

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

INSIDE:

- Fewer guns myth
- A question of ethical hunting

Leader Comment

Ludicrous laws

November 1999 Vol.1 Issue 2

ASJ

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

The political voice of the SSAA

Editorial policy:
to create a better environment and
community understanding of all forms of
hunting and shooting sports.

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A word from the President

Welcome to the second edition of the new *Australian Shooters Journal*. Reactions to the revised format of the *ASJ* and the Association's new magazine, the *Australian Shooter*, have been very positive.

There has been a steady stream of potential articles and ideas for consideration finding their way to the office and I would like to thank both the publication's staff and our researchers for their efforts in getting the new magazines off the ground.

I would also like to thank all those members and supporters who took the time to send in submissions to the Ministry for Police regarding the licensing situation in New South Wales. As members in NSW would be aware, firearm licensing procedures, and indeed the management of the entire regulatory system, desperately need review. I am confident that the many contributions put forward by SSAA members, along with the Association's official submission, will help bring about a rethink on the part of the licensing authorities and the government.

On a darker note, events to our near north have reignited debate among shooters about the wisdom of disarming the

community, especially on the question of military rifle clubs and access to semi-automatic longarms. The SSAA has been under pressure to speak out publicly about the situation. Some have argued that we should seize the opportunity to say 'we told you so'. Given the calumny that was dumped on shooters at the height of the 'gun debate' for suggesting the neighbours may not be as benevolent as some would have us believe - the idea is tempting. However, once a statement has been made there is little control over the sort of spin it receives and we are loath to give the media ammunition to use against the sport and responsible shooters generally. The lessons to be drawn from recent events are obvious. We only hope Mr Howard takes a moment to reflect upon them.

Bill Shelton

National President

Western Australia and the fewer guns myth



Paul Peake

Recently released Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures show that despite more than 60 years of strict gun control, Western Australia is now one of the least safest places in the country. According to data contained in the latest edition of the Bureau's *'Crime and Safety'* report,¹ when it comes to break-ins, attempted break-ins and car theft, WA leads the nation. Similarly, assaults, robberies and murder in WA show prevalence rates well above the national average.

Most of the anti-gun measures forced on Australia's states and territories following the Australasian Police Ministers' Council (APMC) meeting back in 1996 were already well established in WA, including comprehensive registration, a ban on semi-automatic centre-fire rifles and the need to demonstrate a 'genuine reason' before being allowed to possess a firearm - including air-rifles.

The WA Police Service has a long history of antipathy towards private gun ownership dating back to WA's first *Firearms Act* in 1931. The combination of strict regulation and a generally anti-gun outlook on the part of the police is reflected in the state's consistently low rates of gun ownership. Table 1 shows the decline in the ratio of private firearms ownership in WA during the past 50 years.

Western Australia's comparative lack of firearms does not appear

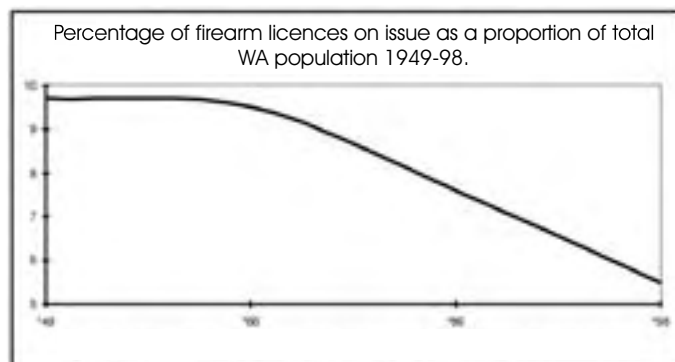


Table 1. Source: WA Police Service Annual Reports and ABS to have had any effect on the state's burgeoning crime problem however. Table 2 contains recent ABS information² showing that assaults in WA are higher than in both Queensland and Tasmania - two states with historically moderate gun laws but considerably higher than the national average.

According to ABS data, in 1998 WA also had the second-highest armed and unarmed robbery rates in the country, with 76.17 and

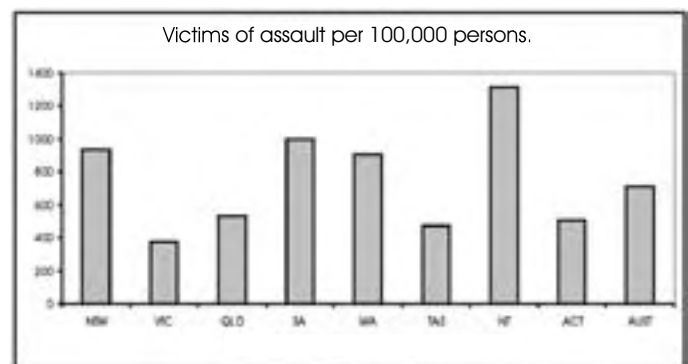


Table 2. Source: ABS data.

71.09 victims per 100,000 persons respectively (see Table 3).³ Western Australia's murder rate is also higher than most other jurisdictions with 1.69 victims per 100,000 persons - 0.18 above the national average of 1.51.

Since 1996, whenever they have been faced with evidence undermining their position on firearms, the catchcry from both

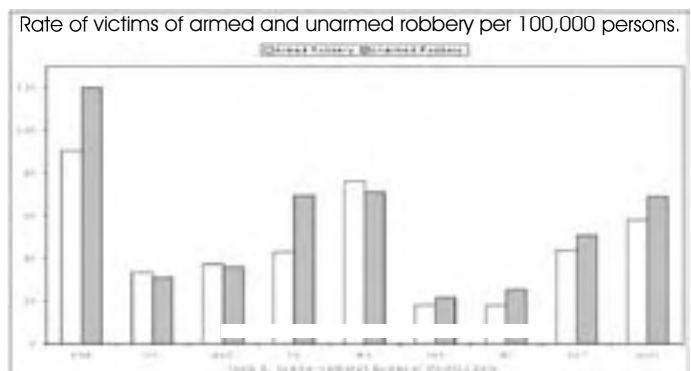


Table 3. Source: ABS data.

the government and the anti-gun lobby has been "wait and see". The Western Australian situation provides an important insight into the likely long-term effects of the Federal Government's anti-gun push however.

If the measures forced on the various states and territories are indeed effective in delivering Mr Howard's promise of a 'safer society', then one would expect to see the benefits already in evidence in WA. After all, the major components of the APMC resolutions have been an integral part of WA's firearm licensing regime for more than six decades. Firearms have historically been

If the measures are indeed effective in delivering Mr Howard's promise of a 'safer society', then one would expect to see the benefits already in evidence...

1. (1999). *1998 Crime and Safety: Australia*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
2. (1999). *1998 Recorded Crime: Australia*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
3. *ibid.*
4. (1999). *1997 Causes of Death: Australia*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

difficult to come by lawfully in WA, with the police frequently hindering shooters seeking additional guns. South Australia, with 20 per cent fewer people, has almost twice the number of registered firearms per licence holder.

If the notion that 'fewer guns equals fewer crimes' is indeed correct, then it should be reflected in WA's crime rate. However, with ABS figures as a guide this is clearly not the case.

Even firearm related crime in WA does not show any significant contrast compared to other jurisdictions. Notably, despite strict firearm controls, the number of suicides in WA has risen considerably during the past decade.⁴

The state now has one of the highest suicide rates per 100,000 persons in the country. The government and the anti-gun move-

ment are faced with a mounting body of evidence that clearly shows that harsh gun controls have little bearing on crime, impacting as they do on the law-abiding as opposed to the law-breakers. The idea that the benefits of the APMC's anti-gun measures will become self-evident at some nebulous point in the future is offset by the Western Australian experience.

Western Australia provides an illustration of the real effects over the long term. Sixty years of strict firearm control have certainly not made the state a 'safer society'.

In many respects it appears to be more dangerous than some parts of the country, which are just beginning to experience draconian gun laws. ●

Promotion Award

The National Board has determined to continue the scheme instigated last year whereby recognition and reward is given to SSAA branches for their efforts in promoting the public image of the SSAA.

The winner of the 1999 award received a lump sum of \$5,000. In an effort to increase the response by branches and to share the rewards across a wider base, it is has been decided to divide the prize money into three divisions.

☆ A cash prize of \$2,000 for the best promotion that encourages juniors to become members of the Association.

☆ A cash prize of \$1,500 for the best

television coverage that promotes the ideals of the Association and/or an activity supported by the Association.

☆ A cash prize of \$1,500 for the best print and/or radio media coverage that promotes the ideals of the Association and/or an activity supported by the Association.

Adjudication shall be made by an independent person familiar with the media.

All submissions must be submitted by 28 February 2000 to:

The Co-ordinator,
SSAA Promotion Award 2000,
PO Box 762, Kent Town, SA 5071

The question of

So why is ethical hunting illegal?

by John Coochey

A little while ago I was chatting with the police minister for Norfolk Island, who is also a keen shooter, and a number of pals from the Island pistol club. We fell to talking about hunting on the mainland. It soon became apparent that one member of the club was an ex-professional hunting guide from New Zealand. I told him that I had heard that the most expensive game in the world was the Californian Bighorn sheep, of which only one could be shot each year and the licence was sold at auction for about \$750,000.

As he opened another can of Fosters, he speculated that fact could be why one of his US clients had negotiated shooting a New Zealand Bighorn sheep - otherwise known as a Merino ram - for an undisclosed amount of money. (He seemed embarrassed to talk about it.) The client turned up complete with a 7mm Remington Magnum and a professional camera crew to film the event. This, the guide thought, was a bit much. A camcorder would have been okay but a complete camera crew?

Two possible targets were located in a field and, with all due ceremony, the hapless ram was dispatched from 150 metres with a 160-grain ballistic tip at some awesome velocity. After the shot, the client and support team started doing 'high fives' and congratulating the proud 'hunter'. The second ram did what most of his ilk would do when his companion fell, he looked around for a moment and then carried on eating.

Quickly the hunting party went into a huddle and then approached the guide to see if it would be possible to shoot the

second one. A suitable 'trophy fee' was agreed upon and the 7mm bellowed once again and another sheep was sent to the happy hunting ground.

This led me to ponder the question, 'what is ethical hunting?'. Is it ethical to hunt for trophies rather than food? What if you use the meat but do not need it?

I read this maxim in a 19th-century hunting book: "Never kill an animal that is useless when dead and harmless when alive." It is as true now as it was then. In the case of the Californian Bighorn ram, supposing the figures are true, an old, probably infertile male is sold for a huge sum that is paid back into conservation. This is a characteristic of US hunting. You pay for it and the game fees go to preserve the wildlife. This seems abhorrent to 'greenies' both in Australia and the US who seem prepared to spend everyone's

money except their own to preserve what they consider to be a natural environment. The hunters are at least prepared to dig into their own pockets.

As a hunter, I make a point of eating what I shoot. I have not been to a butcher for more than a decade, but being an ethical hunter can be against the law.

A few years ago I used to supply a friend with my surplus kangaroo meat. His flat mate, Aaron, was an up and coming national level triathlete who ate 'roo meat with a passion - because it had no fat. It occurred to me that the SSAA cannot really compete in public or parade down the main street with our sporting gear on so why not sponsor an athlete with kangaroo meat? If we gave or loaned him a freezer and kept it full of meat, would he wear our colors and logo when competing? The local club approved it in principle and Aaron was

...any serious ecologist will tell you, there are more Eastern greys and reds now than when Captain Cook landed.

ethical hunting



delighted. The deal could get him publicity and possible further sponsorship and, in my judgement, hunters using what they shot was good public relations.

That is when our problems started. As this was going to be a public affair, we had to be squeaky clean and above the law so I rang the ACT Government to find out how to get an import permit. I was put through to a sweetly spoken female who said that it “was difficult, which was a pity because it is such lovely meat”. Before I could get an ACT import licence I had to get a NSW export licence and for that I had to ring a number at Broken Hill.

I rang the number and asked how to get the export licence. Once the official was convinced that I wasn't a ‘greenie’ on a sting operation, he told me that I would first have to get a commercial culling licence for which I would need permission to hunt from three landholders. Not too much of a problem until he told me that they would all have to be from western NSW, roughly west of Wagga.

I asked why and he explained that for a state to have a commer-

cial culling program they had to have an active wildlife program that involved counting the number of kangaroos each year. As they did not have enough people to count from the ground they

had to do it from the air. The ground east of Wagga was considered too forested to allow an accurate count so the only area for which there was a wildlife program, and hence professional culling, was to the west.

Around about then I realised we were playing against a stacked deck and gave up. So I want to be an ethical hunter but why does the law prevent me from doing it legally? As any serious ecologist will tell you, there

are more Eastern greys and reds now than when Captain Cook landed. European settlers cut down the forest and put in water and grassland so their ‘plains species’ bred up at the expense of the forest-dwelling species. If a landowner can get a permit to reduce his kangaroos, why is it technically illegal for me to take the meat home and eat it but perfectly okay to leave it in the paddock to rot? ●

If a landowner can get a permit to reduce his kangaroos, why is it technically illegal for me to take the meat home and eat it but perfectly okay to leave it in the paddock to rot?

Special Guest Columnist

NRA President Charlton Heston

To the members of the SSAA: As president of the National Rifle Association of America (NRA), I would like to wish you much success with your new politically focused magazine, the *Australian Shooters Journal*, for Australian gun owners. If firearm freedom is to survive anywhere, it will be only through the passion, co-operation and political action of informed gun owners. In that sense, the *Australian Shooters Journal* can serve as a key asset in your country's fight for firearm freedom.

The political debate over firearm ownership spans the globe and Australia is far from alone in seeing its firearms banned and its freedoms diminished and just as in other countries, your loss of freedom has been accompanied by a net loss of public safety. Despite the confiscation and destruction of hundreds of thousands of firearms at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, in the name of fighting crime, gun-related crime in Australia has not significantly decreased.

Unfortunately, that fact is all too often ignored by the national media in their shameless drive to advocate their agenda at any cost to honesty or objectivity. That's why your message needs ink and airplay and volume and vision and why the *Australian Shooters Journal* can be such a unique and useful voice.

In the months and years ahead, I urge you - as hunters, collectors, competitive shooters and lawful gun owners of every kind - to put aside differences of specific interest or degrees of personal belief and to remember what unites you all as gun owners: a love of the outdoors, a respect for wildlife, a commitment to firearm safety and a desire for your families to live in safe communities with your

freedoms undiminished.

This bond of belief and acknowledgement of shared objectives must remain strong if the right to keep and bear arms is to survive in Australia or anywhere else. Only together can you safeguard your rights and sustain your freedoms as a legacy for future generations.

Cordially,



Politics, Law and Reason

Opinion by Clarrie Griffiths

For more than 20 years now, normal, non-violent law abiding citizens of Australia have felt the backlash each time some lunatic does something wrong with a firearm. We are seeing more calls for banning firearms, banning pistols and tighter gun laws.

What have we done that we should bear punishment for the guilty? Where in the law, right or reason, is it acceptable for the innocent to be punished, along with the guilty, for the acts of the guilty? Surely society requires that perpetrators of violent crimes are fairly punished for those crimes and the innocent be left alone, minding their own business. Or is that too difficult?

No shooter can or will disagree that anyone who is convicted of committing an offence while armed should be severely punished. No law-abiding shooter would object to punishment for such offences being so severe as to make potential perpetrators think twice before using a firearm against a fellow human.

However, consider the lessons taught and the deterrent or lack of deterrent demonstrated in these incidents recently reported in our daily press:

Two 18-year-olds pleaded guilty in a NSW country court for attempted armed robbery, breaking, entering, stealing and illegal possession of firearms.

They had lured a local farmer to an isolated spot on the pretext

of selling him goats. They left a note at an arranged meeting place directing him to another location. There, another note told him he was being robbed and to put the money in a certain place. To encourage compliance, they fired shots either at or near him. They were sentenced to 15 months for armed robbery, with lesser amounts for the other charges. Here, a firearm was used with malice and intention to commit a crime. Where is there a deterrent in that sentence? It should have been 20 years minimum.

An innocent bystander was kicked and hit with beer bottles by a gang of youths and stabbed to death. Justice Peter Hidden said, "It was an exhibition of mindless violence perpetrated on a man who had done absolutely nothing." A 17-year-old teenager pleaded guilty to manslaughter. The sentence? Three to five years' jail.

It is not firearms, or knives, or their ownership that constitutes today's danger to our society. It is the odd lunatic, careless irresponsible parent and our far too 'understanding' and lenient lawmakers and law enforcers. It is they who are responsible and must some day wear the blame.

Do something about it. Make a fuss. It may not do much good, but it sure as hell won't do any harm.

It is time we phoned, faxed or nagged our local member, of whatever ilk or party, and complained bitterly about these and like cases. ●

...is it acceptable for the innocent to be punished, along with the guilty, for the acts of the guilty?

Year 2000 Goods and Services Directory

The SSAA has a wide membership base throughout Australia. If you are a business owner and a supporter of private, lawful firearm ownership, we can list you in our National Directory of Goods and Services (GSD). The Directory will be printed by March/April, 2000.

The only cost will be \$20, payable on application. This offer is only open to current members of the SSAA.

Please send details in the format shown, along with your membership number. Maximum is 35 words.

The Co-ordinator
Gary Fleetwood
PO Box 762
Kent Town SA 5071
Fax: 08 8338 0311
Mobile: 040 761 6218

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Produce Store

The GSD will be sorted by state and by service



Keith Tidswell Executive Director Public Relations and International Affairs

Members of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA) make up a considerable portion of Australia's humanitarians. They come in all shapes and sizes and from a variety of backgrounds. There are doctors, nurses, barristers, teachers, coaches, parents, politicians, business owners, servicemen, volunteers and other professionals.

Since the establishment of the SSAA, many of its members have been working, either directly through the Association or through other philanthropic associations, to make Australia a better place to live.

One way in which they are achieving this is through the establishment of the SSAA Hunting and Conservation group, which looks at the whole biotic community, identifies problem areas and negotiates with other concerned parties to determine the best way to balance the environment.

At the 1999 Annual General Meeting of the SSAA, the Hunting and Conservation Branch in South Australia was presented with a cheque for \$5000 by SSAA president Bill Shelton and executive director public relations and international affairs Keith Tidswell.

The cheque, received for winning the 1998 Media Competition, will benefit the Branch in South Australia, but members believe the recognition of their achievements will prove to be an even greater reward.

The South Australian Hunting and Conservation Branch, established by Gil Hartwig, came into existence as a result of a 1991 radio program that focused on the problem of feral goats. Since its inauguration, the activities of the group have expanded to include involvement with a number of departments, councils, associations and conservation groups throughout Australia - proving that they are winners in many aspects.

As well as working to save Australia's native wildlife, SSAA members are active in a variety of other charitable efforts.

The terrors of being exposed to warfare have driven many Kosovo refugees to leave their home and belongings behind and seek refuge.

Australia, as a whole, has sought to assist these refugees by providing a safe haven in this country, far from the conflict, and



SSAA's Keith Tidswell with Red Cross South Australian corporate communications manager Jennie Bell.

the SSAA has assisted by responding to a call by the Red Cross for personal effects for the people of Kosovo.

The Red Cross is renowned for its humanitarian efforts in areas of conflict and major issues, but it is an organisation and like any organisation it depends upon its members - who are often unsung heroes.

Within the SSAA, there are thousands of these unsung heroes. Members conduct safety courses, run ranges, organise competitions and staff canteens, but even beyond that, they also help out when people are at their time of greatest need. They reach out to farmers during droughts and give blood through the blood banks operated by the Red Cross.

One SSAA member, Dr Craig Jurisevic, epitomises what it means to be a humanitarian. Drawn by his concerns for the welfare of others, Dr Jurisevic a cardio-thoracic surgeon from South Australia, served as a volunteer surgeon in Kosovo during the height of the conflict. He courageously worked to save lives within 300 metres of the front lines.

SSAA members care and do make a difference. ●



Cardio-thoracic surgeon Dr Jurisevic pictured here with son Jackson.



SPORTING SHOOTERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

INCIDENT REPORT

With the implementation of new firearm licensing procedures the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia is keen to monitor any difficulties shooters may experience. The Association collects details on the problems confronting members and advises them on appropriate courses of action. At the same time the data gathered assists in the compiling of official submissions. However, given the administrative burdens involved in processing the information you are asked to only fill out the form if you have a genuine incident to report.

Your Name _____ Date ____/____/____

Address _____ SSAA N° _____

Location where incident occurred _____
(Police station, licensing centre etc.)

Date of incident ____/____/____ Time of incident _____

Name and details of police officer(s)/official(s) involved (Include police number if applicable) _____

Description of incident _____

We were not the first

Australia's gun buy-back was hailed as a first among anti-firearm groups and anti-shooting governments worldwide; however, we Australians were not the first to feel the effects of an intolerant government acting against citizens using a gun buy-back program.

Following the Boer War (1899-1902), the British took over the now destroyed Boer republics annexing them and making them British colonies. The British determined the people in the Transvaal had to be disarmed as they constituted a threat and "needed to be disarmed in a quiet and cautious way".

In order to make the disarmament proceed without resistance, the British government paid people for their guns. An African at the time could earn about £25 (per year). During the buy-back of 1902-04, the British paid out £66,000 (2640 years' pay) or some \$A 4.8 million (1999 currency) to remove guns from Africa. The monies paid back to the 30,000 people were regarded as being well spent as it would be recouped by the British in taxes.

Added to the gentle impact coercion by the British Government was the ruthless and massive impact of draconian penalties for failure to surrender arms. Fines in excess of ten years' pay and imprisonment were imposed. The imperial army was used to conduct raids against those suspected of having arms. The British had long experiences in Ireland of such action against a non-compliant population.

Having launched a political and ideological campaign to disarm the Africans, the British discovered they had a compliant workforce. No longer were the gun owners 'arrogant and truculent' and the 'tone of independence' had vanished from the population.

One wonders if such historical precedents were not at the back of the mind of those who orchestrated the gun buy-back in Australia. It is ironic that a mechanism once used by an imperial power to suppress its people in its colony that it regarded as non-citizens is now so enthusiastically embraced by so-called post-colonial governments in Australia and Britain to suppress their own citizens. Further irony is that the Liberals, Labor and Democrats, who pride themselves on unity with Aborigines, would resort to legislative programs that were once used against indigenous peoples and apply that legislation against their own people irrespective of color.

Tony O'Brien, Victoria

Step back in history

Doesn't history repeat itself?

During the buy-back, countries around us were watching while our semi-autos were ruthlessly and thoughtlessly destroyed.

Now war in East Timor is a very real possibility. You can bet our political 'leaders' won't get shot at. It will be our young, strong and best - as usual.

I wonder if the centrefires that we have grudgingly been allowed to keep will be confiscated on the excuse they are needed to fight the enemy. Remember this happened with the old .303s.

Regarding the new magazine format: it was always the best of its genre, in my opinion. Thanks for making it even better.

A dollar for democracy

After decades of agonised soul searching and introspective analysis over why the shooting sports cannot get a fair hearing in the public arena, the pieces all fall into place.

The John Laws and Australian Banking Association revelations demonstrate the deceptively elegant simplicity that the shooting movement has not placed enough advertising business with the commercial media to command balanced treatment.

Of course, no politician dares to stand against the media on any topic, however morally justified, for fear of the treatment they will receive if they are not in a position to balance it with quid pro quo.

How naive we have all been not to have seen the blindingly obvious years ago. But then, in our naivete, we thought we were living in a parliamentary democracy.

Naked fiscal power rules.

Nel Coates, Rose Bay, Tasmania

Gun registration doesn't work

I must take umbrage with the comments by Geoff Cartner (ASJ July 1999) regarding why police need to know what guns, if any, a person owns. Mr Cartner claims that when police attend a situation, it may well save their lives if they know a person is a licensed firearm owner and what firearms they possess. I totally disagree.

For ten years I served the Commonwealth - including several years in an airport counter terrorist unit as a firearms instructor. During this time, I attended several training courses in Canberra, Victoria and Tasmania including several operations group training sessions. Throughout each and every course, all officers were advised to pay no special heed to information received from communications regarding ownership of firearms. Naturally this did not include information regarding persons known to use a weapon. Instead, we were advised to treat every situation as one in which a firearm may be presented against an officer until we had secured the incident site. When quizzed as to why this information was given, the instructors all answered the same way:

"Gun registration doesn't work for several reasons, all of which give us a greater chance of being provided wrong/misleading information. The first major problem is that criminals don't register their guns and the second is that less than ten per cent of all legally owned guns in Australia are registered (before 1996). Even in states like Victoria, where guns must be registered, only 25-30 per cent are."

This course of action is far safer than that presented by Mr Cartner. How many police officers does he know that have been told that a person doesn't own a firearm only to have one stuck in their face?

If Mr Cartner wishes to retain his right to own firearms, he needs to do more than ask gun owners to accept the current laws. He needs to remind those that do not own guns, politicians and many police, that owning a gun does not make a person a criminal. Authorities only need to know that I am legally permitted to own firearms and that I have acceptable storage facilities for the type and number of firearms I own.

David Pickford, Evandale, Tasmania

Duty of Care

The claim, 'In defence of you and your property', is no longer a valid reason for owning a gun. Would it be fair then to assume that the government has now taken over the 'Duty of Care' of its citizens?

If this is so, one must assume the government leaves itself open to legal action if we have a home invasion.

Bill Pernice, Victoria Pt, Qld

Suicide - the real problem

I wanted to drop you a line after reading your article on suicide in Japan. I have read, with interest, other articles published by the *ASJ* on this same subject.

Firearm ownership by the public and suicide are really two very different issues. While it is true that a person having decided to suicide can effectively and quickly do so with a firearm, they can also just as effectively do so by jumping off a cliff, hanging themselves, overdosing, gassing themselves in a car and so on. In fact, from my experience with people bereaved by suicide, the imaginative ways people develop to end their lives are quite astounding.

The real issue with suicidal ideology developing in most cases is an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and helplessness, leading to poor self-esteem and ultimately a very low sense of self-worth.

The triggers for these behavioural developments are many and varied. They can be found in mental illness, physical illness, social influences, economic stresses, performance stresses and feelings of social and mental isolation. The list goes on and on. Add to that the myriad of complications that develop and you can begin to imagine the enormity of trying to combat the development of suicidal ideology.

That in fact is where suicide prevention must be fought, in the areas of its development, not through prohibition of guns, limits on prescription medication, catalytic converters on cars or whatever.

A closing thought: numerous suicidal clients have told me that preventing them from killing themselves only prolongs their agony if the issues causing the pain are not addressed. Can you imagine how much mental anguish a person must be suffering to make a statement like that?

The powers that be ought to remember not to put the cart before the horse and not to blame the mentally ill for what appears to indicate a majority of gun crimes.

The mentally ill are victims of illness - just like anyone with a physical illness. In most cases the mentally ill are no threat to society. They are just ordinary people coping and managing with extraordinary difficulty.

B. Dimmock, QLD

Principal Counsellor SOSBSA

Bruce Dimmock (DipCourse B.C.I.A)

M.A.I.PC/M.A.C.A (Prof)

EDITOR'S NOTE: It would have been nice to have heard these sensible comments during the post-APMC gun debate!

How frustrating

I was in the process of selling an old gun and buying a new one. I had gotten my Permit to Acquire approved and arranged to purchase a new Winchester Mod 70 from Queensland. When I tried to pick up the rifle, I was informed that the rule had just changed and the gun was being sent to a NSW armourer/dealer where I could pick it up.

To sell my old gun, I needed to have my permit and fill out a Notice of Disposal. After checking my records, I realised that I had never received permits for my three rifles. I was very surprised because I had permits for the two shotguns I had registered at the same time. I called to double check and the NSW Registry informed me that the rifles were not registered.

All this time I had assumed that my rifles were registered and that I was obeying the law. The implications could have been serious. I hate to think of what could have happened had I gone on an overseas hunt or been stopped by the police.

Just thought I'd share this information and warn members to check all of their registrations if they have not received the certificates.

Les King, Murrurundi, NSW

Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (NSW) Inc

POSITION VACANT COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

The Association's NSW Branch is seeking a Coaching and Development Officer to operate from the Association's offices at St Marys. Duties will be varied and will include:

- * Developing and implementing statewide coaching and training programs for athletes, coaches and range officers.
- * Developing and implementing general membership and branch development programs.
- * Conducting research and preparing reports and submissions as required by the Association's Management Committee.

- * Providing general assistance to members and branches

The successful applicant will need to demonstrate:

- * Excellent communication skills - both written and oral.
- * Computer literacy including Microsoft Office suite.
- * Competencies in research and report writing.
- * Detailed knowledge of firearms and firearm legislation.
- * Organisational and management skills.

Applications should be forwarded to:

**The Executive Director
PO Box 1001**

Would the media care *if he hadn't used a gun?*

This article was written for *The Boston Globe* by Jeff Jacoby in the United States. Published with permission, it has certain pertinent points that scan the globe, particularly in the relationship between the media and its reporting of murders and tragedies.

Media interest in Buford Furrow's recent Los Angeles atrocity has been massive. His August 10 assault on a Jewish community center in Los Angeles, which left five people wounded - three of them young boys - was a national story from the moment it broke. Scores of newspapers and television stations rushed reporters to the scene. Countless articles and editorials have been written about it. Every angle of the story has been explored, from Furrow's mental health history to the impact the attacks have had on other Jewish facilities nationwide.

Perhaps not coincidentally, Furrow's rampage has also served to advance two causes that are popular with much of the media and with the liberal elite, whose views they so often reflect.

One, of course, is gun control. Furrow fired 70 rounds from an Uzi submachine gun at the community center, then used a Glock pistol one hour later to kill Joseph Iletto, a mail carrier. A Toyota he hijacked and then abandoned was found with seven guns and a stockpile of ammunition. Coming as it did after a string of highly publicized shootings, Furrow's savagery was held out as further proof that the freedom to acquire guns must be curbed.

"There are 192 million privately owned firearms in the United States," began the New York Times editorial on the events in Los Angeles. It went on to ask how many more such calamities it would take before Congress "stops babbling about the right to arms and does something serious about gun control." Innumerable media voices echoed the sentiment.

Furrow's horrifying attack was also offered as evidence that Congress ought to pass a sweeping 'hate crime' law, the better to prosecute violent criminals who target minorities. In this case, the criminal was a neo-Nazi who ranted about Jews and blacks. When he turned himself in, police said, he explained that "he was concerned about the decline of the white race and wanted to send a message to America by killing Jews." He characterized his encounter with Iletto, a Filipino-American, as an unplanned "target of opportunity" to kill a nonwhite.

No federal hate crime law is needed to punish Furrow; everything he did is already illegal in California and prosecutors are sure to seek a harsh punishment. Still, it has become politically correct to demand a hate crime statute any time a bigot commits a heinous assault. On August 12, President Clinton called for a new federal law as a matter of "common sense". Plenty of media voices have called for the same thing.

Now, nobody has to apologize for paying attention when an evildoer opens fire on a group of children. But would the media be quite as interested in Buford Furrow if he wasn't, by their lights, a poster boy for gun control and hate-crime laws?

Suppose, for instance, that the kids he tried to kill weren't in a

Jewish institution but in a nonsectarian day-care center. Suppose he went after them not with an Uzi but with some other lethal weapon - a 300-horsepower automobile, say. Absent the gun control and hate-crime hooks, would the press have covered his monstrous crime so avidly?

We don't have to suppose. Less than four months ago, just such an enormity took place. The media scarcely blinked.

On May 3, Steven Abrams drove past the Southcoast Early Childhood Learning Center in Costa Mesa, California, where 40 small children were frolicking noisily in the playground. Deciding, as he later told police, "to execute those children," he pulled a U-turn, headed back toward the playground and floored the accelerator. The car - a 1967 Cadillac sedan - tore through the chain-link fence, sent the jungle-gym flying and plowed into the crowd of children. It stopped only when it ran into a tree.

Abrams was unhurt. But Sierra Soto, a four year old who loved to dance ballet and play with her pet bunny, Butterscotch, was dead, her body so mangled that the paramedics wouldn't let her mother see her. Brandon Wiener, a three year old whose first word had been "vacuum" and who was never without his favourite teddy bear, was still alive when they got the car off him but died that night in the hospital. Five-year-old Victoria Sherman suffered a fractured skull and a shattered pelvis. Nicholas McHardy, two, was also badly injured. Two other children were hurt and a teacher's aide was treated for multiple lacerations and cuts.

Two dead, five injured - Abrams's violence was far more grisly than Furrow's and led to a grimmer body count. The sheer horror of the crime, if nothing else, should have attracted frenzied media attention. But it didn't involve guns and it wasn't fueled by racial or ethnic bigotry, so it attracted almost none.

On May 5, many papers around the country ran an Associated Press story on the Costa Mesa massacre. Perhaps half a dozen ran a follow-up, also from the AP, on May 9.

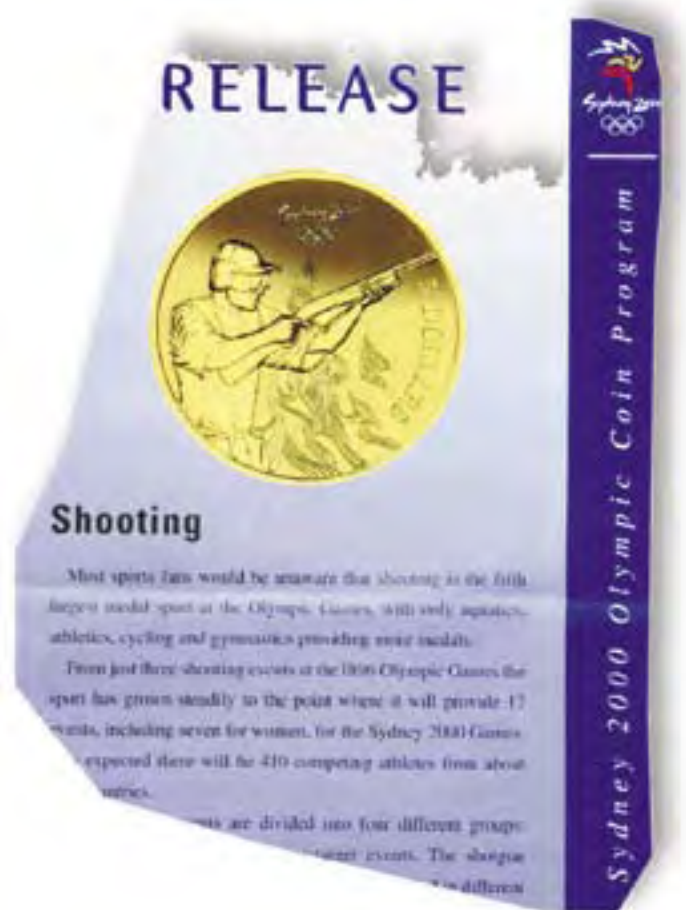
And that was it. No drumbeat of daily coverage, no flood of editorials and opinion columns, no army of reporters flying out to see for themselves.

The story was fully reported in California. It was virtually ignored everywhere else.

Does a homicidal attack on toddlers only make it to the front page when the killer uses a gun? Is attempted mass murder only newsworthy when the victims belong to an official minority group? Perhaps the nation's editors and producers have a sound journalistic reason for paying so much attention to Buford Furrow when they had paid so little to Steven Abrams. Offhand, none come to mind. (*Jeff Jacoby is a columnist for The Boston Globe. His e-mail address is jacoby@globe.com*) ●



PARTING SHOTS



THE GOOD: In the Sydney 2000 Olympic Record – the official newsletter of the Sydney Olympic Coin Program, **shooting is listed as one of the newest sports for which people can purchase an official Olympic Bronze Coin.**

Here is what the newsletter printed about Olympic shooting events:

“Most sports fans would be unaware that shooting is the fifth-largest medal sport at the Olympic Games, with only aquatics, athletics, cycling and gymnastics providing more medals.

“From just three shooting events at the 1896 Olympics Games the sport has grown steadily to the point where it will provide 17 events, including seven for women, for the Sydney 2000 Games. It is expected there will be 410 competing athletes from about 100 countries.

“The shooting events are divided into four different groups: shotgun, rifle, pistol and running-target events. The shotgun events see competitors shoot at clay targets propelled in different directions; the rifle and pistol events are held on shooting ranges with competitors aiming at targets from distances of 10, 25 and 50 metres and the running-target event has shooters firing from a distance of 10 metres at a moving target as it moves across a two-metre opening.”

To order a bronze shooting coin, visit www.perthmint.com.au/olympiccoins or www.ramint.gov.au/olympiccoins.

‘Ban everything’ brigade targets camping

Recent changes to Western Australia’s camping laws have made it extremely difficult for WA shooters and visitors from the east coast wishing to tour the state. The cause of the trouble is the *Caravan Parks and Camping Act 1995* and the *Camping Grounds Regulations 1997*. The new laws, which became effective with the passing of the attendant regulations, make it virtually impossible for shooters to stay anywhere other than in a registered caravan park or camping area. The Regulations provide for fines of up to \$2000 for violations of the rules.

Theoretically, permission to camp in other places can be obtained but the process is complex, convoluted, time consuming and expensive. Furthermore, Western Australia’s Department of Conservation and Land Management has made it clear that its policy is to refuse permission to camp on crown land. The situation places further burdens on Western Australia’s already beleaguered hunters.

If there has been an upside to the new laws however, it has been to prompt several large organisations, including the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, to form a new body dedicated to represent the interests of recreational groups facing similar threats from the ‘ban everything’ brigade.

Membership of the new association, known as the Western Australian Recreational Campers Organisation (WARCO), includes 4WD enthusiasts, caravan and camping groups, anglers and firearm owners. At this stage the combined membership is around 12,000 with more groups expected to join as the benefits of a united front become obvious.

While WARCO’s first task is to bring about some sensible changes to WA’s camping laws, from the shooter’s perspective the fact that so many groups have joined together to support each other is an encouraging start. - **Paul Peake**

THE BAD: This radio interview, between US Army General Reinwald and a female interviewer, was sent to us by Chris Towsy of Upper Kedron in Queensland. While we cannot prove that it is valid, it put a smile on our faces.

Interviewer: So, General Reinwald, what things are you going to teach these young boys when they visit your base?

General Reinwald: We’re going to teach them climbing, canoeing, archery, and shooting.

Interviewer: Shooting! That’s a bit irresponsible, isn’t it?

General Reinwald: I don’t see why, they’ll be properly supervised on the rifle range.

Interviewer: Don’t you admit that this is a terribly dangerous activity to be teaching children?

General Reinwald: I don’t see how, we will be teaching them proper rifle range discipline before they even touch a firearm.

Interviewer: But you’re equipping them to become violent killers.

General Reinwald: Well, you’re equipped to be a prostitute, but you’re not one, are you?

The program stopped abruptly.

Fine line between attack and self-defence



I LOATHE guns and always have. To me, guns are weapons of destruction that have maimed and killed thousands of innocent Australians.

So when Prime Minister John Howard forced the states to adopt tough firearms legislation I applauded his courage.

And, in the spirit of Howard's stance and because of my own conviction, I refuse to own a gun.

A recent incident, though, made me rethink my position.

What happened was that late in the evening, when the wind was howling and I was doing off to sleep, I thought I heard an intruder break into the house.

I was wrong but the occasion made me think about what I would have done with a gun if my house had been invaded.

Would I shoot the intruder or just threaten him?

How would I react if I didn't have a weapon and the intruder did?

Fortunately, I have not had to face any of these situations — but others have.

Take the recent case of former Penthouse Pet Deborah Shyers, 34, and her 19-year-old boyfriend, Daniel Mogg.

The Townsville couple were confronted by an armed intruder who broke into their house with, they thought, the intention of killing them.

Mogg and Shyers had very good reasons for believing that they were to be murdered.

First, the intruder, Lloyd Pennelather, was infatuated with Shyers.

The woman wanted nothing to do with him.

Second, Pennelather was equipped with a cut-down .22 calibre rifle, a full magazine containing sub-sonic 22 bullets, a hunting knife, wrist restraints and a guitar string which would could easily be used for the purposes of strangling someone.

In the words of Anderson Telford, the solicitor for Mogg: "Both my client and Mr Shyers were in no doubt that they were going to die."

So they fought back and in the fracas that followed, Lloyd Pennelather was killed.

The law in Queensland in regard to defending yourself and your loved ones from a situation like the one that confronted Mogg and Shyers is relatively straightforward.

Basically you cannot use more

force than is necessary to repel an invasion. If an intruder in the process of invading but did not believe you were in serious danger of death or severe injury or death, he charged with murder.

However, the law also allows you to believe that you are in real danger of bodily harm or death if it is necessary for defence against a violent or grievous bodily harm.

The law may well be a precise legal term, but he actually interpreted it in a second drama associated with the case.

The transcript of the Mogg case clearly shows that Mogg was conflicting evidence about the degree of force used to defend himself when he entered the house.

As well, there were arguments about the injuries inflicted on him after his hands had been and he had been excited from dwelling.

As it was the jury in Mogg guilty of murder while Shyers was acquitted.

"It was a hollow victory," a witness Shyers said after the verdict.

"They have sentenced a 19-year-old to life for self-defence in a home invasion."

This week Anderson Telford filed an appeal on behalf of Mogg.

It will be up to the appeal judge to decide on the merits of this most complex case.

But the situation Mogg and Shyers found themselves in makes me think of the law as it stands and how I would react if my house were invaded.

Well, I wouldn't want to change the law and I am glad that I do not own a gun.

But if someone forced into my house armed like a Timorese soldierman then I guess I would fight with all the force and courage that I could muster.

Even if it meant breaking the law.

Paul Wilson is a writer and journalist.

A 12 toy gun intended as a birthday present for a 12-year-old boy has been seized by customs officers.

The toy, which looks a projectile almost identical, was declared a dangerous prohibited import after being confiscated at Brisbane Airport.

It is the latest in a series of Australian seizures involving toy guns under strict new firearms laws.

In June, a Richmond toy shop was raided by police who seized five boxes of toy guns deemed illegal fireworks under new Victorian legislation.

The shop's owner was found guilty of serious firearms offences, including possession of a loaded

gun. The charges were dismissed.

The toy gun seized at Brisbane Airport was sent to Douglas Henderson, 11, by his grandmother in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Customs officers unopened the birthday present when they noticed the grandmother had listed "toy gun" along with a birthday card, money and a book on her declaration form.

Gary Holden, the boy's father and a former police officer, was told the toy had been classified as a soft air hand-gun, which is

not a "harmless" toy.

"I don't have a real face," Mr Holden said yesterday. "It's the legislation that's wrong."

"If it'd been sent a replica, it would be fair enough but — come on — this is crazy. It's a little plastic toy."

"If you feed it into your hand, you would hardly feel it. The whole thing is extraordinary."

The toy, which works on a spring mechanism, has a soft yellow pellet — labelled a "projectile" by legislation — a distance of no more than 30cm.

As an Australian Customs spokesman in Canberra said, "toy guns" would be virtually impossible to distinguish from real ones.

The spokesman said it was meant that the gun was not a toy.

Similar guns are available in toy shops throughout Australia.

In theory, the boy could be charged with possession of a

Waikerie Magistrate's Court ...

Magistrate issues warning over guns

Magistrate, Mr. Michael Frederick issued a warning to gun owners last week when he fined a local man for four firearms offences.

"Guns are an instrument of death. I defy anybody to give me one good reason to have firearms in their homes," said the Magistrate.

He made the comment during fining Stephen Kym Stoeckel \$250 for possessing a gun without a licence and for keeping it unsecured.

Four firearms were located at Stoeckel's home 1 of which were unregistered because he could not afford to renew the licences. One of which was a family heirloom.

The firearms will remain at the police station for six months until such time as the defendant receives the appropriate licensing.

Noel Raymond Adams, 55 of Ramco was fined \$300 and received a one month suspension of his driving licence after being convicted of driving in a manner dangerous to the public.

Arthur Kambai appeared before the court charged with driving in a dangerous manner.

"If it was his first conviction and under the circumstances stated, I would be disposed to expose considerable leniency."

Today show to visit

daughter in Adelaide during her rehabilitation process.

Graham Maurice Stebbins of Swan Reach was convicted and sentenced to one month's imprisonment for driving while disqualified from holding a driving licence.

Stebbins was charged after driving on March 20 this year and claimed he was driving to work because he could not get anyone to drive him there.

Employed at the time Stebbins said his wife has never held a drivers licence and his son was working elsewhere.

Magistrate Frederick was informed the defendant had prior convictions for drink driving offences and some 13 pages of criminal convictions.

"If it was his first conviction and under the circumstances stated, I would be disposed to expose considerable leniency."

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A Fair Go

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ASSOCIATION

Boy's fake machinegun

almost got him shot

BRISBANE. — Police almost shot a 15-year-old boy yesterday while he played with a Thompson machinegun replica in his parents' garden.

A neighbor had called the police after seeing the boy with the gun. Five carloads of police surrounded the house in Red Hill, a Brisbane suburb, aimed their pistols at the boy and twice ordered him to drop the gun.

The boy, whose name was not released, did not hear them and kept the gun pointed at the ground until he heard the third order.

Constable Brian Ahern said he never doubted that the gun was

real. "If the boy had pointed the gun at us there almost certainly would have been shots fired and a tragedy could have resulted," he said.

The boy's mother told police her son had paid \$225 for the replica at a disposals store earlier in the day. She said neither she nor her son had realised it was illegal to own the replica.

She said her son had saved for months to buy the replica as a Christmas present to himself. He was playing war games under the house when the police arrived.

Police told the boy's mother they would not lay charges. The gun was confiscated.

Today show to visit

Today show to visit

Today show to visit

Gun buy-back backfires

Sir, in total support of G Cohen and G Higgins letters of Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 I have always maintained personally and publicly that there was a possibility that the National Firearms Buy-back scheme could backfire on the politicians and the people of Australia.

As far back as the late 1970's and early 1980's you could see a man was underway to reduce the level of rifle and gun ownership in Australia.

Long before the Martin Reynolds' of this world became a tool, to be used by certain politicians, most of the press, and people that had nothing to do with that disgusting event, nevertheless they all jumped on the band wagon saying: "People should remember one thing, unless we have weapons including firearms (except pistols) despite what you read in the papers and see on television, has not diminished at all — something responsible and not gun owners have been against all

any gun buy-back scheme would be put in place, then I think Australia will without any being pressure upon them.

Of course it is impossible to specify in one short letter, and I must be realistic. Time for coming out. Our school training and National Service were that, never shall be forgotten. Very few people Military Cadets now.

The skill and training for police and army has been and is being lost. This is the same category, military and the abolition of our POW's.

There's a lesson here to country must take a part in our own defence. The 5-1000, follow the

Today show to visit