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To Whom It May Concern,

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (SSAA) is the premier sports shooting and recreational hunting body representing over 166,000 licenced firearm owners.

The SSAA is disappointed with the recent coverage by *The Project* regarding the ongoing Senate Inquiry into *The ability of Australian law enforcement authorities to eliminate gun-related violence in the community*, broadcast 31 October 2014. We believe the reporting has breached 'The Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice' surrounding accuracy and fairness.

The coverage claimed "Australia is awash with stolen guns" with host Carrie Bickmore stating that "most illegal firearms are stolen from licenced firearm owners."

This statement is purely false, with the source of illicit handguns themselves having a high unknown rate of 70%, as found by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC). Furthermore, the AIC's *Firearm theft in Australia* report series, only 1545 firearms out of approximately 780,000 legal firearms were stolen from 1100-odd robberies, meaning less than 0.2% of licenced firearm owners are affected by theft each year. This is a far cry from *The Project's* claims that most illegal firearms are stolen from licenced owners.

The SSAA also points to our porous borders and the significant lack of funding for our Australian Customs and Border Protection agency to stem the flow of illegal firearms into the community as a key issue that should have been considered.

Accompanying the episode on the program's website, <http://tenplay.com.au/channel-ten/the-project>, was the following inaccurate information:

"Since the Howard government's introduction of the 1996 National Firearms Agreement, Australia has had historically low levels of gun ownership."

This statement is false, with more private firearm ownership in Australia compared to pre-1996 levels.

The SSAA was also disheartened by the irresponsible interviewing of the victim, Dianna Blenkinsopp, who should be credited for remaining rational when questions such as: "But do you think tighter gun control laws could have saved you husband's life?" was asked, showing an obvious bias against firearms and the desire to paint the issue in a negative and unfair light.

The SSAA believes that until the Senate Inquiry issues its final report, the use of inaccurate figures and statements amounts to irresponsible and biased journalism. We implore you to revisit the episode and take our complaints into consideration, in the good faith it is intended.

Kind Regards,

Tim Bannister
SSAA National
Chief Executive Officer