

ASJ

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

The political voice of the SSAA

**Tougher
penalties
for gun
trafficking**



**Rethink
on British
handgun ban**

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The political voice of the SSAA

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A word from the President

By now, most members would be aware of the SSAA's national 'Secure your gun - Secure your sport' campaign, which is aimed at encouraging shooters to lock up their firearms when not in use. To date, the response from the public, the media and governments around the country has been very positive. However, the Association has come in for some criticism from a small minority who see any attempt to promote safer storage as an attack on their rights. The fact is, the more guns that are stolen, the stronger the anti-gun lobby's case that people should not be allowed to keep firearms in their homes. A number of recent incidents in Queensland and South Australia have highlighted the importance of not leaving firearms unattended in vehicles. While the legal specifications on just how guns are to be secured when transported vary somewhat between jurisdictions, the best approach is to ensure that you never leave firearms in the car -

full stop. If you need to do some shopping after a trip to the range, make sure you drop the guns off at home first. Alternatively, stay with them in the vehicle while someone else goes into the store. When you're at the range make sure you take all of the firearms out of the vehicle.

Everyone who owns a firearm has a responsibility to ensure that it is properly secured. By making it harder for the thieves you are helping to protect the future security of our sport.

Bill Shelton
National President

**WE WANT
YOUR
GUNS**

Don't hand in or sell off your special firearms to just anyone. Help preserve Australia's firearms heritage and donate them to the SSAA National Firearms Museum for all firearm enthusiasts to see. Contact the SSAA National Secretary Roy Smith on 02 9833 9444.

Secure your gun Secure your sport

A message from SSAA National President Bill Shelton

It is up to you to protect your firearms from falling into the wrong hands - hands that could damage the reputation of other firearm owners who do the right thing.

Besides suffering heavy penalties for failing to secure your firearms, you will also give gun prohibitionists an opportunity to promote their cause.

Our ability to continue in the shooting sports relies upon our ability to be responsible for the security of our firearms in accordance with our respective state legislation.

I ask that you spread this important safety message to your shooting friends.

For information on correct firearm storage, contact your local SSAA organisation or local police.

Police firearm registry contact details

ACT 02 6245 7405 actfirearmsregistry@afp.gov.au www.afp.gov.au	SA 08 8204 2495 firearms@senet.com.au www.sapolice.sa.gov.au
NSW 1300 362 562 firearmsenq@police.nsw.gov.au www.nsw.police.gov.au	TAS 03 6230 2720 firearms@police.tas.gov.au www.police.tas.gov.au
NT 08 8922 3543 pfes.firearms@pfes.nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/pls	VIC 03 9247 3142 firearmsregistry@police.vic.gov.au www.police.vic.gov.au
QLD 07 3364 4416 weaponslicensing@police.qld.gov.au www.police.qld.gov.au	WA 08 9223 7000 firearms.branch@police.wa.gov.au www.police.wa.gov.au/firearms

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PROMOTING GUN SAFETY

The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia Inc.



www.ssaa.org.au



SSAA National President Bill Shelton

For Immediate Release

Canadian News Release

October 10, 2002

Handguns were used in 64% of firearms homicides - 74% weren't registered. How can this be? The RCMP has been registering handguns since 1934.

Ottawa - The homicide statistics for 2001 have just been published by Statistics Canada and once again they prove the absolute futility of registering guns as a policy for reducing the number of murders - especially firearms homicides. "Every year the statistics prove the same thing and every year the Liberals just bury their heads a little deeper in the sand," said Garry Breitkreuz, the Official Opposition's critic for firearms and property rights. "This year's statistics are particularly revealing and must even be hard for the Justice Minister to ignore." Here are a few of the more revealing facts from the Statistics Canada report, 'Homicide in Canada, 2001':

1. Of the 554 homicides in Canada in 2001, 31% were stabbed to death, 31% were shot to death and 22% were beaten to death. "Trying to register all the firearms in Canada doesn't make any more sense than trying to register all the knives and baseball bats," said Breitkreuz.
2. Of the 171 firearms homicides in 2001, 64% were committed with handguns that the RCMP has been registering for the last 68 years, 6% were committed with firearms that are completely prohibited and 27% were committed with a rifle or shotgun.
3. Since 1991, handgun use in homicides has steadily increased from 49.8% to 64.3% in 2001. Over the same period homicides committed with rifles and shotguns have steadily decreased from 38% to 26.9%. "The Criminal Code has required the mandatory registration of handguns since 1934 and registration of rifles and shotguns doesn't become mandatory until January 1, 2003. Why can't Liberal

MPs see what's wrong with this picture?" asked Breitkreuz. 4. Between 1997 and 2001, 74% of the handguns recovered from the scenes of 143 homicides were not registered. "Liberal MPs must ask themselves two questions:

- (1) Why were so many handguns not registered after 68 years of trying to register them, and
- (2) Why didn't laying a piece of paper (a registration certificate) beside these handguns prevent 37 (26%) of these murders?

Based on this statistic alone it defies all logic why the Liberals continue to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars trying to register 16 million rifles and shotguns," stated Breitkreuz. The 2001 Homicide Report exposed more interesting facts:

- 65% of persons accused of homicide had a Canadian criminal record and 58% of these had previously been convicted of violent crimes.
- 51% of homicide victims also had a criminal record - 54% of them had previously been convicted of a violent crime.
- 75% of accused persons and 56% of all homicide victims had consumed alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the murder.
- Between 1998 and 2001, the average of gang-related homicides increased to 10.5% of all homicides.
- While Aboriginal people account for approximately 3% of the population, they comprised 25% of all persons accused of committing homicide and 15% of all homicide victims.
- 14% of persons accused of murder were reported to have a psychological disorder.

"Once again, Statistics Canada has proven that the Liberals are way off target by forcing completely innocent people to register their firearms. The real targets are known criminals, gangsters or the mentally disturbed - not farmers, hunters, target shooters and collectors!" concluded Breitkreuz.

Renewal reminder for Qld firearm licence holders

Minister for Qld Police and Corrective Services Tony McGrady has reiterated the importance of firearm licence holders making renewals no later than 14 days prior to the licence expiration. Mr McGrady said the Qld State Government was determined to help firearm licence holders with the renewal of their licences. The first five-year firearm licences issued after amendments to the Weapons Act in 1997 began to expire in January this year. There are about 190,000 firearm licence holders in Queensland who will need to renew their licences at some point in the next four years. "Having a firearm licence is a very serious responsibility and applicants need to comply with the strict legislation so that they do not run the risk of illegality," Mr McGrady said. "Weapons Licensing Branch has experienced some delays in processing applications because applicants are not submitting

them on time or are failing to disclose all relevant information. "Things have improved in recent months and, as at 25 September, only 20 renewal applications held by police were in danger of expiration because applicants had failed to disclose all relevant information." Mr McGrady said the Government announced earlier this year that it would introduce amendments to the Weapons Act later this year to remove the requirement to apply for a licence renewal at least 14 days prior to licence expiry.

This will allow renewal applications to be lodged anytime up until their expiry date. He said a link on the police web site (www.police.qld.gov.au) included information on the material required in a firearms renewal application. "In January, Police also commenced sending renewal packages to applicable people and all licence holders will receive a package at an appropriate time during the next four years."

by Keith Tidswell
Executive Director of
International Affairs and
Public Relations



Caught in the Net

- legal gun traders resist being misjudged

In September I described SSAA involvement in the international workshop entitled ‘Export, Import and Brokering of Small Arms and Firearms: Identifying the Problems - Partnerships for Solutions’ held in Naples in June of this year.

Through the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities (WFSA), the SSAA is represented at these meetings. Sponsored by the Manufacturers Advisory Group (MAG), this meeting was attended by representatives of countries, manufacturers’ associations and individual companies. This month, I want to focus more on the manufacturing side of things.

Just as legal gun owners in Australia have been wrongly penalised for criminal activity, the same is true internationally. Lawful arms business people suffer by being confused with illicit gunrunners. The WFSA aims to change this.

Bob Delfay has been president and CEO of America’s National Shooting Sports Federation, a body of nearly 2000 gun industry representatives. As a person deeply involved in the industry all his working life, his closing remarks at the conference, referring to a UN-related document, give a good idea of the flavour of the meeting. He said:

“I should like to conclude my comments by referring to an introductory comment in the paper ‘Shining a Light on Small Arms Exports: The Record of State Transparency’. It reads: *This paper uses the terms ‘small arms’ and ‘small arms and light weapons’ interchangeably. Unless noted, no distinction is made between weapons designed for military or civilian use.*

“I submit to you, my friends, that if we cannot make the effort to differentiate between military and civilian firearms - between shoulder-fired rocket launchers and hunting rifles, between fully automatic assault rifles and target shotguns - then we have made no effort to differentiate between the millions of responsible citizens who use firearms in legitimate recreation and those who use them for political repression, for aggression and to create political instability.”

Mr Delfay spoke further about the firearm industry wanting to be part of a solution to problems of illegal gun use, saying that in the past 50 years America’s firearm industry has contributed \$US1.2 billion to wildlife conservation. Such positive involvement does not seem obvious to international lawmakers, whose interests lie chiefly in firearm misuse on a near-national scale.

Speaking for the industry, Mr Delfay said he was disappointed and concerned “at how political the matter seems to be”. He spoke on the theme of failing to communicate and showed how commercial manufacturers of sporting firearms from the US and Europe need to break down barriers in their dialogue with governments concerned about reducing illicit traffic in weapons of war.

On the first day of the conference, figures presented showed quite clearly that most of the commerce in so-called ‘small arms’ occurs in the legal civilian market and does not contribute to the problems of international unrest. To date, two factors have impeded progress toward solutions by partnership between gun users and governments. Mr Delfay said:

“First, there has been this lumping together of military ‘weapons of war’ - usually fully automatic and usually manufactured by or for government - with civilian firearms usually manufactured by traditional, responsible commercial makers like Remington, Winchester, Ruger or Beretta.

Secondly, there has been a continued and erroneous assumption that the key to controlling illicit arms dealing is to increase regulation of licit commerce. The danger is that legal civilian commerce will be regulated further and further, when it is not what our governments and certain NGOs should be concerned with.”

He went on to call for consultations with affected businesses to avoid unnecessary opposition. He declared the legitimate industry willing to help establish a database of the various national trade prohibitions. This would provide manufacturers with one place where they can determine the legitimacy of trade to a particular state. This might apply to UN and other international embargoes as well. Sometimes industry itself doesn’t even know of the existence of an official prohibition.

Industry of course has no interest in commerce with human rights abusers. Several codes of conduct have been promulgated and there seems to be substantial interest in them.

Mr Delfay said the trade neither needs nor wishes to operate in secrecy, but is proud of its record of responsibility, safety and co-operation with law enforcement.

He stipulated that in the view of the industry, there should be no exemptions for governments from any possible regulatory scheme. Just as the various legitimate sections of the trade are expected to manifest their country-to-country sales, so also should governments be required to do so. The real problems come more from transfers by states and not from legal private commerce. ●



Rethink on British handgun ban

by SSAA Head Researcher Paul Peake

In 1997, the British Government initiated a total ban on the private possession of handguns, which saw more than 200,000 pistols and revolvers surrendered to the state. The immediate impact was felt by Britain's elite competitive shooters who were forced to trek across the English Channel on a regular basis in order to practise in European countries free from the Blair regime's brand of political correctness.

Despite the increasingly draconian policies, which have plagued its gun owners since the 1920s, Britain has an enviable track record when it comes to the shooting sports, boasting some of the best known and most prestigious competitions in the world. Needless to say, the government's handgun ban was a major blow to both competitors and the firearms industry as a whole.

The gross injustices of the past five years notwithstanding, there may finally be some light at the end of the tunnel. Recent media reports suggest the British Government is considering a relaxation of the ban in the wake of the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. On a recent visit to the National Shooting Centre at Bisley, Labour's Sports Minister, Richard Caborn, was quoted as saying that when it came to the prohibition on handguns "things are not set in tablets of stone and they can always be revised."¹ Speculation is rife that the government may be considering lifting the ban on small-bore pistols under certain conditions.

Although the government's foreshadowed rethink is still a long

way from being turned into legislation, predictably, the anti-gun lobby has come out with the usual barrage of criticism. But the fact is, in terms of crime prevention, Britain's handgun ban has been a complete waste of time. Gun-related violence linked to criminal gangs has skyrocketed in the United Kingdom since the new laws came into force. Home Office figures show that in the ten-month period to January 2002, there were 939 firearm-related crimes in London alone - a threefold increase on the previous year.² Similarly, Manchester has seen a 23 per cent climb in gun-related incidents, while Bristol has experienced an incredible 46 per cent rise.³ Along with the steep growth in firearm offences, there have also been substantial increases in burglaries, robberies and muggings linked to the illicit drug trade.

The failure of the British Government's handgun ban has added considerable fuel to the argument that legitimate shooters should not be made to suffer for the irresponsible acts of a tiny minority. It seems the powers-that-be might finally be listening. ●

References

¹ Dunblane handgun ban under review. (2002, Aug. 11). *Scotland on Sunday*.

² Roberts, G. (2002). Wild West Britain. *Combat & Survival*, 14 (4) p. 29.

³ *ibid.*, p. 30.



A Brief History of Gun Control: 1662 - 1819

by SSAA Head Researcher Paul Peake

Despite the popular belief that draconian gun laws are a recent phenomenon, a brief look back at the history of gun control in both Britain and colonial Australia reveals that much of the argument and many of the contemporary anti-gun policies we see today have their roots in debates that can be traced back through several centuries.

Australia's first colonists were heirs to a long history of gun control. As early as 1662, the English Parliament initiated a number of strict measures in the wake of the nation's civil war (1642-49) and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy. The Militia Act (1662) gave deputies the power to seize the weapons of anyone thought to be "dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom".¹ Royal proclamations supported by Parliament forbade the importation of firearms or their transport without a licence and gunsmiths were required to submit lists of the people who bought firearms from them. In 1671, the Game Act made it illegal for anyone who made less than £100 a year (a very considerable sum in the 17th century) from the land to possess a gun.

The Bill of Rights, which came into being following the dual ascendancy of William III and Queen Mary in 1689, endorsed the notion that Protestants could "have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law".² The provisions were put forward in response to the actions of the deposed James II, who had aggressively promoted the Roman Catholic Church during his brief three-year reign. While eliminating the royal prerogative where gun control was concerned and superseding most of the measures put in place after the Restoration, the Bill entrenched the notion that Parliament had the power to make laws covering the private possession and use of firearms.

In 1765, noted English attorney Sir William Blackstone was arguing that an individual had the right to be armed in his own defence and that of the Constitution.³ However, the situation changed dramatically following the massacre of demonstrators in Manchester in August 1819. In an incident that became known

as 'Peterloo' in deference to Napoleon's famous rout four years earlier, more than 50,000 people gathered at St Peter's Fields to protest against the heavy tariffs on imported grain. When local magistrates panicked, the Yeomanry, which had been called out in response to the demonstration, opened fire on the crowd, killing 11 people and wounding several hundred. At a public demonstration in November intended to force those responsible for the shootings to justice, many of the protestors showed up armed. Several of the organisers were subsequently arrested and put on trial. In the case of *Rex vs. George Dewhurst and Others*, Justice Bayley declared in his summation that while a person had the right to be armed for self-defence in their own home, they had "no right to carry arms to a public meeting".⁴

Within months, the government, fearful of the protests and what it saw as the media's role in encouraging discontent, passed a series of laws that became known as the 'Six Acts'. Among the initiatives designed to rein in the press and curtail public gatherings, there were a number of measures aimed at controlling firearms. Drilling, in the form of military exercises undertaken by private citizens, was banned without permission, as was the carrying of arms "under suspicious circumstances".⁵ In a move foreshadowing later arguments about the possession of guns not being in the 'public interest', the Seizure of Arms Act empowered authorities to enter a private place at any time to search for and seize any weapons kept "for a purpose dangerous to the public peace".⁶ The legislation sparked heated debate and while the bulk of the measures were designed to expire within two years, the provisions making drilling without permission illegal remained in place for the next century. Similar provisions still exist in several Australian jurisdictions.

Official attempts to control the private possession of guns extended to Australia's early colonies. In 1796, Governor John Hunter initiated an order requiring everyone in colonial New South Wales who possessed a firearm (excluding military and civil officers) to be registered.⁷ Constables were ordered to take anyone



carrying arms without a registration certificate into custody. In 1802, Governor King went a step further, ordering a search of every house in the settlement and allowing only one musket to be kept on the premises with the remainder being confiscated. Any subsequent movement of firearms had to be reported to a Magistrate.⁸

From the Militia Act of 1662, to the initiatives implemented in the wake of the mass shootings in Manchester 150 years later, gun control both in Britain and colonial Australia developed from naked expediency on the part of the government and Crown, through to liberal notions about personal rights and eventually back to expediency. The rubric laid down in 1689 concerning an individual's freedom, albeit a freedom reserved for Protestants, to "have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions" was readily set aside in deference to the suffix "and as allowed by law" whenever officialdom believed the circumstances warranted. Three hundred years later it appears that little has changed. ●

Endnotes

¹ Malcolm, J. L. (1993). The Role of the Militia in the Development of the Englishman's Right to be Armed: Clarifying the Legacy. *Journal on Firearms and Public Policy*, 139-151.

² Bill of Rights (1689): An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown, clause 7.

³ Blackstone, W. (1889). *Commentaries on the laws of England*. Philadelphia.

⁴ Malcolm, J. L. (1994). *To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an Anglo-American Right*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 168.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Solomon, R. C. (1990). *The Convicted Gunsmiths of New South Wales*. Rockdale: Ronald C. Solomon, p. 1.4.

⁸ *ibid.*

Letters

Jumping Hoops for Reapplication

When I arrived home the other day, I found that my shooter's licence renewal had arrived. While perusing the form, I found, to my absolute disgust, that shooters now have to 'apply' for a shooter's licence renewal to be forwarded to them. I now have to go through the same rigmarole of five years ago to be granted the right to renew my shooter's licence, including providing evidence of club membership and a letter from a landowner saying that it is all right to shoot on his property.

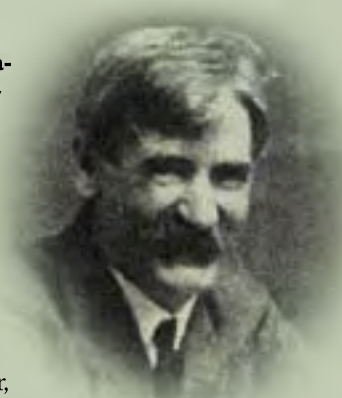
If it was a driver's licence, the renewal would automatically be forwarded to me; I would pay the money and Bob's your uncle - new licence. Is this another poor attempt to discourage legitimate and law-abiding people from participating in the hobby/sport of their choice? I think political correctness has gone too far this time.

Maybe with the rising road toll they should introduce mandatory driver testing and leave us sportsmen and women alone.

Vaughan Atherton, Melbourne, Vic

A poem by one of Australia's greatest poets - Henry Lawson. Written the first decade after Federation - 1907.

Every man should have a gun



So I sit and write and ponder,
while the house is deaf and
dumb,
Seeing visions over yonder of the war I know must come.
In the corner - not a vision - but a sign for coming days
Stand a box of ammunition and a rifle in green baize.
And in this, the living present, let the word go through the
land,
Every tradesman, clerk and peasant should have these two
things at hand.
No - no ranting song is needed, and no meeting, flag or fuss -
In the future, still unheeded, shall the spirit come to us;
Without feathers, drum or riot on the day that is to be,
We shall march down, very quiet, to our stations by the sea.
While the bitter parties stifle every voice that warns of war,
Every man should have a rifle and have cartridges in store.

The enemy within

by Mark Jefferson

I was at a gun show recently when it struck me that I was witnessing a depressingly familiar spectacle: small groups of gun owners letting off steam about the injustice and stupidity of the modern world. *They* know they're good people, so why does the rest of the world have it in for them? How on earth have the ridiculous, hysterical voices of the gun prohibitionists come to be so ubiquitous and so influential in the media and politics?

The fact that so many of us are baffled by the situation makes me wonder how much we've really thought about it. Prohibitionists are universally loathed by shooters, but we don't seem to have done much serious thinking about them. As a consequence, relatively few of us have taken the all-important step of figuring out how to make our opposition to them as effective as possible.

It seems to me that civilian firearms ownership faces two threats. The gun prohibition movement is obviously one of them but, to my mind, a far more serious threat is our own apathy. It is our inaction that gives the prohibitionists a clear stage on which to perform unchallenged. We know there is a threat but we don't analyse it, we don't look ahead and so we don't take meaningful steps to stand up for ourselves. We are our own worst enemy.

For instance, consider something we're only too familiar with: the routine misuse of words and the consequent distortion of their meanings. Combined with a creative approach to statistics, this is by far the most useful weapon in the gun prohibitionists' arsenal. It is one that they've relied on for years and that continues to be extremely effective because most of our media are disinterested in the precise use of language. 'Gun control' is a classic example. As we know, we already have gun control, have had it for years; what they mean is gun *prohibition*. But 'prohibition' is a dangerous word after the experience of America in the 1920s and drugs today. Most people realise that prohibition doesn't affect anyone who

doesn't want to be affected. It's a loss of control. They still want it, of course, because they are fanatics interested only in the purity of the cause, not the usefulness of the outcome. So they call it 'control' because it sounds so reasonable, will encourage the belief that guns currently are *not* controlled and because they know that no journalist is likely even to notice, let alone care about, such linguistic sleights of hand. The news business is increasingly about entertainment and quality of information comes a very poor second, but how often do we actually complain about it?

Another example: In the continuing push to ban handguns we have been breathlessly informed of the frightening numbers of handguns that are 'in circulation' in Australia. Apparently I, as the holder of a category H licence, 'have access to' several hundred thousands of the things. The power of the story lies not so much in the numbers that were cited, but in the way those expressions were carefully chosen to conjure a mental image of shooters leaving their pistols on the street corner or playing pass-the-parcel with them in the pub. Just exactly how my pistol is 'in circulation' when it's locked in my safe is open to question, as is how I 'have access' to anyone else's. But how often do we get the TV station on the phone and ask those questions?

When we're told that 'public attitudes are changing', do we ask 'who says?' Are they reporting what people are really thinking or what some journalist thinks they *ought* to be thinking? We *are* the public, but how often do we phone in to remind them of the fact?

I could go on all day, but here's the point: How many of us ever stop to consider just how calculated each of these distortions is and that their effect is cumulative? We find them annoying, but we usually dismiss them as simple ignorance and prejudice, the unfortunate result of the average reporter not being the brightest or most articulate of souls. Whether it is ignorance or complicity

The news business is increasingly about entertainment and quality of information comes a very poor second, but how often do we actually complain about it?

that allows press releases drafted by activists to be obligingly parroted on air as news can be debated. Either way, they all add to our problems and either way very few of us ever bother to contact the offending newspaper or broadcaster to say 'what the hell'. Sure, some of us do, but not enough to make much difference.

It's hard to avoid the conclusion that we just can't be bothered. I have even heard it argued that not being bothered is a valid stance to take. However much we, as individuals, may demand honesty, impartiality and accuracy in journalism, individuals are always going to be pretty ineffectual. We can shout the facts at the tops of our voices, but we'll still be wasting our time if we think it will make any difference. There is a certain amount of truth in this, but if that is where your thinking stops, it's a cop-out. If we can't do much on our own accounts, that's all the more reason to make sure we're doing as much as we can collectively.

What more of us need to grasp is that this is about politics and politics is a game that is played with perceptions, not with facts. Being right has nothing to do with it. Prohibitionists, who know the game well and are good at it, have created the perceptions they want in a great many people and they're listened to because numbers mean votes. The majority of shooters are cynical enough to regard politicians as unprincipled, opinion poll-groveling career-builders, but too few of us have accepted that, like it or not, that is the game; we're stuck with it and we can either learn how to play or we can lose.

Most shooters just want to shoot, enjoy the fresh air and go home. The way they see it, they've always shot, so they always will shoot - she'll be right, mate. Considering how highly motivated and well-financed the prohibitionists are, it is nothing short of a disaster that such a pitifully small proportion of firearms owners have taken the elementary step of joining an organisation that can

represent them in the political arena.

At the time of the Port Arthur murders in 1996 I was not an active shooter, but when the nonsensical rhetoric began to flow I joined the SSAA simply in order to support the lonely voice of reason. It was a choice between doing nothing or doing what I could and it seemed like an obvious move. If we want any influence in what passes for a debate we have to have numbers of our own. More to the point, we have to be *seen* to have numbers. Even in '96, though, frustratingly few shooters made any such move and a lot of expensive firearms were vandalised in what was soon confirmed as an entirely futile waste of an awful lot of public money.

She'll be right? Well she might *if*, and only *if*, those who believe in civilian firearm ownership wake up, sniff the wind and realise what's heading this way. We didn't pick the fight, but we're in it all the same and being in the right is not going to be enough. We have to stand up and be counted. All of us. Otherwise the prohibitionists will keep the whip hand and we'll just keep getting walloped.

There are two things we can all do. First, write letters and/or get on the phone whenever we encounter something stupid. Do this politely, of course. The idea is to be informative, not abusive. It may not change the world, but you'll feel better for it and it's healthier than shouting at the TV. Then again, if we all picked up the phone on the same night, some ratings-obsessed station chiefs might have a bit of a re-think.

Second, and this is of paramount importance, join the SSAA. Nag your mates to join too. This game is about numbers, remember, visible numbers and the SSAA can only support us if we support it. Otherwise when the next round of punitive and pointless legislation goes through, you can curse the politicians and prohibitionists all you like, but you'd better hope no-one asks you exactly what *you* did to stand up to the buggers. ●

SSAA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NEW RENEWAL

Membership Office, SSAA PO Box 906, St Marys NSW 1790 ABN 95 050 209 688
 Phone 02 9623 4900 Fax 02 9623 5900 E-mail mem@ssaa.org.au

Membership No.



Title (PLEASE CIRCLE) Mr Ms Mrs Branch

First name

Middle name

Last name

Address

Town/suburb

State Postcode

Phone (bus/mob) (priv)

Fax

Email

Date of Birth

Select Membership type - Fees are per year unless specified and include GST.

Membership categories

- Adult** (over 18 years) - \$65 current family member's No.
- Family** (no magazine - available to each immediate relative of a member paying the full adult rate) - \$50
- Pensioner** (available on production or photocopy of pension concession card) \$50
- 5-year Adult** - \$325 GST on recreational club subscriptions CANNOT be claimed as Input Tax. If, despite this you require a tax invoice please contact the membership office.
- Member for life** - \$1300
- Overseas** - \$70
- Junior** - \$20 (under 18 years) (magazine required)
Parent's or guardian's signature
- I also wish to donate \$..... to the SSAA

Payment options

Enclosed is payment for the amount of \$.....

Cheque **Money order** **Bankcard** **Mastercard** **Visacard**

Card number

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**MAIL TO: MEMBERSHIP OFFICE,
 PO BOX 906, St Marys, NSW 1790**

SSAA Inc is subject to the provisions of the National Privacy Act. Should you want a copy of the SSAA Inc Privacy Statement or seek further information please write to PO Box 2066, Kent Town, SA 5071.

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.

To register as an affiliate member of the SSAA (NSW) Inc or SSAA (ACT) Inc* please register your SSAA club activities by marking one or more of the following boxes:

- TARGET SHOOTING
- HUNTING
- COLLECTING

Note: Under NSW legislation, shooters 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 dealers stamp has been affixed this form may be used as proof of membership to satisfy the "genuine reason" requirements of the Firearms Act 1996.

*SSAA (ACT) is the holder of club approval for target and hunting only

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.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

In the Media

19/8/2002

Radio ABC 774 3LO Victoria

Program: Morning with Jon Faine

Time: 08:49am

Item: Discusses the Need for Tight Gun Control

Randy Marshall - Gun Control Australia
Marshall: Yeah, but, I think the trick now is to ensure that the controls we have on people, like the security industry and the pistol clubs, are extremely tight.

23/8/02

The Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) - An Emory University professor and author of a disputed, prize-winning book about guns in America was placed on paid leave for the fall semester amid an investigation into possible academic fraud. Michael Bellesiles' *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* received national attention for its contention that early Americans did not own or use firearms in great numbers. The book sparked fierce criticism from gun-rights advocates and scholars suggested that Bellesiles made serious errors, prompting Emory to begin a probe in February.

03/09/2002

SSAA Safety Course and Schools

S/C Gary Pearce Victoria Police

ABC Radio Mildura Swan Hill

Gary Pearce: It's a very important issue. All firearms, they're just another tool; they can be a dangerous tool in inexperienced or unqualified hands. So what we're running here is, we're running two different programs. There's a program for young children, which is the 'Don't touch, walk away, tell an adult' and basically this is run off the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Safety Program. For the older ones, we're running the Junior Firearms Safety Program, which goes into a bit more detail because of their ages. 'Don't touch it, walk away, tell an adult' - very important.

10/9/2002

Firearms Seized in NSW/Qld Police

Operation

NSW Police Media Unit

Police have seized a number of illegal handguns and suspected stolen property

during a combined NSW/QLD operation this morning.

13/09/2002

Radio ABC South East NSW

Lee Rhiannon NSW Greens MP

Rhiannon: And the Greens and many of the community groups, including various gun control groups that we work with, are calling for a ban on semi-automatic pistols because at the moment they are resulting in so much death and injury, particularly in inner Sydney but actually across the country.

20/9/2002

Victoria

Results of the *Herald Sun* Voteline Poll:
Should drought-stricken farmers be allowed to shoot kangaroos for human consumption?
Yes - 784 (73.3%)
No - 285 (26.7%)

20/9/02

Canada - Edmonton Journal by Lorne Gunter

On September 9, the *Yellowknifer* newspaper reported that the federal firearms officers in both Yellowknife and Hay River had quit their jobs. No replacements were being sought. These resignations follow hard on the heels of resignations by firearms officers in Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg. Since spring, eight in all have left their posts. Between now and the end of the year, the government must register another 3.5 million firearms (assuming its own ridiculously low estimate of the number of guns in Canada is correct). It cannot possibly meet that target, particularly if its staff keep quitting and its computers keep crashing. It has taken nearly two years to register the first 4.2 million.

22/9/2002

Media Release - NSW Shooters Party Tingle to Stand Again

Shooters Party MLC John Tingle will seek re-election to the NSW Upper House in the coming state election, leading a team of 22 candidates. Chairman of the Shooters Party, David Leyonhjelm, said today that Mr Tingle had told the State Committee of the Party 12 months ago that he did not wish to stand again, when his eight-year term

expires in 2003. But the State Conference of the Shooters Party at the weekend carried a unanimous resolution asking Mr Tingle to stand again and, after some discussion, he has agreed to do so.

23/9/2002

A hunting they'll go - with Charles By Peter Fray Europe Correspondent London

The Age - Victoria

Prince Charles has dramatically thrown his support behind Britain's angry rural community by telling Prime Minister Tony Blair that he believes farmers are more victimised than "blacks and gays". The Prince's intervention came as about 300,000 farmers and hunters marched on central London to protest against Mr Blair's plans to ban fox hunting and the general treatment of the country community. In his letter to Mr Blair, the Prince said he agreed with the Cumbrian farmer who told him that "if we, as a group, were black or gay, we would not be victimised or picked upon".

26/9/2002

New York Times

'California's Governor Signs Series of Anti-Gun Measures' by John M Broder

LOS ANGELES: Gov. Gray Davis signed a series of gun measures today, including a bill to repeal the special immunity from liability suits granted to the firearms industry nearly 20 years ago. California, which was one of the first states to give weapons makers protection from lawsuits, now becomes the first state to lift that immunity. In the last five years, more than two dozen states have granted the gun industry immunity from suits filed by cities and counties seeking damages to cover the costs of combating gun violence.

27/9/02

Northern Territory News

\$2500 for rifle breach

A man who failed to properly store a .22 bolt action rifle and its ammunition was fined a total of \$2500 with \$40 in levies when his case went before Darwin Magistrates Court yesterday. Magistrate Vince Luppino was not impressed that the rifle was found with live rounds.

Firearms Training, Bureaucrats and Bunglers

by John Dunn

While class C firearms - semi-auto rifles and shotguns and pump action shotguns - are generally beyond the reach of most Australians in these days of 'national' gun laws, they remain an important component within armories held by the armed services, police and other government agencies.

Of the shotguns available, the Remington 870 pump action remains a popular choice for many state and federal departments. This firearm is highly regarded for its reliability and armourers courses have been run in Australia for the past ten years to ensure those responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of it are continually up to date with manufacturers' recommendations.

The courses are organised by the Australian Remington dealer Raytrade in conjunction with the agencies involved. Noted gunsmith John Miall, an accredited Remington firearms instructor, delivers the training and Australia is the only country outside the USA where this occurs.

Course participants receive a thorough grounding in stripping procedures, diagnostic troubleshooting and the replacement of worn or damaged parts. While there is a degree of theory involved, emphasis is on hands-on, practical work with the firearms.

There are numerous positives that come from such training. Participants and their organisations benefit through improved maintenance and repair procedures. There's an inevitable exchange of ideas and experience across the board. Raytrade and the various departments work together to ensure a satisfactory customer/client relationship and everybody should be happy.

The courses achieve all those things, while at the same time demonstrating just how difficult even essential programs such as this have become in the post-Port Arthur clamp-down on firearms of this type.

Discussions with Raytrade principal Gary Raymond highlighted some of the problems encountered when organising the courses - as well as detailing some of the problems encountered when importing prohibited firearms.

Though the Model 870 shotgun is the focus of the course, Raytrade is not permitted to hold any in stock, nor are they allowed to carry spare parts vital to the running of the course. They are not even permitted to hold an inoperative, skeletonised 870 strictly for training purposes.

Overall, this means that that the organisers, while providing a valuable service to a range of government departments, must rely on the goodwill and generosity of those departments to supply the firearms

and essential spare parts that the whole training program is based on.

No department is exempt from the ramifications of the current legislation. Before they can order even basic parts, such as replacement breechblocks, they must first obtain the permission of the Attorney-General, which could take months.

Even after that permission has been granted, the parts are subject to an import permit. Processing of that permit may take some time and should the goods arrive before the permit is issued, they must be sent back or sent to another country and then imported again when the permit arrives. If not, they will be forfeited for destruction.

Even when the system works, it still gets bogged down.

Importers are allowed to bring in small shipments of prohibited firearms and store them with Customs against a future need. This sounds reasonable, provided they come in as a separate shipment.

If they happen to come in as part of a container load of goods, the entire container is sent to a bond store and unpacked. Police and Customs then go to the bond store to do the necessary safety testing. Customs then take the firearms away for storage; the container is repacked and delivered to the importer's warehouse.

Apart from increasing costs, this process also exposes the firearms to periods of insecurity that would not occur if the locked container was taken directly to the importer's warehouse and the testing carried out there.

Just how unwieldy the system has become was demonstrated recently when a shipment of 26 firearms arrived by air - 20 of them intended for the armed services, the remainder for Customs.

Instead of allowing the guns to be sent to their destinations direct from the Airfreight Bond Store, Customs seized the shipment and had them transported under police escort to Customs House in Melbourne. Intervention from the Department of Defence in Melbourne, through Canberra, saw the armed forces' firearms quickly released for delivery. This left Customs holding six firearms they'd effectively seized from themselves.

This incident highlights the almost Monty Pythonesque procedural formats that exists under the current legislation. At present, it's easier for a primary producer to obtain a C class firearm than it is for the army or police services. That is a ludicrous situation.

While the intent of the current legislation may have been noble, the bureaucratic procedures and, indeed, the actions of some departments, leave a great deal to be desired.

If the government of the day cannot (perhaps will not?) trust its own departments, is it any wonder private firearms owners have been treated so badly? ●



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