

SYDNEY SIEGE SHOWS TOUGHER GUN LAWS NEEDED NOW

Thursday, December 18, 2014

Today's revelation that the gunman at the Sydney siege had a gun licence must lead to tougher gun laws across the country.

NSW Police Commissioner Scipione must immediately explain how a man charged with such serious violent offences retained a gun licence with the NSW Police Firearms Registry.

The Police Commissioner has at all times had the power to suspend the gun licence under s22 of the NSW Firearms Act. <<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+46+1996+cd+0+N>>

Greens MP and Justice Spokesperson David Shoebridge said:

"NSW has seen four years of inaction on gun control in the face of a growing pro-gun lobby in the NSW and Commonwealth parliaments.

"It is impossible to understand how the NSW firearms registry did not take immediate action to revoke this man's gun licence once he was charged with this offence.

"Police Commissioner Scipione has at all times had the power to suspend this man's gun licence under s22 of the NSW Firearms Act.

"Why didn't Commissioner Scipione move to suspend the gunman's licence given the serious charges he faced? There is no point having a power to keep the community safe if it is not used.

"This man was not only charged with accessory to murder and indecent and sexual assault offences but he was also on the terror watch list. However NSW gun laws are so lax that even this does not produce an automatic suspension of his licence.

"There is a lot of rhetoric about police powers but surely one of the first steps in making NSW safer would be to get guns out of the hands of people charged with serious violent offences?

"Over the past decade many conservative politicians have spoken about the war on terror but none of them have taken a single step to remove guns from the hands of people charged with violent offences.

"A gun licence is a privilege not a right, and removing a licence when a person is charged with a violent offence is a basic precautionary measure," Mr Shoebridge said.