

Mass killer had raised 'red flags'



AN EXCLUSIVE REPORT in The Australian has revealed how a grandfather who killed his four grandchildren, daughter and wife suffered from 'severe depression and anxiety' and had a violent family history that raised 'red flags' and led to a recommendation the children's time with their grandparents be limited. Peter Miles shot his grandchildren Taya (13), Rylan (12), Arye (10) and eight-year-old Kayden, their mother Katrina and his wife Cynda before killing himself on the family property at Osmington near Margaret River south of Perth.

The report by Legal Affairs Correspondent Nicola Berkovic outlines how the grandfather also had significant stressors in his life including financial insecurity, according to the findings of the Coroner's Court of WA. The Court has released four short records into the deaths of the children. The findings have not been released publicly but were sent to their father Aaron Cockman last month.

Berkovic wrote that the investigation concluded the children died from gunshots to the head inflicted by their grandfather by way of homicide. Their mother and grandmother were also shot dead before Miles dialled 000 and turned the

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gun on himself in Australia's worst mass shooting since the Port Arthur massacre.

The Australian explained the children's father has been fighting for a public inquest into the tragedy which he says would shine a light on the role he believes the Family Court of Western Australia played in placing the family under financial and emotional pressure. However, State Coroner Ros Fogliani has rejected his request.

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia would like to offer its support to Mr Cockman in his fight for a public inquest. Why wasn't more done to prevent this tragedy? Why was there no police intervention into this volatile situation, including removing firearms from a perpetrator who had a violent family history and had displayed red flags?

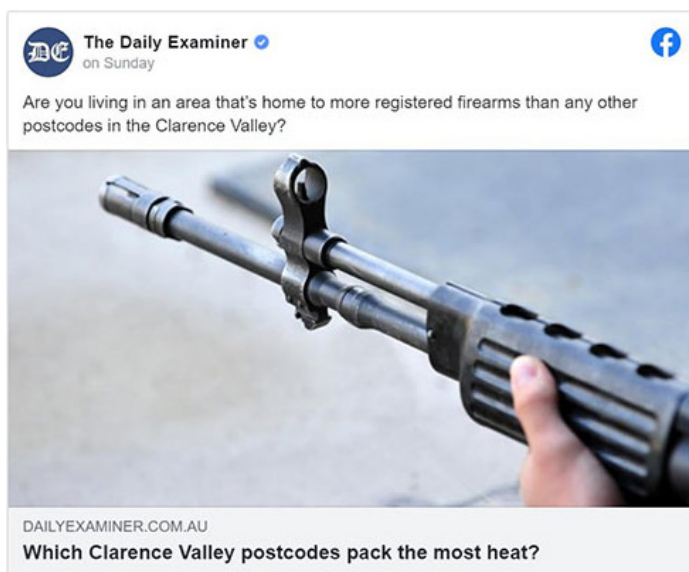
SSAA would enforce the message that more needs to be done to prevent gun crimes. Police need to work harder to make sure family's lives aren't ripped apart instead of implementing restrictions which only impact law-abiding people who use firearms for sport and recreation.

Irresponsible journalism surfaces yet again



A SURAT BASIN News journalist has likened firearm owners to conspiracy theorists in an article entitled 'How a gun story stirred the pot on media distrust'. Jenna Thompson referenced another article she wrote in The Daily Examiner which published the number of registered firearms in the Clarence Valley region of New South Wales.

The article, 'Which Clarence Valley postcodes have the most guns?' drew extensive backlash from the general readership and licensed firearm owners on Facebook who thought they were being portrayed unfairly.



- The Daily Examiner article on registered firearms.

The SSAA is bitterly disappointed in how poorly Ms Thompson has portrayed licensed firearm owners - once again they have been vilified in the media.

One comment by Facebook user Jacquie Polsen said "If guns are owned legally there is no problem. Stop trying to scare monger [sic]". Ms Thompson responded with her opinion piece saying she was "disappointed" but "not surprised" by the comments. "During times of uncertainty or when major tragedies unfold, suspicion toward our publication inevitably bubbles up on social media," she wrote.

The article then linked unrelated issues such as the bushfire crisis and referenced controversial celebrity chef Pete Evans. "Our 2019 bushfire stories were declared Greens, Labor, Liberal, even Communist propaganda depending which Facebook comment you read. Early local coverage of the coronavirus was shot down as scare-mongering, while a handful of local tragedies were labelled 'fake news'."

The SSAA is bitterly disappointed in how poorly Ms Thompson has portrayed licensed firearm owners as LAFO's have once again been vilified in the media. The Association respectfully requests Ms Thompson reconsider such damaging comments in the future.

Hunters feed families in need



The New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) has backed a deer hunting program to feed families in need with prime wild venison harvested in Fiordland on New Zealand's South Island. The meat comes from hundreds of deer culled in the Fiordland National Park as part of the wildlife management. NZDA Chief Executive Gwyn Thurlow said the initiative will see about 18 tonnes of meat donated to needy families around the country.

SA Police launch firearms self-audit



by Nadia Isa

LICENSED FIREARMS OWNERS in South Australia will be required to self-audit their firearms as part of an update of a decades-old system. The Australia-first strategy will see SA Police contact more than 66,000 law-abiding firearm owners statewide in the coming months, asking them to conduct a self-audit of their firearms including make, model, serial number and other identifying features.

The online portal will launch today and eventually hold the most detailed information ever recorded on SA's registered firearms. However, SSAA (SA) President David Handyside said the initiative is essentially to update an old and outdated system. "SAPOL are currently working with a 40-year-old database which is unbelievably clunky and over time has become incredibly inaccurate," he said.

"We welcome the investment in a completely revised system as this is an attempt to update an enormous amount of old information. The essence of this is to enable the system to be put in place with reasonably accurate information. Once the new system is in place it will be possible to access that information online, where at the moment we're using pieces of paper in the mail which is hardly technology."

Firearms owners will be required to complete the self-audit online within 28 days of receiving the request from police. "Licence holders don't have to do anything until they receive notification from the Firearms Branch," said officer in charge Superintendent Stephen Howard.

The new SA database will then be linked to the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's firearms information network, which all jurisdictions will be required to join. Supt Howard said this would provide a consistent national approach and help reduce discrepancies.

But Mr Handyside said that's a separate issue which may not be of any advantage to the shooting community. "Inclusion in the national database is potentially a monster that will come back to bite us," he said.

Anyone seeking more information on this process can visit the Firearms Branch webpage at <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/firearms-audit>