preventable.

*The Age* 30/7/95

The Federal Government is standing by a survey, which suggested up to 14,000 Australians a year die due to accidents in hospital.

*The Weekend Australian* 3-4/6/95



## Hotshot MADONNA

REMAINING TRUE to her spontaneous outlook on life, pop musician Madonna was seen taking shooting lessons at the West London Shooting School just days before her wedding to British filmmaker Guy Ritchie.

A British tabloid published a series of pictures of the Queen of Pop shattering one clay target after another. While Madonna's image may not be representative of the typical shooter, the shooting fraternity is happy to have her promoting the sport. After all, she is one of the world's greatest pop idols among the young.



by Paul Peake

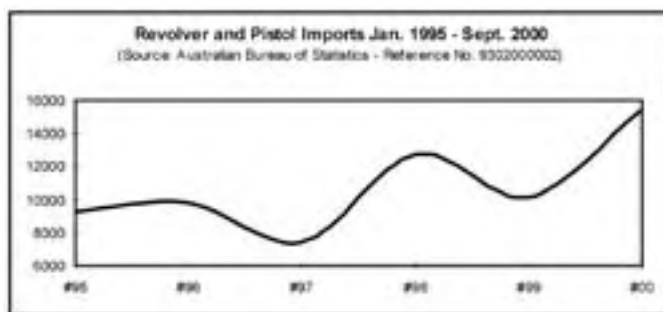
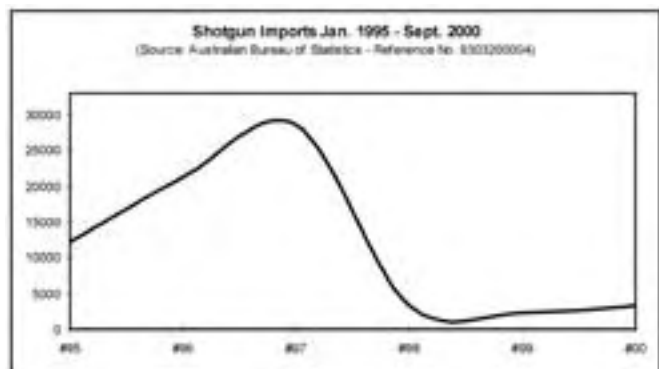
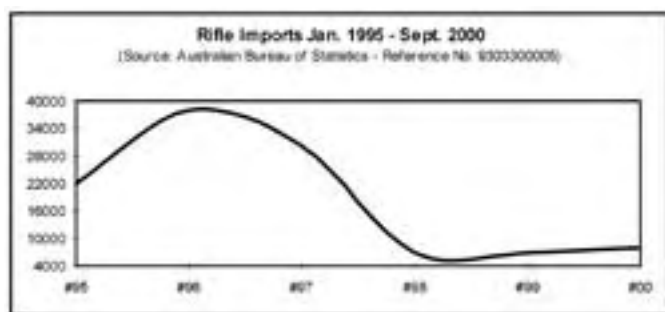
# Import UPDATE

**T**he Federal Government's 'buy-back' confiscation scheme may not have had much impact on crime, but one area that has certainly felt the effect has been firearm imports. Many dealers have been forced out of business by falling sales as thousands of shooters leave the sport. The trend is reflected in the huge downturn in the number of firearms entering the country.

In the first half of last year imports of sporting rifles were down by almost 70 per cent compared to the 12 months before the government's 'buy-back' program. Shotgun imports have shown

a similar decline since the introduction of new licensing laws throughout the country.

The only exception has been handgun imports, which have risen steeply throughout the past few years. However, the data is deceptive. Once the huge numbers of firearms imported for various government contracts have been factored out, the actual number of pistols and revolvers coming into the country for legitimate sporting purposes has fallen by about half. Imports from the United States, traditionally one of the principal suppliers of handguns to the local market, were down by nearly 40 per cent in the first half of 2000 compared to pre-'buy-back' figures.



Recent changes to the Customs Regulations are bound to have a further negative impact as the process for obtaining a firearm legitimately becomes more complicated and costly.

The fact that the steep decline in firearm imports has not been matched by a corresponding fall in serious crime raises some important questions about the government's anti-gun agenda. Far from delivering a 'safer society', the real effect appears to have been the elimination of scores of dealers from the industry and thousands of enthusiasts from the sport. ●



# Bound for Broken Hill



Broken Hill worth the drive.

by Gary Fleetwood - SSAA Special Projects

**M**yra Sports Store founder Arthur Langsford once said that Broken Hill was the best place to live in Australia if your favourite pastime was hunting. After obtaining a local property owner's permission for hunting, this vast area of land allows an escape from the restraints of city life and an opportunity to ethically use your firearms in the pursuit of game animals.

Serviced by both rail and air, along with a well-maintained national highway, Broken Hill is the gateway to traditional hunting grounds of many SSAA members. A number of visiting hunters that enjoy this area come from outside NSW and they have a responsibility to understand and comply with local firearm laws.

NSW Police Service Sergeant Paul Klievens is based at Broken Hill and, along with Senior Constable Michael Milton, deals with both local and interstate hunters when matters of legislation arise. I spoke to Sgt Klievens on a recent visit to 'the Hill' and



Sgt Paul Klievens of the Broken Hill Police Station

he gave me a brief summary of what he is obliged to 'enforce' when dealing with firearm owners coming to town.

NSW legislation acknowledges interstate firearm licences and visiting hunters should carry their firearm licence and ensure that their registered firearm is being used for the 'genuine reason' indicated on the licence. NSW police officers can demand that firearm licences be produced for inspection. Roadblocks occur from time to time to facilitate random breath testing and heavy vehicle inspections, which may give police an opportunity to see a firearm on the back seat.

Travelling firearm owners should ensure that their firearm has the bolt out (if physically capable) and that ammunition is securely locked in a container separate to the firearm. If leaving your vehicle, ensure that your firearm is out of sight and locked up. Police recommend that someone remain with the vehicle at all times if you are stocking up on supplies at a roadhouse. If the vehicle is broken into and the gun stolen, charges will be pending if steps to secure the firearm were not taken.

Vehicles belonging to travelling hunters have an aura all their own and can be easily identified by both police and criminals alike. Common sense will help you avoid a situation that may ruin your hunting trip and initiate a chain of events that may jeopardise your ability to keep your firearm licence.

If visiting the area for hunting, you should carry a letter from the landowner whose property you intend to hunt. This will reduce disruption to your program and the investigative workload for police. This letter should indicate permission to hunt on the land and also a contact phone number so that police can quickly and easily confirm your intentions with the landowner. While this is not enshrined in legislation, it will

make life a lot easier if the police question you about firearms in your possession.

Police at Broken Hill welcome queries from interstate hunters regarding the requirements when bringing firearms into the state. A few moments on the phone before your journey begins will pay dividends by way of peace of mind when travelling 'on foreign soil'.

Local firearm dealer Merv Peake has a considerable supply of ammunition on hand as well as other hunting requirements. Silver City Guns & Ammo is open Saturdays from 9am till midday and 9am till 5pm weekdays. You will of course need to show your current firearms licence before ammunition can be purchased.



Two young Broken Hill residents talk guns at Silver City Guns & Ammo.

Silver City Guns & Ammo  
9 Williams Lane, Broken Hill  
Phone 8087 7262

Broken Hill Police Station  
252 Argent Street, Broken Hill  
Sgt Paul Klievens  
Phone 8087 0299



# Web site SUCCESS

In July 1999 the SSAA initiated the first internet-based search function for stolen guns in Australia. As a result of a violent theft of firearms from a Peterborough (SA) dealer, the police supplied the SSAA with a complete list of the stolen guns' serial numbers which we distributed to firearm dealers across Australia via our extensive e-mail list.

Within hours of circulating that information, we requested Adelaide-based Planet Software Pty Ltd to create a web-based search function for stolen gun serial numbers. That list is linked to our web site and is updated as required. You may remember that police across Australia once happily supplied lists of stolen gun serial numbers to this Association and these were reproduced monthly in the

*Australian Shooters Journal*. Recognising the benefits that our web-based network can offer, we requested that the South Australian Police provide us with access to the complete list of stolen firearm serial numbers maintained on their Firearms Control System. Alas, today's privacy matters did not allow that release of information and in response SAPOL initiated their own stolen firearm search function, which is now linked to our web site. Recently a South Australian SSAA member was given a Brno Model 2.22LR rifle. Remembering the stolen search function created by SAPOL, he went to their web site and typed in the serial number of the rifle. The query indicated that the firearm was stolen. Concerned about dealing with local police station staff, he contacted the SSAA and we took possession



Sgt Doug Riach collects the recovered Brno rifle from SSAA's Keith Tidswell.

of the firearm, which was subsequently collected by a member of the Firearms Section. Members are asked to utilise the search function when coming across firearms that appear to be off 'the system'. To this date, South Australia is the only police service to have created such a facility, so you may wish to lobby your state police commissioner to establish a similar service. SSAA web address:

[www.planetsoftware.com.au/gunreg/](http://www.planetsoftware.com.au/gunreg/)

SA Police web address [http://](http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/firearms/search.htm)

[www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/firearms/search.htm](http://www.sapolice.sa.gov.au/firearms/search.htm)

## The Bradbury Collection

The SSAA has been given custodial possession of firearm-related papers, letters and reports collected over a 50-year period by SSAA founding President John Bradbury.

Collections such as this are a valuable illustration of the changing attitudes of the media towards issues such as conservation and firearm ownership.

John passed away late last year and recently Mrs Hazel Bradbury was able to compile the collection into a single location ready for inspection and collection by SSAA.

In January, some 280 kilograms of documents were transported from Brisbane to Adelaide and throughout time they will be sorted by category and filed. The documents will be an important addition to the SSAA's extensive archives.

John had the ability to get to the heart of an argument and was unforgiving of fools. He recognised the need for a strong public relations commitment by all shooting organisations and worked tirelessly towards that goal.

The Bradbury collection is a fitting monument to a man who committed his life to all Australian firearm owners and we thank Hazel for her support in allowing the Association to have access to these valued documents.

Mrs Hazel Bradbury with 280 kilos of her late husband's papers, letters and reports.



# ASJ Letters

## Double Standard

I was more than a little amused, if not a little irate, at some of the comments made in a radio interview on January 22 at 5:15pm on Radio 2SM in Sydney. The interviewer was Jason Morrison and the interviewee was NSW Police Traffic Commander Ron Sorenson.

The subject under discussion was the new breed of 'super cars' capable of spectacular acceleration and very high speeds. When questioned as to the suitability of a blanket ban on such vehicles given the nature and condition of our roads, the good Commander responded to the effect that it is not the vehicles themselves that are the problem, it's the people who use them improperly that are a concern and that we must address the attitudes of the drivers of such vehicles...

Does this sound like an 'each way bet' by the police department? Has not the police department steadfastly rejected, as unacceptable, our arguments to the effect that firearms are inanimate lumps of metal and wood that are harmless until in the hands of a person? We also advocated the monitoring of 'attitudes' by way of some sort of register of persons who were unsuited to firearms ownership. "Oh no!" cried the anti-gunners, "A breach of civil liberties!"

Don't misunderstand me. I agree completely with the comments from the Traffic Commander. Cars do not kill, just as firearms do not kill - people do. My concern is at the apparent duplicity of the police department in rejecting an argument when it does not suit and embracing the same argument when it does.

Sorry, 'fellers', you can't have it both ways without forfeiting your credibility.

**Keith M Falk, Ermington, NSW**

**Mail your letters to:  
Australian Shooters Journal  
PO Box 2066  
Kent Town, SA 5071**

## Glimmer of common sense

Even though I am a diehard supporter of the ALP, I applaud Chris Hartcher and the Liberal Party's 'Right to Self-Defence Bill' to be tabled in the NSW State Parliament shortly. Their proposal for the right of citizens to defend their homes and property will be a severe deterrent against home invaders and the criminals who use force as a substitute for an honest day's work. This will mean a weapon can be close and handy in case of an emergency at all times.

Can you imagine the absurdity of saying to a person who is about to rob you, "Just a second, I have to unlock my gun safe and my ammunition safe and then locate the bolt of my firearm so I can defend myself against your invasion"?

Any criminal who is injured in any way when he or she is committing a crime does not deserve any compensation whatsoever - other than to be rewarded with a long sentence in one of our correctional institutions.

I'm glad to see that someone is finally showing some sense and is about to put the criminal and the victim in the right perspective.

If this Bill is passed, it will mean a major

overhaul of some of the ridiculous rules that are in place at the present time. It is very pleasing to me as an SSAA member that we are finally about to be treated as first-class citizens and not hooligans because of our love of sporting and target shooting.

It's great to see that someone in authority sees the need for a change in the gun laws - so decent citizens may protect themselves against the riff-raff of society.

Come on Mr Carr, get your government to support these worthwhile proposals when they are debated in parliament. You will receive more accolades than negative responses if this Bill is passed. Most criminals will think twice if they realise they will be attempting to rob someone who may be armed instead of a toothless tiger.

The time has come and the citizens of NSW are sick of being treated like doormats. Remember when Unsworth was defeated when he was attempting to become the Premier of NSW? If he hadn't been a great advocate of stricter gun laws, I'm convinced Liberal would never have won power in that era.

**Kevin Lee, Blackett, NSW**

## Untraceable

About two weeks ago my brother received a phone call from a Geelong firearms police office that said that a .30-06 calibre rifle registered in my brother's name had turned up in a Geelong gun shop. He lost the firearm about five years earlier when the ute he was transporting it in was stolen near Alice Springs.

Apparently the firearm had been through three gun dealers and was traced back to Darwin. It appears that the police cannot trace who sold the firearm in Darwin. My brother has since moved to Kalgoorlie for work and has

been told he would have to go to court to try to get his property back. The gun dealer in Geelong has offered my brother half the profit on the sale of the firearm. What a bloody mockery gun registration is if three gun dealers do the right thing and after the third change of ownership it is detected that the firearm was stolen.

**Jeff Ingram, Briagolong, Vic**

[Ed's Note: Crimtrac will now enable all state police firearm offices to search each other's databases.]

## Antis at it again

This morning I was just 'surfing' the 'net when, low and behold, I heard some ramblings on the radio regarding Gun Control Australia (GCA) and their desire for more stringent gun laws to combat the escalation of gun-related crimes. (I wonder who is committing those crimes? The legitimate gun owner? I think not.)

Back in 1996, when John Howard and the rest proposed the new gun laws, GCA was the first on the bandwagon, stating how we needed these new laws to create a safer Australia. Just out of curiosity, I looked at the GCA web site and they were ranting about how the Prime Minister had let them down in a big way and how the new gun laws had gone backwards in some states.

Also, on their site, the SSAA was being portrayed as an element hell-bent on making gun ownership as easy as possible. What utter nonsense. We all know that the new gun laws have had little effect on reducing the criminal element.

The SSAA has worked very hard with the police in every state to create manageable and workable laws since Port Arthur. Some gun owners were initially upset at the new laws but we have learned to overcome our initial grievances and continue to shoot.

The GCA's manifesto is purely based on sensationalism and theories, not fact. SSAA's information and policy relies on fact. To be branded a potential criminal just because I own a gun makes me feel very hurt.

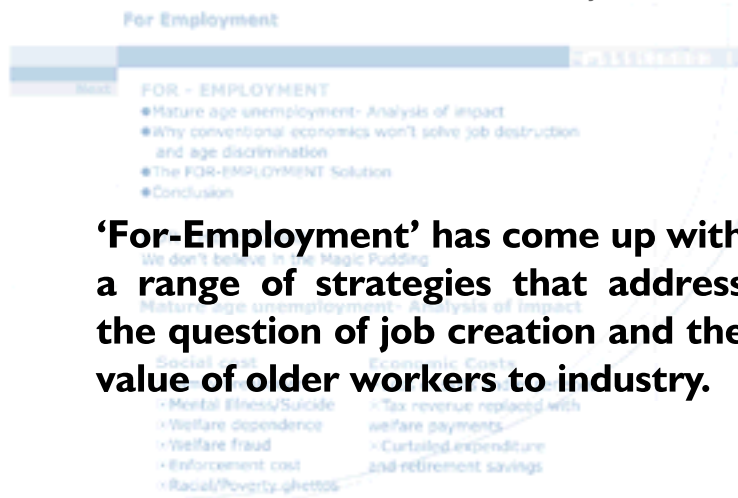
I urge all shooters and hunters with access to the Internet to log onto GCA's web site to have a look at their ideals. I did and was very surprised at the lengths that this organisation is going to in order to make life for recreational shooters and hunters as difficult as possible. We all must get behind the SSAA to protect our sport and pastime. Be vigilant and aware. They are out there and they are aiming for us.

Con Kapralos, Allenby Gardens, SA

www.for-employment.net.au

# For-Employment

by Paul Peake



**'For-Employment' has come up with a range of strategies that address the question of job creation and the value of older workers to industry.**

**F**rom the shooter's perspective, people using firearms to commit suicide is a major public-relations problem. But the fact is people don't kill themselves because they have access to guns - they kill themselves because they're unhappy. Often their anguish stems from a sense of hopelessness about the future. For instance, the high suicide rates in many of Australia's regional areas can be linked to the steady decline of the rural sector and the corresponding dependency it fuels.

While the focus is usually about the impact of suicide on young people, often it is older people and especially older men who face the major hurdles when the job market shrinks. While government has been quick to embrace policies designed to streamline industry and increase profits, it has been slow to do anything about the casualties. The result is a disproportionate number of middle-aged Australians committing suicide - all too often with a gun.

What is needed are not more draconian gun laws, but a comprehensive re-think about how older workers are treated. A new Australian-based think-tank called 'For-Employment' has come up with a range of strategies that address the question of job creation and the value of older workers to industry. Their proposals could go a long way to offsetting the negative impacts on people over 40 who are often the first ones on the scrapheap when a decision is made to 'rationalise' a business or government department.

Like all innovative public policy ideas, however, to be effective For-Employment's approach will need the government's help to become a reality and to date the powers-that-be have shown a marked reluctance to do anything comprehensive about the needs of older workers and the problems such as suicide that flow from them. Only time will tell if they're prepared to listen.

In the meantime why not take a look at For-Employment's web site at [www.for-employment.net.au](http://www.for-employment.net.au) or write to:

For-Employment  
PO Box 229  
St Marys, NSW 1790

# the continuing British farce

by Colin Greenwood

A report on the effects of the 1997 ban on handguns in Britain was published in the July 2000 issue of the *ASJ*. Like bureaucrats in most of the world, Britain's official statisticians are slow enough to ensure that their statistics are old news when they are published and will therefore receive little media attention. Criminal Statistics for England and Wales for 1999 (actually for the fiscal year to April 6, 2000) were published at the end of December 2000 and these reinforce all the comments made in the July article.

I have updated the tables used in that article so that Australians can see the continuing effect of a handgun ban and I have included the total number of homicides and robberies to demonstrate that the use of firearms in these crimes has been low in world terms.

## Homicides

Year	Total Homicide	Total Firearms	Shotgun	Sawn-off Shotgun	Pistol
1980	621	24	11	1	8
1981	556	34	21	-	11
1982	618	46	28	7	9
1983	552	42	27	5	8
1984	619	67	34	7	21
1985	625	45	22	7	8
1986	660	51	31	6	10
1987	686	77	33	10	10
1988	645	36	19	8	7
1989	622	45	19	7	13
1990	661	60	25	8	22
1991	725	55	25	7	19
1992	681	56	20	5	28
1993	675	74	29	10	35
1994	727	66	22	14	25
1995	753	70	18	10	39
1996	679	49	9	8	30
1997	753	59	12	4	39
1998	731	49	4	7	32
1999	761	62	6	13	42

The Total Firearms column includes a small number of 'other firearms' that do not appear in the accompanying columns.

The major trend in firearm homicide has been away from other classes of firearms and towards pistols, which in the latest year

account for 67 per cent of all firearm homicides. There have been 113 pistol homicides since the ban was imposed and all must have been committed with illegally held guns. The picture for robbery is worse:

## Robberies

Year	Total Robbery	Firearms Robbery	Shotgun	Sawn-off shotgun	Pistol
1980	15,006	1149	127	181	529
1981	20,282	1893	262	292	1001
1982	22,837	2560	364	372	1440
1983	22,119	1957	269	342	1011
1984	24,890	2098	216	378	1106
1985	27,463	2539	282	399	1221
1986	30,020	2651	256	471	1196
1987	32,633	2831	280	450	1374
1988	31,437	2688	241	451	1321
1989	33,163	3390	280	524	1772
1990	36,195	3939	280	448	2233
1991	45,323	5296	381	650	2988
1992	52,894	5827	406	602	3544
1993	57,845	5918	437	593	3605
1994	60,007	4104	274	373	2390
1995	68,074	3963	235	281	2478
1996	74,035	3617	224	232	2316
1997	63,072	3029	121	178	1854
1998	66,172	2973	138	193	1814
1999	84,277	3922	138	217	2561

The Total Firearms column includes a small number of 'other firearms' that do not appear in the accompanying columns.

From 1993 a massive police effort directed at known armed robbers produced a reduction in the number of robberies involving a firearm committed in subsequent years. I have included the total robbery figure to demonstrate that even this effort had no effect on overall robbery totals, which have continued to climb. But the police effort has run out of steam. Firearm robberies are now back to their 1990 and 1995 levels but there has been a significant trend towards pistols.

Further comment would probably be superfluous, but we should reflect on the truth of that old cliché, "When guns are outlawed, only criminals will have guns".

**Video**

**NEW**

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# DON'T TOUCH IT!

**A video to encourage young people to become GUN SAFE**



'DON'T TOUCH IT!' is a video produced to educate young people in gun safety and the safe handling of firearms. The overall message is, 'If you come across a gun somewhere don't touch it, walk away, tell an adult'. The message is accompanied by a catchy tune and cartoon characters, both produced especially for this video. Prominent sporting identities Russell Mark, Carrie Quigley, Martin Faull and Phil Smyth have generously given their time to help educate and motivate youngsters.

**AVAILABLE FROM SSAA MERCHANDISE LIFT-OUT IN THE AUSTRALIAN SHOOTER**

## Olympian turned politician

**A**ustralia's own Olympic gold and silver shotgun medallist Russell Mark has recently announced that he will be running in Ballarat's Liberal Party preselection contest on March 16. If he wins the seat, which he admits will be a battle, he will be on the hustings for the Federal election later this year.

Mark's decision to tackle politics means he will be spending less time at the shooting range and while he hasn't come out and said he won't compete in Athens, he's

left his fans with that impression, saying he was "very lucky" to be in Sydney at his age of 36 and that Athens is "light years" away.

"I'll always compete at probably club or state level but you know... the time was always coming for me to seriously consider what I'll do at any Olympic level and, in all honesty...I just can't see that I would be even close to being good enough in four years time to make the team - there's just too many good guys coming through behind me."

## Australia warms up to winter biathlon

The sport of winter biathlon has nowhere near the following of many other shooting disciplines in Australia but it is gaining in popularity.

Part of the reason this sport has not seen membership numbers grow has been the restriction of firearms in Australia's snowfields, which are all in national parks such as Kosciuszko National Park. But a new concept combining roller blades and a computerised electronic target shooting system has been devised that allows participation in this event in the summer, outside of the snowfields and in areas where firearms are permitted.

The Faezor Biathlon System currently being used here in Australia is a computerised target shooting system that shoots optical pulses of light rather than bullets and meets the requirements of the Australian Biathlon Association and the Kosciuszko National Park management.

After having overcome the restrictions that hindered the success of this Olympic and World Cup sport here in Australia, the way is clear for those looking for the unique challenges offered by summer and winter biathlon.



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**International Affairs**

## Meeting the challenge - Standing together in the international arena

**T**oday, sports shooters, hunters, collectors and ammunition and firearm manufacturers are faced with a huge array of concerns. These can be related to the environment, the survival of wildlife, the safe and efficient management of our shooting ranges or the education of the wider public so that there is a positive perception about our sport.

There is no way that any one of us, or any one of our organisations, can address all of these issues alone. The only way to tackle them is by coming together for the benefit of our sport. And that's just what the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA) did way back in 1947 and more recently what it has done working with the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities (WFSA).

We are sharing resources and harnessing individuals, sporting associations, hunters, collectors, writers and researchers. We have pulled all of these people together from both Australia and from around the world and are providing a focus for their talents. In this way we have the combined strength to deal with the many issues facing the shooting fraternity.

I can tell you that we are being listened to. We have representation in the right places - both within Australia and internationally; we are breaking new ground and we are leading the way. We are able to provide the research material, at the right time and at the right place. We have representatives at the UN and other important international meetings.

The SSAA and NRA are already accredited NGOs (non-government organizations) and the WFSA has also applied to become an NGO in its own right and is scheduled to have its application heard in New York in May 2001.

Together, these groups are fighting crime by contributing to UN efforts to develop a Transnational Organised Crime Convention and

Protocol. The SSAA, along with the WFSA, has been part of creating an image among the international community by running workshops related to firearm marking, which is the central focus of the UN efforts to control illicit manufacture and trafficking in firearms by transnational organised crime.

At the same time the SSAA is ensuring that the views and the concerns of the shooting fraternity are understood. And why are we doing this?

It is because, just as we use cars and computers, take medication or read newspapers, so do the criminals. But they also use guns and when they do, it is the responsible law-abiding firearm owner who pays the price with more restrictions, more costs and increasing bureaucracy.

We have built up a highly credible reputation as experts in the area of firearms and we are seen as the crucial link between industry and international regulatory bodies.

The tasks of building a reputation and an image are not easy and one of the reasons is that individuals create a stereotype of what they perceive shooters to be. Once an image is implanted there is a recall concept that operates within our minds that is triggered when the subject is raised, making stereotypes difficult to change. Because of this, the challenge lies in connecting the right image to the sport.

Creating the right image begins with the freedom and the responsibility to pursue our sport, protect its future and cherish the heritage that has been created by those who have gone before us.

The heritage of the next generation is now in our hands, both as individuals and also as associations such as the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities. ●

# Parting shots

## The good:

When the shooting sports get a bit of positive media coverage we are pleased, but when it gets two full pages of color coverage, we are excited.

During the weekend of January 13, the *Townsville Bulletin* took a trip out to the SSAA Townsville Branch in Queensland for a tour of the range and a chance to speak with members.

The double-page article mentions the enjoyment and competition local SSAA shooters find through participation in the sport, as well as the skills they develop.

The newspaper's professional coverage of the branch will go a long way in inspiring members to continue learning and promoting the shooting sports.



## The bad:

### Welcome to Canada

Travelling overseas is always an adventure, but as the Japanese Junior Airgun Team quickly found out as they arrived in Canada for the Crosman International Airgun Grand Prix, it is not always a pleasant one.

Canada Customs officials at the Lester B Pearson International Airport detained the young shooters, seized their airguns and tried to determine if their airguns were actually 'firearms' under C-68, the Firearms Act, and if they could issue Temporary Firearms Licenses to the competitors, who are all still minors.

Canadian Institute for Legislative Action Executive Director Tony Bernardo stated, "This is exactly the kind of nonsense we have repeatedly warned about. These kids are not a threat to Canadian society. "These future Olympic competitors will hardly be doing drive-bys in Toronto with their \$3000 competition pellet guns but they'll sure remember this if Toronto succeeds in getting its Olympic bid."

Canadian Shooting Sports Communications Director Owen Nisbett says this is typical. "No-one in Canada really understands this ridiculous legislation, much less the officials charged with enforcing it.

"This sort of incident is virtually guaranteed to happen again and again until the government repeals this law. Some welcome to Canada, eh?"

## The ugly:

### Gun laws have little effect on crime in Australia

When the new, more stringent gun laws came into effect, Australians were led to believe crime in general, and more specifically firearm-related crime, would be reduced. But, according to figures in the *New Year Book Australia 2001*, gun laws have had no tangible effect on reducing crime, which supports the firearm community's claim that registered firearm owners are not the problem. The following figures and statistics offer up a telling tale:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics figures already had shown a steady fall-off in firearm-related deaths since 1980, well before the 1996 Port Arthur massacre that prompted Prime Minister John Howard's gun laws.
- Police records show Australians were more likely to be murdered, kidnapped, robbed or a victim of attempted murder in 1999 than in 1997.
- From 1994 to 1999, prisons were the largest growth area for government expenditure on justice.
- The area of corrective services received a funding boost of 7.1 per cent Australia-wide while funding for the administration of criminal trials received just two per cent more funding than five years ago.
- According to a paper written by Australian Institute of Criminology director Adam Graycar, in 1900 many Australians were incarcerated because of their mental state and "at the end of the century this continues to be the case".
- Alcohol-related crime was a common theme through the past 100 years.
- Except for the Northern Territory, there is little difference in the murder rates throughout Australia's states and territories.

# Just nibbling?



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