

# ASJ

**AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL**

*The political voice of the SSAA*

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July 2001 Vol. 3 Issue 4

Members-only insert to the *Australian Shooter*

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**- an insight into  
Australia's Kangaroo  
industry**

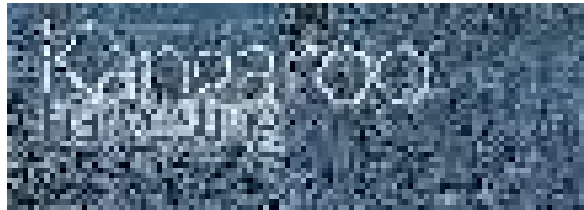
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## A word from the President

Last month, Parliamentary Defence Secretary Brendan Nelson announced that the Federal Government intends to increase funding and extend firearms training for Defence Force Cadets. While the statement evoked a predictable response from the anti-gun lobby, it also drew some disappointing reactions from Victorian and Western Australian Labor Premiers Messrs. Bracks and Gallop.

Federal funding for cadet units was originally withdrawn under Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam back in 1975 and there is still a strong anti-gun/anti-cadets sentiment running through the Federal Labor Party. On the question of private gun ownership, Federal Labor Defence spokesperson Stephen Martin declared back in 1998, "As far as I'm concerned, you separate out the defence force, the police and maybe some farmers who legitimately need guns on their property and say no one else beyond that." (*The West Australian*, 25/2/98) Clearly, Mr Martin, who may well be our next Minister for Defence, is no friend of the sporting shooter.

Similarly, there have been some well-founded rumours to the effect that a future Federal Labor Government might seek to limit private handgun ownership

exclusively to models used in Olympic-style competitions - effectively wiping out many national and international disciplines, including IPSC and silhouette. Subsequent discussions between the SSAA and senior Party officials have resulted in assurances that Labor does not intend to undermine shooters' interests - only time will tell.

The SSAA believes that introducing young people to firearms in a disciplined environment like cadets is a good way to teach both respect and responsibility. The Association has had a national competition underway for cadet units for some time and a number of state branches have made facilities available for training. The fact is hundreds of thousands of Australians have participated in the cadet system since the 1950s and gone onto become better citizens as a result. With this in mind, the Federal Labor Party's lack of support is regrettable.

Bil Shelton  
National President



The political voice of the SSAA

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# CrimTrac



now  
**ON-LINE**

**T**he Howard Government's much vaunted \$50 million law-enforcement initiative was officially launched in Canberra on June 20. The CrimTrac Agency was established by the Commonwealth on July 1, 2000 as an initiative that allows Australian police services to utilise opportunities unlocked by recent advantages in forensic science, information technology and communications.

At the request of the Minister for Justice and Customs Senator Chris Ellison, the SSAA was present at the official opening so questions about issues that may concern firearm owners could be asked.

Firearm owners from all disciplines have often raised concerns about the possibility that their licensing and firearm details would be placed on the same database as paedophiles and other criminals. We now know that is not the case.

"There is no separate database. CrimTrac is an interface that allows existing firearm information held by state registries to be accessed by each other," said the CEO of CrimTrac, Mr Jonathan Mobbs, in replying to a question from SSAA's Gary Fleetwood concerning the collection of firearm and owner details by the Federal Government. This answer is supported by comments made in 1998 by the then Justice Minister Amanda Van-



stone<sup>1</sup> when she said, "CrimTrac was the vehicle used for accessing existing databases, [it is], not a central database."

While we will continue to be cautious about the collection and storage of information by government agencies, the SSAA supports the uniformed police officer's requirement to have speedy access to information that will assist in quickly identifying the criminal element that is

now more mobile than ever before.

Continuing to promote a flawed perception of CrimTrac would contradict the oft-used cry of the sporting shooter that we are 'law abiding'.

CrimTrac web site:  
[www.crimtrac.gov.au](http://www.crimtrac.gov.au)  
E-mail: [crimtrac@crimtrac.gov.au](mailto:crimtrac@crimtrac.gov.au)

<sup>(1)</sup> *Queensland Times* 30/9/98 Page 9

# Face to Face

## Sports shooting groups meet the Federal Government

**T**he SSAA and representatives of other major shooting organisations met with the Minister for Justice and Customs Senator Chris Ellison on June 19, 2001 in Canberra. The meeting was arranged by the Federal Member for Wannon (Vic) David Hawker, a keen field shooter and firearm owner. David's ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

The discussion focused on issues that were of concern to firearm owners who are still dealing with some of the unintended consequences of the rushed implementation of firearm legislation during 1996 and the apparent desire of some state police to deliver further restrictions by the 'policy' method.

Field and Game (F&G) raised the issue of the availability of Category C firearms to its members. The example was given whereby an F&G member, who was also an ACTA member, was denied access to a Category C shotgun, but could obtain one if he used his ACTA membership. Same person, same licence, different outcome - an outcome that the Minister acknowledged as being strange.

The ongoing debate about the 28-day waiting period was raised by the SSAA. Minister Ellison was advised that now that CrimTrac was on-line, there should be no reason for a 28-day waiting period to exist. The original purpose was to allow an interstate check of a person's details when applying for a firearm licence or to obtain a first-time or subsequent



SSAA National President Bill Shelton with Minister for Justice Senator Chris Ellison reflecting upon comments made by others present.

firearm. "Technology has caught up and surpassed outdated practices," said SSAA President Bill Shelton. "Surely if it takes a police officer 28 days to enter an applicant's name, hit the 'enter' key and then review the information on the screen, then the system needs a revamp."

The topics of uniformity of gun laws across Australia and the acceptance of firearm licences that have been issued from outside a state were thoroughly reviewed. The shipment of

firearms for the purpose of interstate and overseas competition received considerable mention, along with the proposed 'formula' for those dealers who wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to apply for an increase in the number of handguns they wish to import. It was suggested that if, in fact, the 'formula' was now agreed upon, then Customs should make every effort to send firearm dealers across the country notification of that fact.

The introduction of firearm training into the cadet system created uniform agreement from those present about the opportunity to instil into our young self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Minister Ellison, an ex-reserve soldier and one-time school cadet, believes in the advantages of such a liaison with objects that demand respect.

Lastly, the issue of a National Firearms Consultative Committee was raised by the SSAA. Such a group, comprising of firearm groups and others with an interest in the matter, could meet and deliver an agreed position on issues that may arise concerning the ownership of firearms in this country. That idea did not find outright objection by the Minister and we await some feedback on this point and some of the issues raised during what was a great opportunity to jointly represent the interests of shooters from all disciplines. ●



A sight that brings pleasure to all firearm owners - major organisations putting up a united front.

# Do you reload?

# YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

The future of the ADI facility at Mulwala is uncertain. Australia's only defence propellant plant is the subject of a Defence Department submission to Federal Cabinet concerning the operational viability of the 60-year-old establishment.

If the Mulwala facility is closed it will have a huge impact on those sporting shooters who reload and use the ADI range of powders.

In this election year you need to contact the Minister for Defence and advise him of your concerns about the possible closure of Mulwala.

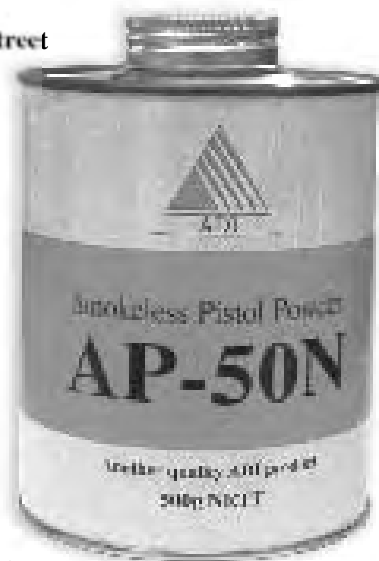


**The Hon Peter Reith MP**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Parliament House**  
**Canberra ACT 2600**  
**Tel: (02) 6277 7800**  
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**Hastings Office:**  
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**Hastings Vic 3915**

**Postal Address:**  
**PO Box 274**  
**Hastings Vic 3915**  
**Tel: (03) 5979 3188**  
**Fax: (03) 5979 3034**



In your letter please make reference to:

- The negative impact on your chosen sporting pastime.
- The strategic requirement for Australia to have the capacity to manufacture its own range of military propellant and ammunition.
- The effect upon the employment of some 351 people at Mulwala and 300 at Benalla.

More information at <http://www.ssaa.org.au/adi.html> or ring Gary Fleetwood on 0407 616 218.



**National  
 Dealers  
 & Traders  
 Council**



# The Ban(e) of my Life

by Col Allison

**Let's get it in perspective. One corrupt politician doesn't mean all polities are crooks who should be banned (though some may debate this point).**

**O**ne gunman who runs amok in a city doesn't mean every legitimate gun owner is a 'nutter' just waiting to cause harm. And a set of bull-bars that kill an errant pedestrian doesn't automatically mean all bull-bars are potential killers and should be banned. I'm thoroughly sick of the illogical push to ban things - like women's boxing. If women want to belt themselves stupid, so be it. It's their call. They're not hurting me.

Why do some intolerant people insist on legislation to take the risk out of everything, making our world as bland as theirs? To me, banning is the shallow-thinker's response to every supposed problem of mankind; it's the political mantra of a Third-World despot or an Aussie axe-grinder: Ban it! Ban it!

Fireworks injured a few kids when I was in knee-pants. When a mate lost an eye in a skyrocket duel on cracker night, his parents didn't call for a fireworks ban. Instead, they urged other parents to better supervise their kids. They realised the ultimate truth: the cracker wasn't a weapon, per se; it was only dangerous when used thoughtlessly. (The gun analogy: the nut behind the butt.)

Our great leaders disagreed, of course. Ultimately, there was the inevitable ban, saving the great unwashed from their own ineptitude. Cracker night fizzed out. One of the great social icons post-war - fireworks for big and small kids alike around the suburban backyard bonfire - blown away by another arrogant ban.

It's the same response to so many issues. Everyone suffers by a ban for the idiotic, senseless actions of a few. Look at Martin Bryant and the impact his actions had on so many lives in Tasmania and beyond. The spin-off is still being felt in the world of Nimrod, where a few hundred thousand of us sporting shooters live under a cloud of suspicion. The fire-arm bans and their \$500 million tag won't stop another Bryant coming along, nor will they stop the ongoing push by anti-gunners to have city-slicker gun owners from storing their weapons en masse in central repositories.

Now, it's the anti-bull-bar push. Inner city trendies and thought-police in Sydney who believe the outback is French Forest (a leafy North Shore suburb) want bull-bars removed from cars in city garages. Hey, I live in the city and I own a four-wheel drive. Have for yonks. 'The Brute', as my wife calls the Nissan, carries a big bull-bar that holds my recovery winch and spotlights and my CB aerial. It keeps unwary critters on their side of my windscreen - like the big black boar that wrecked the front end of my sedan outside Batemans Bay (southern NSW) a few years back or the big red 'roo that joined my old man in his Holden at Bourke one time, slashing, kicking and hissing alarmingly until Dad crashed the car and bailed out.

It may surprise those who would ban bull-bars, but many four-wheelers are actually driven from the Big Smoke on the weekends. Some of us go outdoors, often. The 'banning kind' didn't think of that, did they? Or they don't give a damn. But thousands of us city-based drivers of bull-bar-laden four-wheel drives have and do and we're not pulling our bars off without a political fight. ●

**Why do some intolerant people insist on legislation to take the risk out of everything, making our world as bland as theirs?**



Photos used with permission of KIAA

**T**here are a number of different species of kangaroos, including the following five most commonly celled kangaroos: the eastern grey, western grey, red, wallaroo/euro and whiptail wallaby, all of which are protected species and, as such, cannot be hunted by just anyone. Special skills, courses and equipment are required in order to become a licensed kangaroo harvester, of which there are more than 1500 in Australia. In 2000, NSW had about 550 licensed harvesters, Queensland 1000 and SA about 100 to 150 harvesters.

#### **Becoming a Kangaroo Harvester**

Becoming a licensed kangaroo harvester is an arduous task and the requirements vary depending on the state/territory and whether the kangaroo is harvested for human or animal consumption. The meat from a kangaroo intended for animal consumption must be processed in a separate facility from meat intended for human consumption. Meat intended for animals

cannot be upgraded to human consumption but meat intended for humans can be downgraded to serve as animal food.

There are two levels of registration needed for any harvester: meat hygiene and wildlife. Meat hygiene for human consumption is governed nationally by SCARM 57 - The Australian Standard for Hygienic Production of Game Meat for Human Consumption. The detailed document covers rules and regulations for the harvesting and transport of game animal carcasses; construction, equipment and maintenance of field depots; operation of field depots and much more.

Harvesters must be trained and accredited by the individual state authorities and while rules vary, all states/territories require

that harvesters complete a TAFE accredited course and pass a test involving training in field processing and meat hygiene, the controlling regulations and animal welfare considerations, including minimal firearm calibres and velocities and animal identification.

Equipment used in harvesting must comply with the standards set by the Meat Hygiene Authority. For example, a harvester's vehicle must be washable and corrosion resistant, have a hand-wash and sanitisation facility and a supply of drinkable water.

The firearm skills of a potential harvester are also tested, as by law kangaroos must be headshot. The ability to administer a humane kill is not only a statutory requirement in

**Becoming a licensed kangaroo harvester is an arduous task and the requirements vary depending on the state/territory and whether the kangaroo is harvested for human or animal consumption.**





each state/territory but it is also important in the way the public perceives the industry.

Once shot, kangaroos must immediately be bled and eviscerated. They must then be hung and placed in a field chiller that is capable of reducing the temperature of the carcass to seven degrees Centigrade in less than 24 hours.

The meat hygiene registration for animal consumption is similar but not quite as onerous.

To obtain wildlife registration a shooter must be registered as a licensed kangaroo harvester with their state's National Parks and Wildlife Service and be endorsed by the property owners of the land on which they plan to harvest.

In NSW, shooters must hold a current firearms licence and must complete a firearms accreditation and TAFE course (health and hygiene) in order to become a kangaroo harvester. Both courses were developed during 1997 and early 1998 in cooperation with the kangaroo industry. These days, similar standards exist in all



states. Often, new entrants learn some of the necessary skills by working with experienced professionals.

Once a shooter is a licensed harvester, he is not given free rein on the number of kangaroos he is allowed to shoot. According to John Kelly of the Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA), "each state/territory conducts an annual aerial survey of the population, estimates changes according to seasonal conditions and applies to the Commonwealth for a quota, generally 10 to

15 per cent of the population".

In order for kangaroo harvesting to be an effective means of population management, the actual number of kangaroos taken must be strictly controlled. Each year the government sets conservative quotas that limit the number of kangaroos that can be shot. The quotas are set after taking into consideration the following information<sup>1</sup>:

- The current estimates of population, (Population sizes are estimated by ground and aerial surveys. They must also be monitored by the data collected by harvesters.),
- Trends in population,
- Any recent changes to conditions (eg, droughts, floods) that might affect population sizes.

Once the application is approved, sequentially numbered plastic lockable tags are printed and sold to harvesters. A tag must be attached to each kangaroo that is shot and the species, sex, weight and date and location of the kangaroo harvested must be recorded and submitted monthly to the



**Kangaroo  
meat is a  
healthy  
alternative to  
other red  
meats.**

state authority.

Kangaroo harvesting is limited to leasehold and freehold land that is used for primary production and occurs in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. Kangaroo harvesting is not permitted in national parks, state forests or conservation reserves, which make up roughly 68 million hectares (8.9 per cent) throughout Australia.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to what some animal rights groups might propagate, harvesting is not cruel. A four-year investigation of the harvesting industry by a Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare during the 1980s concluded that, "There is no doubt that the shooting of kangaroos by professional shooters is the most humane way of killing kangaroos" (p.176).

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals also investigated the culling of kangaroos and stated in its 1985 report, The incidence of cruelty to kangaroos, that, "...if achieved correctly, kangaroo

culling is considered to be one of the most humane forms of animal slaughter" (p.82).

#### **Why Kangaroos are Shot**

To ensure a prosperous agricultural area, a number of elements must be controlled and often one of those elements is the kangaroo. Because the kangaroo has no natural predators within Australia, they can multiply quite rapidly and reach plague proportions. In that capacity, the kangaroo can be a serious threat to a managed agricultural system.

The main reason the kangaroo harvesting industry is accepted throughout Australia is because, as well as being a national treasure, kangaroos are also considered pests. Left uncontrolled, they not only do damage to the land, but to the kangaroo population itself.

Joshua Gilroy, Kangaroo Management manager in NSW, said kangaroos are shot with very specific objectives in mind. The NSW Kangaroo Management Program strives to:

1. Maintain viable populations of red,

western, grey and eastern grey kangaroos and wallaroos throughout their natural range;

2. Minimise the adverse effects that certain densities of these four species may have on rangelands, on pastoral and agricultural production and other land uses;

3. Maintain populations in these areas at levels that will not, in the long term, adversely affect these habitats;

4. Where possible, manage the species as a renewable resource, providing conservation of the species is not compromised.

"How effectively the management program achieves each of these four aims is debated constantly," said Mr Gilroy. "Effectively, the management program will not compromise maintenance of viable populations while achieving (to varying degrees) aims two, three and four."

According to Mr Gilroy, the kangaroo industry rarely (only once or twice each decade) harvests the full commercial quota set annually by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Numbers for commercial harvesting are dictated by demand and weather conditions (eg, widespread flooding rains of 1998 and 2000).

To get the best possible results from an area, land managers must take into consideration the Total Grazing Pressure (TGP) of that specific area. The TGP is the number and needs of all grazing animals, including sheep, termites, kangaroos, feral goats and other grazing species. An uncontrolled TGP could mean the loss of biodiversity.

According to the KIAA, kangaroos typically represent about 30 per cent of the TGP and the only way to effectively control their numbers is by harvesting.

## **Nutritional Composition of Kangaroo Meat**

Meat	Protein	Fat	Kilojoules (per 100g)	Cholesterol (mg/100g)	Iron (mg/100g)
Kangaroo	24	1-3	500	56	2.6
Lean Lamb	22	2-7	530	66	1.8
Lean Beef	22	2-5	500	67	3.5
Lean Pork	23	1-3	440	50	1.0
Lean Chicken	23	2	470	50	0.6
Rabbit	22	2-4	520	70	1.0

As a pest, the kangaroo must be controlled for the sake of its own population and the land. As a natural resource, the kangaroo must be treasured and managed. Properly managed, the kangaroo can serve a number of purposes. The meat, which is a healthy alternative to other red meats, is a valuable food source and the hide is a valuable commodity, used for shoes, belts, gloves, leather clothing and sporting equipment. The strength-to-weight ratio of kangaroo leather as compared to other types of leather makes it suitable for many uses.



Currently in NSW and SA, all kangaroos are harvested as full carcasses, with the skins attached. Queensland and WA are the only

states/territories where kangaroos can be harvested for skins only. Management programs throughout Australia try to maximise the potential of shot kangaroos, but in Queensland and Western Australia, where large distances between the harvesting areas, higher temperatures and lower human population densities make harvesting for meat more difficult, regulations such as those in SA and NSW won't be implemented unless the price of kangaroo meat rises significantly.<sup>3</sup>

#### Public Perception

The culling of kangaroos and the consumption of kangaroo meat is becoming more and more acceptable but it is obvious that additional information needs to be generated in order to change the perceptions of the misinformed. For example, in NSW most people are unaware of the vast numbers of kangaroos and the procedures used to effectively

manage the population. Mr Gilroy pointed out that a survey of the kangaroo population in 2000 estimated that there were 7.6 million kangaroos in the western 75 per cent of NSW, which is where most of the harvesting takes place. Those numbers clearly show that there is room and a need for the harvesting of the species.

#### Media Involvement

Positive media coverage of kangaroo harvesting will go a long way in changing people's perception of the industry. KIAA's John Kelly said that in 1996, 'roo hops off shelf' was an example of a typical newspaper headline about the kangaroo harvesting industry. However, through years of lobbying, the KIAA has been able to average positive weekly mainstream media for the past four years and has seen positive coverage on programs such as 'A Current Affair' and in magazines like the *Financial Review*.

By increasing this type of exposure, both the industry and the kangaroo population will benefit.

For more information on the kangaroo harvesting industry, contact:

Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia, Inc  
 PO Box 447  
 Woden, ACT 2606  
 Ph: 03 6326 8639  
 Fax: 03 6326 2790  
 Web site: [www.kangaroo-industry.asn.au](http://www.kangaroo-industry.asn.au)

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Environment Australia - Biodiversity Group (<http://www.environment.gov.au/bg/plants/wildlife/kangharv.htm>)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Overview of Background Information for Kangaroo Management - by Tony Pople and Gordon Grigg, revised 1999, Chapter 7.

# Too many kangaroos

Early this year *The Advertiser* reported on the environmental damage to pastoral leases and national parks by kangaroos. The problem stems from the unharvested quota, with less than 50 per cent of the tagging quota being harvested.

The destruction being sustained by the kangaroos has caused the Federation to vote on a review of the current management system.

In order for kangaroo harvesting to be an effective means of population management, the actual number of kangaroos taken must be strictly controlled.

# Nowhere to

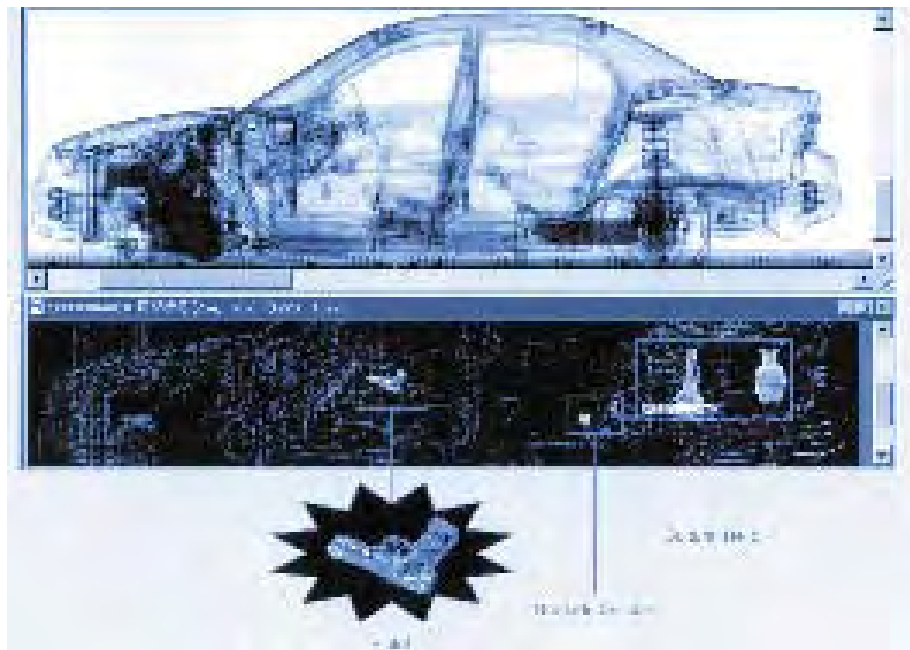
# hide Customs gets an upgrade

In May, Customs purchased two state-of-the-art cargo container X-ray machines for \$11 million. The machines, which will allow Customs to screen imported goods at the wharf more quickly and effectively, reduce the need to physically handle items. They also give Customs the ability to detect illegal and prohibited goods such as illicit drugs and organic matter such as livestock and plants.

With 1.6 million containers arriving in Australia each year, the need to reduce inspection time without compromising the quality of the inspection was paramount. The new technology provides for both. A large 12-metre container can be X-rayed in ten minutes, whereas without the machines, a similar sized container took anywhere from a few hours to eight days to be inspected, depending on the goods involved. Used in conjunction with Customs electronic profiling capabilities, the X-rays will allow up to 100 physical inspections to be made each day.

"The new units will have the added benefit of making it even more difficult to conceal prohibited and illicit goods in cargo, to misreport consignments, evade revenue payments and commit fraud," said Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Chris Ellison.

Located at Australia's two major ports in Sydney and Melbourne, the units will also assist Custom officials in meeting the



increased inspection measures included in the 2001-02 Budget in an attempt to prevent the Foot and Mouth Disease from entering Australia.

The possibility of installing similar equipment at Australia's other major ports is being considered in Customs' long-term planning.

In addition to the installation of this tech-

nology, an additional \$6 million will be invested in site development, staffing and training and equipment maintenance.

According to Senator Ellison, the new technology, which is expected to be operational in 2002, was funded through the Howard Government's Tough on Drugs Strategy. ●

## Opening

## the lines of communication

SSAA Special Projects met with the Police Federation of Australia in Melbourne on June 13, 2001 to discuss the private ownership of handguns and recent comments in the media, including the incident in Martin Place in Sydney.

All representatives seemed to respond positively to the message delivered by Special Projects Director Gary Fleetwood, which was that handguns owned by licensed club members were not the cause

of the recent increase in handgun-related crime.

The SSAA left the meeting, which was chaired by Federation president Peter Alexander (SA), confident that a line of communication had been created between the 'cop on the street' and the sporting shooter.

If you have any questions about this meeting ring Gary Fleetwood on 0407 616218.

## What can we do?

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.

### Liberal Party Member Quotes on Firearm/Crime Issues

“One of the high points of the Howard Government’s first term in office was successfully tackling the difficult and complex problem of uniform national gun laws.”

Federal Attorney-General Daryl Williams - *Illawarra Mercury*, NSW - 4/6/99

“This Government will not sponsor changes to the law based on knee-jerk reactions to isolated and unrepresentative incidents.”

South Australia Attorney-General Trevor Griffin - Report to State Parliament - 28/10/98

“There is no common legislation as such, nor is there a ‘standard national firearms legislative approach’. It is up to each state and territory government to decide whether to incorporate the APMC agreements into existing legislation or to draft new legislation based upon the agreements.”

Federal Attorney-General Daryl Williams - 12/2/97  
Federal Hansard

On repealing regulations in the Defence Act concerning rifle clubs -

“Although this provision is still in force, it is obsolete and is going to be repealed.”

Defence Minister Ian McLachlan - *Sydney Morning Herald* - 15/1/97

“The Coalition believes that the long-standing association between the Defence Forces (particularly the Army) and rifle clubs and associations should be preserved.”

Coalition Policy on gun laws - October 1995 - John Howard letter to John Tingle

“Gun control in the domestic Australian context is a matter for national and state/territory jurisdictions and does not fall within the purview of any of Australia’s international treaty obligations.”

Alexander Downer - Minister for Foreign Affairs - Letter to NSW MP Garry Nehl

Although I am only 15 years old, I have been shooting several times under my junior permit. I believe the media is portraying all law-abiding firearm owners as irresponsible public menaces, which you and I know they are not. Every time you read or hear a news article regarding a firearm-related incident, it portrays firearms as extremely dangerous ‘weapons’, which are used to murder. Illegally imported firearms cause the majority of incidents, not law-abiding firearm holders, who, incidentally, should be given a fair go to enjoy their sport.

The 1996 Howard gun buy-back scheme was one of the largest wastes of taxpayer money. All Mr Howard succeeded in achieving was disarming law-abiding shooters and destroying some of Australia’s valuable heritage. The buy-back scheme was aimed to reduce the number of shootings, except it was aimed at the wrong section of the firearm owning public. A high-ranking police official has told the media the same thing, but, as you know, the media often has a way of twisting the facts.

Associations like the SSAA are doing all they can to protect our sport, but they require more support to make an even bigger difference. So what can we do? We can give the SSAA our full support. We can also get more people interested in the sport, get them to support the SSAA and in turn get them to tell more people.

**Brendan, Carlingford, NSW**

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

## SA Firearms Amnesty

The South Australian Registrar of Firearms has declared a Firearms Amnesty between June 20 and midnight September 19, 2001.

The purpose of the Amnesty is to remove unwanted and illegal firearms, firearm parts, fittings, mechanisms and ammunition from the community. Anyone voluntarily surrendering such items during the Amnesty period will not be prosecuted.

For additional information, inquire at any police station or contact the Firearms Branch Hotline:

Phone: 08 8204 2495  
Fax: 08 8204 2314  
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## Woodgate Morgan Solicitors



Specialists in firearms and prohibited firearms legislation.  
Wide field of technical knowledge and experience.

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# ASJ Letters

## From the Apple Isle...

On the evening of May 7, 2001, 31 Tasmanian shooters attended a meeting with the SSAA's Special Projects Executive Director Gary Fleetwood.

Gary's background in firearms is extensive. An ex-sergeant of police in South Australia, he was also in charge of a firearms registry in Papua New Guinea for about five years. His current position has him overseeing a whole range of projects - such as liaising with the membership better to make sure they have co-ordinated efforts, tackling political issues or representing the Association at public events, as was the case at the Ag Fest held in Hobart. As special projects executive director, Gary's duties can, and often do, encompass a wide range of issues.

Because of his position, Gary was able to provide a general view of what is going on in the world of lobbying, counter lobbying and the fight to prevent further erosion of the ability to own firearms.

Basing his conviction on the knowledge gained in the years since 1996, he believes that we must protect what we still have and be willing to fight for it. The Gun Control Coalition is not going to go away.

During the meeting, Gary gave an overview of the allocation and use of funds obtained through member subscriptions, discussing how funds are spent, audited and returned, to some degree, to the state of origin in proportion to the number of members. He also addressed the amount of funding used for lobbying and the cost of producing the magazine.

The SSAA is the most actively involved organisation in lobbying and protecting the interests of shooters. Before this coming election, Gary suggests that members approach their local party members and ask where they stand.

Here are some tips on how to write to a politician:

- Send hand-written letters, as they typically get more attention.
- Be polite and keep it short and simple. Try to keep to one page, get to the point and politely but firmly demand an answer.
- Remember that the last part of a letter is usually the first read.

One aspect that really requires a lot of attention is the need to improve the image of shooters. George, with a gut full of grog, leaning on the pub bench cursing a particular politician or carrying on about the Browning A5 he had to surrender, is bad news. Extremist statements and threats don't help the cause and can be used by the opposing side to highlight the supposed dangerous nature of the shooting community. Once heard by the media, these types of comments would be used repeatedly.

Regarding the *Australian Shooter*, there are a number of changes on the way: changes such as getting other companies to advertise, including better articles and better writers and utilising more natural and interesting photos.

The meeting ended with an invitation to join Gary's e-mail or fax list, which provide speedy access to the latest gun-related news and, if required, calls for action to fend off any threat to the shooting community.

Gary Fleetwood can be contacted on:

0407 616 218  
PO Box 762  
Kent Town, SA 5071  
E-mail: gf@ssaa.org.au

**Vince Merlo, Hobart, Tasmania**

## Service with a smile

In reference to the letter sent to you by Andrew Scali in the May ASJ titled 'Try Being Polite', I would like to reiterate the sentiment of his letter in regards to the service he has received while visiting shooting outlets.

I have been employed with a major retailer for some 13 years and have considerable experience in dealing with the public and the demands made by customers within retail. The backbone of retail is the customer; without them I would not have a career, a house, a car and the finances to continue my sporting interest, which is shooting.

My first experience in looking to buy a firearm should have been an exciting learning experience, with my father at my side giving me advice as to what type of firearm to buy and what would be a good deal for a first-time shooter. While with my father I received thorough customer service, which we were both happy with. However, on my return to the gun shop on my own, I must say the experience left something to be desired. I was not acknowledged and when I did ask for help I was ignored. When I finally was noticed, the answers I was given were non-committal and non-informative. This experience nearly put me off entering this great recreational sport. I thought if this was the type of response I got from the dealers, what sort of a response would I receive at the gun club from

fellow shooters?

I am glad to say that I stuck with it, but I did not return to that gun shop. In fact, I did not buy my firearm through any gun shop. I instead purchased privately and received the best advice and the best service. In this instance, the dealer's lack of customer service skills and unwillingness to give advice cost him the sale of not only my firearm but also of a reloading press, ammunition, reloading components, etc, which so far add up to more than \$9000 during the past five years. Luckily, I have found another dealer just an hour's drive from home who wants to provide the service I desire.

Lastly, to that dealer that lost my sale, you must have lost a few more because you closed your doors a while ago. Why?

If this sport is to survive we need all the support we can get, from the suppliers of firearms to keep making them, the distributors to distribute them, the gun shop owners to keep selling them and shooters like me who will continue to buy them.

Good advice, correct advice and a friendly smile will go a long way in any business and I'm sure any gun dealer will tell you, 'business isn't what it used to be'.

**Francis Shaw, Caboolture, QLD**

# Parting shots

## The good:

### NSW gets tough on criminals

In May NSW Premier Bob Carr introduced new laws to the NSW Parliament that gives tougher sentences to criminals, more power to police in Cabramatta and tougher laws for crimes with guns.

The new Law and Order Bill, which targets the trade in illegal firearms and their use in drug-related activity, includes the following measures:

- Increasing the penalty for illegal possession of a prohibited firearm from ten to 14 years' goal.
- Making it illegal to supply or take part in the supply of firearms to any person not authorised to use firearms (This offence will carry a 14-year prison sentence.)
- Making it illegal for a licensed firearms dealer to wilfully record false details in firearms transactions. (This will carry a 14-year gaol term.)
- Making it illegal for an eligible person to obtain a licence to act as a front for an illegal firearms dealer. (This offence will carry a 14-year gaol term.)
- Making it illegal to conspire to traffic illegal firearms, even if such conspiring takes place outside NSW.
- Giving police the power to demand all firearms and parts for inspection from suspected arms dealers.
- Requiring the compulsory registration of firearms frames to curb the trade in the trafficking of illegal firearm parts.

"I'm not going to see a condition of lawlessness in this state with people, criminals, taking it for granted they can use handguns," said Mr Carr. "If they've got a handgun and it's found on them, bang, in gaol, 14 years. That's how tough our law is getting.

"Given the importance of these bills, I want the NSW Parliament to pass them this session."

## The bad:

### Gun Control Australia says teaching teenagers 'responsibility' is dangerous

In a move supported by the SSAA, the Federal Government has planned to provide military training to young men and women within the cadet system. Dr Brendan Nelson, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, is also in favour of the plan, saying that teaching teenagers how to fire military weapons was a constructive move that gave them new skills, self-discipline and improved concentration.

Of no surprise to the SSAA was the response to this plan from Gun Control Australia's (GCA) president John Crook, who said giving teenagers guns was risky, as it would create a dangerous mix of young men and weapons at a fragile time in their lives.

SSAA (WA) president Paul Peake has heard this type of rubbish from John Crook before and said that he didn't believe there was any evidence to support GCA's statements. Giving a teenager a gun will not turn him into a mindless killer.

"I think the experiences of many, many thousands of Australians over the years has proven to be completely the opposite...for the overwhelming majority of young people who participate in cadets, it's been a very positive experience," said Paul.

## The ugly:



### Gun control group targets unwitting public

Using the fifth anniversary of the Port Arthur mass murder to launch their annual 'celebration' of anti-gun drivel, the New South Wales Coalition for Gun Control upset many non-aligned members of the public when they used a large television screen to display a crosshair superimposed on images of people using the thoroughfare in Martin Place.

# NATIONAL FIREARM PURCHASE DAY



Buy a pistol, shotgun or rifle  
**July 9, 2001**

A GROUP of people from FreeRepublic.com in the USA have organised a National Firearms Purchase Day on July 9, 2001 in an effort to counter Gun Burning Day, which was called for by the Preparatory Committee of the UN Conference on Small Weapons. The UN's 'day of destruction' is also scheduled for July 9, 2001 - the first day of the conference.

So, if you're opposed to the UN's initiative and you've had your eye on a pistol, rifle or shotgun, make plans to purchase it on July 9.

National Firearm Purchase Day is also the perfect day to buy ammunition or firearm supplies or take a trip out to the range for a little target practice.

Whatever you do, don't let July 9 go by without showing your support for the legitimate firearm fraternity.

For more information, see:

<http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3b172e1533f1.htm>  
or [www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org)

## HANDGUNS - MEMBER SURVEY

YOU MAY be aware of recent media coverage concerning the subject of semi-automatic handguns and Olympic competition. The SSAA has recently had discussions with federal and state politicians from the two major parties on this subject, and to assist us in future meetings about this subject we need you to fill in the form below and send to:

Category H Survey  
PO Box 762  
Kent Town SA 5071

Your assistance will enable us to accurately communicate our position to law-makers.

Feel free to photocopy and circulate this form amongst other pistol owners and ask them to participate. There is no need to identify yourself. Concerned at giving away information? Let us say you have more to fear from not participating in establishing accurate information for use by those who represent your ability to own and use handguns. If you need further information, contact Gary Fleetwood on mobile 0407 616 218.

What state do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of SSAA? \_\_\_\_\_

How many handguns do you own? \_\_\_\_\_

How many are centrefire semi-automatic? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of your handguns qualify for Olympic competition?\*

Web address for handgun specs is:  
[www.issf-shooting.org/Rules/special\\_for\\_pistol.html](http://www.issf-shooting.org/Rules/special_for_pistol.html)  
No Olympic match allows centrefire pistols.



E-mail your answers to:  
[gf@ssaa.org.au](mailto:gf@ssaa.org.au)

or

fax this form to 08 8272 2499  
Survey ends August 31, 2001