



GUN LAWS TO PROTECT ALL AUSTRALIANS PAVING THE WAY FOR A SAFER AUSTRALIA

The Greens' plan for banning semi-automatic handguns

The Greens are working to make sure Australian streets and neighbourhoods are safer for all. We know that banning semi-automatic handguns is an important step in reducing firearm-related deaths and violent crime – for the benefit of Australians everywhere.

There are approximately 10,000 handguns in the illicit firearm market within Australia.ⁱ Data also tells us that ‘criminals at all levels favour handguns.’ⁱⁱ

Australia must take steps to limit the number of guns available to reduce the number of guns falling into the hands of criminals.

Existing gun control laws have reduced firearm deaths in Australia, but there is more to do. The next step is to ban semi-automatic hand guns.. Such a step will increase public safety in the interest of all Australians.

> MAKING OUR STREETS SAFER

The Greens are taking action to make our streets and neighbourhoods safer. Our plan for tighter gun laws in Australia includes:

- **Banning the importation, ownership, possession and use of semi-automatic handguns with exemptions for government-owned guns**
- **Implementing a 12-month amnesty and buy-back** scheme for newly prohibited handguns and an amnesty for already prohibited firearms.
- **Implementing a national public education campaign** in support of the gun buy-back scheme.

The Parliamentary Budget Office has costed our plan at \$351.5 million over the forward estimates. Using data from the highly successful 1996-1997 gun buyback, we have shaped a plan which will dramatically reduce the number of semi-automatic handguns in Australia.

> WHY HANDGUNS?

Despite an overall decrease in the use of firearms in violent crime over the past decade, handguns have emerged as the firearm of choice for crimes in Australia– particularly among those involved in the drugs market or gangs.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Greens are serious about tackling violent crime, and that means banning the importation, ownership, possession and use of semi-automatic handguns in order to make our streets and neighbourhoods safer.

> TAKING ACTION

The gun buy-back enacted in the aftermath of the Port Arthur massacre in April 1996 proved incredibly effective, resulting in more than 700,000 weapons being surrendered.^{iv}

Statistics from the Australian Institute of Criminology show that the proportion of homicide victims killed by offenders using firearms in 2009-2010 is 18% lower than in 1995-1996.^v Data shows that amnesties and buy-back schemes have tangible results.

That’s why we will implement a 12-month amnesty and buy-back scheme for handguns prohibited by our tighter gun control laws. We will also enact a 12-month non-compensated amnesty scheme for already prohibited firearms. In conjunction with these measures, our plan also provides for the rollout a national public education campaign.

Our plan to get semi-automatic handguns off the streets will pave the way for a safer Australia.

In addition, we will continue to advocate for stronger regulation of legal firearms including consistent eligibility requirements based on a genuine need, consistent age requirements and strengthened storage requirements across the nation.

ⁱAustralian Crime Commission, *Illicit Firearms* (2012)

<<http://www.crimecommission.gov.au/publications/crime-profile-series/illicit-firearms>>

ⁱⁱSOCA (2006) cited in Bricknell, *S Criminal use of Handguns in Australia*, Australian Institute of Criminology (2008) <http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/4/C/C/%7b4CCFAEC4-8C95-4326-B00E-F98187713F19%7dtandi361_001.pdf> (1)

ⁱⁱⁱBricknell, *S Criminal use of Handguns in Australia*, Australian Institute of Criminology (2008) <<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/361-380/tandi361/view%20paper.html>> (1)

^{iv}Library of Congress, *Firearms-Control Legislation and Policy: Australia* (2013) <<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/firearms-control/australia.php>>

^vAustralian Institute of Criminology, *Australian Crime: Facts and Figures* (2011).

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/facts/1-20/2011/2_profiles.html> (19)