

ASJ

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

The political voice of the SSAA

Reflections on the Schuller Thesis

See page 12.

LEARN TO
LOBBY.

Jan/Feb 2001 Vol. 3 Issue 1
Members-only insert to the *Australian Shooter*





In this issue

The political voice of the SSAA

Editorial policy:

To create a better environment and community understanding of all forms of hunting and shooting sports.

PO Box 2066, KENT TOWN, SA 5071

PHONE: 08 8272 7100

FAX: 08 8272 2945

Internet: www.ssaa.org.au

E-mail:

AS - as@ssaa.org.au

SSAA - ssaa@ssaa.org.au

A MEMBER OF THE
CIRCULATIONS
AUDIT BOARD



98,538

This *Journal* is owned and published by the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia Inc. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of this Association.

AFFILIATIONS:

International Shooting Union; Australian Olympic Federation; Australian Shooting Association; International Practical Shooting Confederation; International Benchrest Shooters (IBC); Confederation of Australian Sport (CAS); National Rifle Association (NRA) of America; IHMSA (Aust) Inc.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Freelance contributions are welcome. Color slides and manuscripts may be sent to the address shown above.

CONTRIBUTORS: Bill Shelton, Paul Peake, Gary Fleetwood, Keith Tidswell, John Coochey, Dr Paul Hopwood

While the publishers exercise due care with regard to handloading data, no responsibility can be accepted for errors and/or omissions, or any damage suffered as a consequence. Neither the ASJ nor any of its advertisers accept responsibility in this matter. No text or photographs within the *Journal* may be republished, either electronically or in print, without the express written permission of the managing editor Tim Bannister. Copyright 2001.

THE AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL is published bi-monthly and is printed by PMP Print, Watson Ave, Netley, SA.



4



12

A word from the President	3
Deceased estates, firearms and the law	6
Arming yourself with words - Part II	8
ASJ Letters	10
Keith Tidswell - Executive Director Public Relations and International Affairs.	14
Parting shots	15



A word from the President

The new year sees a few issues on the national front still up in the air. As this editorial is being prepared the ongoing problems surrounding the new Customs regulations are yet to be resolved. The SSAA, along with representatives from the National Dealers and Traders Council, have been working together to try and bring about some sensible changes and we will keep members apprised of the situation as it develops.

A draft of the new national Framework for Firearms Safety Training was distributed to the various police services throughout the country late last year. In some jurisdictions the firearms fraternity was invited to comment on the proposals - in others it was not. While the draft framework followed the basic recommendations set down in the report prepared by David Kay Training and Development Services back in 1999 (a report which the SSAA supported in principle), the proposed framework contains a number of additional 'learning outcomes' that the Association believes are completely inappropriate and outside of the focus of what is ostensibly a firearm safety program. The SSAA has forwarded its objections at both the national level and through several state branches. At this stage we are awaiting a response.

At the state level, several jurisdictions are considering alterations to their firearm laws in the wake of reviews conducted during the past 12 months. While the raft of possible changes are too involved to consider in the limited space set aside for this column, it is

sufficient to say that while some of them may prove to be sensible, others, especially in New South Wales, are ill-conceived and the SSAA will be opposing them with all the resources it can muster. We will keep members up-to-date on developments as they come to hand.

Many members would be aware of the recent fire at the Association's St Marys indoor range in NSW. While the commercial side of the facility was largely unaffected, the administrative staff have been doing their best to keep the wheels turning from temporary offices located in the complex's carpark. I am happy to report that repairs are well underway and the SSAA hopes to have the range back at full capacity in the next few weeks.

In closing, I would like wish you all a happy new year. The shooting sport's ongoing problems notwithstanding, the Association has every reason to look forward to a productive and prosperous 12 months ahead.

Bill Shelton
National President

LEARN TO LOBBY

Lobbying is often a kind of top-down approach to defending our right to participate in the shooting sports, talking to the senior decision-makers to convince them of our point of view and remind them of our voting power.

by John Coochey

The US Marines have a saying: Every marine a rifleman, every rifleman a marksman. It's a policy that has put them in good stead throughout the years. What we have to do is make every shooter a lobbyist. The potential political power of the shooting lobby is immense but we seem to have problems harnessing it. I have met the anti-gun lobby and they really are 'paper tigers', a movement with much appearance but little substance.

The SSAA has already published articles telling members how to lobby their local politicians but how many of us still can't even name them? Lobbying is often a kind of top-down approach to defending our right

to participate in the shooting sports, talking to the senior decision-makers to convince them of our point of view and remind them of our voting power.

For those who don't feel comfortable with politicians, there is another method, which, in the long term, is far more effective - it is working at a grass roots level. These days it is not such a good idea to advertise that you own firearms but to those people who already know you shoot, why not try and get them involved - especially if they are juniors? A 16-year-old will be a voter in two years.

I have found that there are a few ways that seem almost infallible in winning 'hearts

and minds' for shooting. One of which is to actually get people out on the range where even those with only a passing interest in the shooting sports seem to become immediate 'nitrocellulose junkies'.

In the past, the pistol club that I am a member of had a system whereby if you did not turn up for two 'working bees' each year, you got fined when you paid the next year's membership. It would be a good idea to bring in a system whereby every member is expected to take two non-shooters out to the range each year.

Why not give each existing member two vouchers per year that would cover range fees for guests and maybe put them into a

lottery each year?

My personal best was when I was helping out as an instructor at an Australian Naval Base a couple of years ago. I was asked if I would train some Sea Scouts. I agreed, but someone goofed and we ended up with 28 candidates instead of the promised four. After checking them out we went ahead without incident, but afterwards I suggested that it would be better for them to attend the SSAA junior training session, an offer they were glad to accept.

So in 20-odd years of shooting, I have recruited maybe 50 sympathisers/new shooters. It's not a lot, but suppose every SSAA member does the same? That would be one helluva lot of voters.

If target shooters are not well regarded, then hunters seem to fare even worse. This is almost always due to ignorance. I had a girlfriend some years ago who was surprised that the only creditable hunting outcome was an instant one-shot kill. She genuinely thought that the animal was tortured like in a bullfight - and she had gone to university.

A central issue is often whether the animal is eaten or not; people seem far less upset if the meat is used. It is amazing the situations where the ability to supply game meat can 'win friends and influence people' both for yourself and the shooting sports.

Have you ever thought how many of our rituals revolve around sharing food or drink - the Sunday dinner, the Royal Garden Party?

It has always been my policy to give a kilo of kangaroo meat to anyone who expresses an interest, but no more on the first occasion because sometimes they decide not to use it and it is wasted.

A while ago my girlfriend said a colleague wanted enough kangaroo meat to feed 25

If target shooters are not well regarded, then hunters seem to fare even worse. This is almost always due to ignorance.

people, which struck me as a bit of a nerve as we hadn't even met. I was then told he planned to take it overseas. I refused, thinking there was no way it would get through customs, but I was assured that as it was going to the World Health Organisation it would definitely get through.

A suitable recipe was e-mailed to the French chef in Zurich; the frozen meat got through, together with a case of Australian wine, and the dinner was successful. As a token of appreciation, I got a box of Swiss chocolates and some good kangaroo recipes

- how he got those in Switzerland I never did discover. I still have images of a senior World Health Organisation official approaching our ambassador and saying he liked Australian kangaroos and that they went well with a good cabernet sauvignon.

So, with luck, you can lobby everyone from your neighbour to diplomats.

Once again if you are not already eating what you shoot it is a good idea to start. E-mail me at cazador@dynamite.com.au and I will send you recipes and instructions.

Putting forward the interests of the Australian shooter is pretty simple providing you are prepared to make the effort. There are many ways to do it without appearing on television or standing for Parliament.

I remember a friend of mine saying he went to a business conference in the United States. Before the dinner started the guest speaker told all the guests to stand up. Having done so they were told to pick their chairs, underneath which was a US silver dollar that they could keep.

The speaker then said the moral of the story was that "if you wanted to make a dollar in this country you have to get off your arse!" Okay, we are not trying to make money but the principle is the same. ●

INTERSTATE TRAVEL

SHOOTERS TRAVELLING interstate need to remember that there are restrictions when it comes to crossing state lines with a firearm.

Here is a breakdown of the jurisdictions and the length of time interstate licences are recognised:

- ACT (Category C not recognised) - 3 months
- Northern Territory - 3 months
- South Australia - 3 months
- Victoria - 3 months
- Western Australia (Not recognised in legislation. Need to apply for a temporary permit - no fee, 3 month time limit)
- New South Wales - no time limit
- Queensland - no time limit
- Tasmania - no time limit (Category C not recognised)

For shooters moving to a new state, other time periods apply. Contact your state's firearms registry for additional information or www.ssaa.org.au/lawindex.html



Woodgate Morgan Solicitors

Specialists in firearms and prohibited firearms legislation. Wide field of technical knowledge and experience.

Contact: T I Morgan
Phone: 02 4957 1666
Fax: 02 4957 7166



by Paul Peake

Deceased estates, firearms AND THE LAW

Unfortunately, most of us will have to deal with the question of a deceased estate at some point in our lives. The sad fact is friends and relatives pass on and we are sometimes asked to administer their affairs. Conversely, we may be left property by way of a will. The situation can become complicated when firearms are involved. What should you do if someone you know dies and leaves a gun in the house? What are the responsibilities of an executor charged with carrying out a deceased person's wishes? What are the procedures for taking possession of a firearm that has been bequeathed to you?

Despite the notion of 'uniform national gun laws', the situation varies considerably between jurisdictions. For instance, in Victoria, section (180) of the *Firearms Act* allows the executor of a will to hold a deceased person's guns for up to six months. However, they must notify the Chief Commissioner immediately. On the other hand, when a person dies in New South Wales, their firearms must either be given to the local police or removed to a licensed dealer for safe keeping. In both states, if a gun is left to someone via a will, they must fulfil the usual 'genuine reason' criteria and obtain a licence before taking possession of it.

Despite the notion of 'uniform national gun laws', the situation varies considerably between jurisdictions.

Under section (11) of the South Australian *Firearms Act*, the executor or administrator of an estate is able to maintain temporary possession of a deceased person's firearms while their will is being sorted out. Conversely, in Western Australia the police must be notified as soon as a licensee dies and their firearms must be placed in the hands of the local authorities straight away (the police will usually come and collect them). A temporary permit must then be issued before the guns can be taken to a dealer. Additionally, if a firearm is left to someone in a will, they must produce a letter from the estate's executor when applying for a licence.

According to the Northern Territory's Police Service, the best approach when someone dies in the NT leaving firearms as part of their estate is to pass the guns on to the local police or a firearms dealer until the beneficiary can either make arrangements to license them or they are sold. If the executor is not a licence holder, then it is best to have a dealer pick them up - avoiding the problem of being in possession of a gun without a permit. Under section (30) of the NT's *Firearms Act* authorities may issue an 'Heirloom License', which allows a person to possess firearms bequeathed to them.

In Queensland, the police recommend that firearms from an estate be handed to an appropriately licensed person while the deceased's will is being administered. Section (36) of the State's *Weapons Act* allows a person (with a suitable firearms licence) to take temporary possession of a gun for up to three months. However, the deceased's firearms licence, along with the details of their guns and a copy of the death certificate, must be forwarded to the Weapons Licensing Branch as soon

as possible. Beneficiaries who already hold a licence do not need a permit to acquire a firearm bequeathed to them if they can provide a copy of the will or a statutory declaration.

In the Australian Capital Territory, firearms from a deceased estate should be placed in the hands of a dealer as soon as practicable and the police should be notified of the licensee's death. As with the NT, to avoid any hassles connected with carrying guns sans an appropriate permit, it is best to have a dealer collect them. However, the police in the ACT maintain that an unlicensed person taking guns to a police station is unlikely to be charged if the firearms form part of a deceased estate.

Finally, while Tasmania does issue heirloom licences under section (13) of the state's *Firearms Act*, it does not permit the executor of an estate to hold on to a deceased person's firearms. According to the Tasmanian Police Service, when a person dies their firearms should be handed over to the local authorities until arrangements can be made to have a dealer take them. Additionally, any firearm held under an heirloom licence must be rendered permanently inoperable - whether or not it's your grandfather's old Lithgow 1A or a \$30,000 handmade Purdy shotgun.

In summary, all states and territories insist that authorities are notified when a licensee dies and in most jurisdictions a beneficiary must fulfil the same 'genuine reason' criteria as anyone else before they can take possession of a gun left to them. Remember, if you're called upon to administer someone's last will and testament and you have any doubts about their firearms and your obligations under the law, call the local police and ask for some advice before you take the guns anywhere. ●

NSW Pistol Affiliation UPDATE



STEPS TOWARDS an affiliation between the NSW SSAA and the NSW Amateur Pistol Association (NSW APA) have been made during the past few months and according to SSAA executive director Roy Smith, they are "steps in the right direction".

On October 7, the NSW APA held a meeting to discuss the possible amalgamation with the NSW SSAA. While amalgamation was not the end result, a motion was made that saw executives from both the NSW APA and the NSW SSAA meeting to identify common ground and barriers or problems with the affiliation/alliance of the two organisations. Despite the fact that no long-term decisions were made, the executives did reach the following interim agreement:

1. The NSW APA will continue to offer the discounted membership rate of \$27 (plus GST) to SSAA members.
2. The SSAA will offer to NSW APA members (who are not current SSAA members) SSAA membership at the discounted rate of \$27 (plus GST).
3. Membership of either organisation is voluntary.

While many had hoped for more significant progress, Mr Smith said he is "very pleased with this interim outcome".

Arming yourself WITH WORDS

Part II

Being able to use accurate quotations from both our leaders and opponents is a valuable tool to inform those around us of the true nature of the gun debate.

The following is another set of quotations that have been collected and placed on our web site at www.ssaa.org.au/quotes.html

Quickly identifying the source of any quotation you use is paramount and it is far better not to say anything than be found wanting when those you speak to demand a source. It is all about credibility.

Australia - quotes by gun prohibitionists/ academics

On IPSC applying for Olympic demonstration status -

"We should ban this sport which simply glamorises violence and legitimises the dangerous fantasies of some men."

Roland Browne - Coalition for Gun Control
The Canberra Times 26/7/99

"Chapman demonstrates a lack of understanding of the technology he is so keen to regulate."

Solicitor Don Barton reviewing Simon Chapman's book *Over our Dead Bodies*.
Law Society Journal NSW July 1999

"GST...means more guns in the community."

Greens Senator Bob Browne
The Age - Victoria 7/7/99

On lower NZ gun deaths -

"Now, I can't explain that, I don't think anyone can, except to suggest that we're just backward and we'll catch up with you one day."

Philip Alpers
Radio 5AN, Adelaide 24/2/99

On Australian cricketers holding rifles while on tour in Pakistan -

"These blokes all have smiles on their faces."

Roland Browne - Gun Control Chairman
19/10/98

In a letter to Australian Commonwealth Games Association asking to ban shooting sports -

"Fundamentally, guns are designed to kill and the practice which competitors at Commonwealth Games participate in, is just the same as normal target practice. This is aimed at making the shooters better equipped to kill some living thing."

John Crook - Gun Control Australia
21/9/98

"However, there are also strong life-saving arguments for banning guns...we don't introduce these measures partly because we are a democratic society which values individual freedom..."

Paul Wilson - criminologist
The Courier Mail 9/9/98

"Our logic is that shooters are the most ill-disciplined people of any recreational group. That's what attracts them to guns. It's a state of mind. They are usually poorly educated, they never had much success at school and were never very good at

sport.”

John Crook - President Gun Control Australia
The Advertiser - Adelaide 16/7/97

Gun shows could “act as a place...where people of dubious intent get together.”

John Crook - President Gun Control Australia
The Australian 17/2/97

“We are discovering that there is one enemy around the world: the organised gun lobby.”

Philip Alpers
Canberra Times 16/2/97

“The gun lobby doesn’t deal in facts.”

John Laws
The Daily Telegraph 22/5/96

“...A gun is designed and purchased with lethal or threatening intent.”

Simon Chapman
Sydney Morning Herald 31/7/95

All guns would be banned in urban NSW under legislation proposed yesterday by the Australian Democrats. A former hobby shooter, Mr Jones said, “Ordinary people should not be able to have them.”

Democrats MLC NSW Richard Jones
Glebe & Western Weekly 1991

Democrat quotes on firearm issue

“Gambling is an issue like firearms - they are both scourges of society. The less we have of either, the better it will be for the nation.”

Democrats press release by Senator Woodley 16/12/99

“The hunters use a spray of shotgun pellets, which means there is almost no skill to this so called ‘sport’, just the thrill of killing.”

Democrats press release Senator Andrew Bartlett 18/3/99

On semi-automatic handguns -

“They are not used in any Olympic or Commonwealth Games shooting event and the only prominent international event using these guns is highly questionable, thanks to the use of human silhouettes as targets.”

Democrats press release by Senator Natasha Stott Despoja 12/3/99

(To find out what pistol competitions use semi-automatic pistols, go to the official Olympic web site: www.olympics.com/eng/schedule/SH_sched.html)

All targets used in Olympic competition are circular in shape.)

“The Democrats object to extreme and/or gratuitous violence in any material for public exhibition.”

Ian Gilfillan MLC Democrat SA in a letter to SSAA 12/1/98

“Actually, I’m a bit embarrassed to admit how many times I’ve seen RoboCop, The Terminator and Terminator 2.”
Democrats Senator Natasha Stott Despoja
Woman’s Day 21/12/98

“I therefore support the tightest possible controls on the use of firearms and the complete removal of firearms from the home.”

South Australian Democrat Sandra Kanck 12/7/96 in a letter to an SSAA member

“A psychologist would have a field day analysing the phallic symbolism of duck hunting and what the practice reveals about the sexual inadequacies of the men involved.”

Senator Norm Sanders
The Advertiser 27/11/86

Australia - National Party quotes on firearm issues

“You do not prevent such atrocities by taking away the civil rights of law-abiding citizens.”

Karlene Maywald - SA State Member for Chaffey in a letter to SSAA 19/8/97

“Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer yesterday called upon people who support tougher gun laws to write to politicians urging them to withstand pressure from the gun lobby.”

The West Australian 24/6/96

“unfairly besmirched”

Tim Fischer - Deputy Prime Minister on media portrayal of firearm owners
The Daily Mercury 6/6/1996

“...It was all about draining the suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney of firearms.”
Tim Fischer - Deputy Prime Minister in a letter to an SSAA member 9/9/97

‘Brady Bill’ FAILURE

by Paul Peake

ONE OF the chief anti-gun measures forced on Australia’s states and territories following the Australasian Police Ministers’ Council in May 1996 was the notion of a 28-day waiting period on the licensing of firearms. Thankfully, several jurisdictions have since overhauled the requirement in relation to second and subsequent guns or at least given police discretionary power in applying it. One of the main progenitors of the waiting-period idea was the *Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act* introduced in the United States in 1994.

The ‘Brady Bill’, which has now been superseded by a new system administered through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), required federally licensed firearm dealers to impose background checks and five-day waiting periods on anyone wishing to purchase a handgun. The procedure was implemented in 32 US states and touted by the anti-gun movement as the panacea to violent crime. However, a recent study by Dr Jens Ludwig and Dr Philip Cook published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* has shown that in fact the Act had no effect whatsoever on homicide rates:

Our analyses provided no evidence that implementation of the Brady Act was associated with a reduction in homicide rates. In particular, we find no difference in homicide or firearm homicide rates to adult victims in the 32 treatment states directly subject to the Brady Act provisions compared with the remaining control states.¹

When it comes to violent crime, it seems the imposition of a waiting period on US gun owners has proved no more effective than the one forced on Australian shooters, a fact supported by the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data, which shows that the number of murders in Australia rose during the past year by an alarming 20 per cent.² Ludwigs and Cook’s findings in relation to the Brady Bill reinforce what should be obvious - trying to combat crime by penalising the law-abiding is a waste of time.

1. Ludwig, J., & Cook, P. (2000). Homicide and Suicide Rates Associated with Implementation of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Vol. 285, No 5.

2. (2000). *1999 Recorded Crime: Australia*. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ASJ Letters

Proper handling procedures

I was deeply disturbed to read of the accidental discharge of a Steyr service rifle and the resulting death of a young soldier serving his country in East Timor this past August.

According to the newspaper article, the soldiers had entered an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) and proceeded to stack their field packs and firearms at the front of the passenger area, without removing the magazines or clearing the chambers of their weapons.

As both an old soldier and a current club shooter, I have several problems with the procedures that, if reported correctly, were followed by the troops.

During my service, it was normal to carry your rifle in the loaded and cocked position when traveling by truck, where there was always the possibility of being ambushed and quick return of fire was essential. However, when travelling by helicopter or APC, weapons were routinely unloaded and cleared before embarking. I should point out that infantry transports were uncovered and if need be soldiers could exit the truck at a good rate of knots. When the destination was reached, firearms were cleared before dismounting and, when necessary, immediately reloaded after grounding.

I do not know if the current breed

of APC is fitted with gun ports for the infantry, but if this is not the case there is no logical reason to enter such a vehicle with a loaded and cocked firearm.

If there was an undisclosed reason for the troops to carry their weapons in a manner ready for imminent contact, it appears to me that each soldier should have had his (or her) weapon to hand, with a loaded magazine inserted but with the chamber empty. In a contact situation, it takes as long to cock the firearm and chamber a round as it does to stand up and face the door of the APC.

If the newspaper report is correct, it appears that the weapon handling procedures exhibited by these soldiers is abysmally poor and leads me to wonder if the current Australian infantrymen and women are receiving the training that soldiers sent to combat situations are clearly entitled to and if not, why?

I have observed, with some dismay, the apparent winding back of our Australian armed forces during the past years and I sincerely believe that Australia and Australians need a defence force capable of entering any situation that may confront them and deserve the best military training possible.

Robert Kerr, Snug, Tasmania

Stand up for your rights

I am writing to you in respect of AVOs and firearms.

Last year I was served with an application for AVO by the local police. A neighbour had decided that they would be vindictive and get on the anti-gun bandwagon.

What I wish to say is that there is hope in the legal system. When this matter was finally heard, the end result was that the magistrate ruled that the applicant had no real fear for personal safety and was also made to pay my solicitor's costs.

All I wish to say is if you haven't done anything wrong don't be afraid to stand up for your rights, as 'it is easier to tell the truth than to remember a lie'. There are too many people out there who abuse and clog up the legal system and who pays? Once again, the poor old tax payer.

Apparently there has recently been changes to the system, due to the inappropriate application for AVOs, which should hopefully protect, to a certain extent, the innocent law-abiding gun owner from harassment. Maybe, once people know that they may have to pay all the costs, they may think twice about applying for an AVO for a purpose other than it is intended.

I wish to thank all the people who supported us.

Trevor Allen
[Address withheld]

An easy solution

I am writing in regards to a letter by Phillip Dunn in the September ASJ. Mr Dunn quite properly and legally told his unlicensed wife that she couldn't, by law, have access to his gun safe and then said he had no answer for her when she questioned him and said that she owned half of the house, etc. Well, Phillip, you have the answer in your own hands.

Take your darling down to the range one day, when you know other women will be practising, either long or short

arms, and enrol her as a member of the SSAA and coach her through the Victorian licensing requirements.

In addition to the obvious advantages of sharing a hobby and giving her new insights and confidence, you will, in the event you fall off your perch before she does, make it easier for her to have lawful possession of your hard won collection.

Stay safe and alert.

Paul Carew, Mt Gavatt, Qld

Mail your letters to:
Australian Shooters Journal
PO Box 2066
Kent Town, SA 5071

United we stand

Having been a shooter for the past 32 years and a journalist for most of that time, I feel I have a good grasp on current trends in my sport.

The latest effort by the Commonwealth Government heralds the start of a trend, which I think firearm owners have been expecting for some time and it will not end.

The government learned that a firearm buy-back is a most expensive exercise, which did not achieve what it was designed to do and does not have broad community support.

They have now turned their attention on removing firearms from personal ownership through political moves that will cost very little. Gradually the eroding will continue.

They came for our semi-autos after 1996.

They have come for our handguns in 2000.

They will come for our rifles in 2001.

They will come for our shotguns in 2002.

Senator Vanstone has openly and freely admitted that legal firearm owners of this country are not causing any

problems, yet her recent import restrictions will do absolutely nothing to combat illegal firearm ownership and activity. The only people who will be penalised under this regime are licensed pistol shooters.

We all know this.

The government is killing us off with stealth.

Enough is enough!

So, on to my point in writing this letter.

I have noted how the shooting sports have been divided by different discipline loyalties. That was obvious following Port Arthur and continues today. Now pistol shooters are under threat. Next it will be rifle and then shotgun shooters.

We are a divided sport and unless we depolarise we will vanish. Without strong opposition from a massive body representing every form of shooting in this country, the government will be emboldened to move right through the sport until every type of private firearm ownership is removed.

I urge all shooting sport executives to come together in a summit with the intention of forming a union similar to the

National Rifle Association of America.

If we had one body representing the million firearm owners in Australia, lobbying at the state and federal level to leave us alone, the voting power of that group would force the political parties to listen and change. They understand nothing but losing and we are capable of making them lose.

Unsworth found that out.

However, I see us as a divided sport and politicians know that. Look at other sports - Athletics Australia, Swimming Australia, etc - they are not fragmented into high jump association, 100m association or butterfly association. They are one body, one force and they get a hell of a lot of support through the clout they carry.

All shooting groups should bury their prejudices and ancient feuds; we are all hurting. Shooters are crying out for this.

Bill Power, Colonel Light Gardens, SA

[*Editor's Reply:* That is what the SSAA is all about.]

Letter to SSAA National President Bill Shelton

Dear Mr Shelton,

I have been meaning to get this note to you for quite a while. I am the president of the World Forum on the Future of Sport Shooting Activities (WFSA).

I am writing to thank both you and the SSAA for your incredible contribution in defending hunters and sport shooters in the international arena. As you know, efforts at global gun control, especially out of the UN, are increasing everyday. In June/July of 2001, we will be facing a major international disarmament conference aimed not at countries, but at gun owners like ourselves. I won't go into more detail here, but we are being challenged like never before.

Fortunately, we are meeting that challenge. For the first time in history, the world's firearms community, through

the WFSA, is organised. There are primarily four groups that have accomplished this: the Italian firearms manufacturers, the NRA, the European ammunition manufacturers and the SSAA. The SSAA has been an absolutely crucial force in defending gun rights worldwide.

Let me make an even more important point, we have been attending meetings, conferences and international workshops for five years during this effort. We have made a difference by calling attention to the need for the international community to respect the millions of legal firearm owners in the world. For better or worse, there are basically two people who have been representing all of the world's shooters at these various meetings - Keith Tidswell (SSAA) and Thomas Mason from the US. Keith Tidswell is a crucial half of that partnership.

Keith has proven to be extremely effective in the international environment. He has developed superb rapport with UN official, diplomats and national government representatives. His style has been perfect in meeting our objectives and I might add that he works extremely well with Mr Mason.

I realise that there is substantial expense to what have had him to do. However, if it wasn't for Keith's presence we would not be half as effective as we are.

Again, thank you for your support. If I can do anything in the way of furnishing more information on how important your contribution is, please let me know.

Regards,

**Carlo Peroni
President, World Forum on the
Future of Sport Shooting Activities**



Reflections on the Schuller Thesis

by Dr Paul Hopwood

*Dr Paul Hopwood is Senior Lecturer in
Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney*

In her 1998 PhD thesis entitled 'Killing for Sport: A critical analysis of recreational hunting in Australia', Cathy Schuller tells us that recreational hunting is morally wrong "because it is a cruel way to treat animals". We are told that it is a violent macho sport with "negative environmental impacts" and that it is no longer "appropriate in today's world".

Schuller claims that hunting is "all 'high-tech' and killing for the pleasure of it"; that it is "conduct which has well and truly outlived its purpose and should demand an ethical sanction"; that "there is a strong association between hunting, aggression, violence, dominance, manhood and male youth"; that it "has sexually violent overtones" and that "although hunters may not admit to it, many of their satisfactions are derived from killing violently, whether these are sexual or related to attaining

power over another living creature or both".

Schuller poses the question, "Can we really say that recreational hunting is violent in the sense that there is something socially unacceptable about it, like wife-beating and child abuse?" And concludes, "I think we can." Schuller quotes Connel

...recreational hunting is a useful tool among a range of options open to ecosystem managers.

who describes hunters as "power-hungry emotionally blunted masculinity", which "is wrecking the environment". Schuller offers the observation that hunters who have the temerity to oppose bans on the guns they use to hunt do so because of "the fear of emasculation".

One needs to ask if this diatribe is the stuff of PhDs or if it is simply the vilification of the hunting community. One gains the overwhelming impression that

the work is not a critical analysis at all but rather a critique designed to support the author's anti-hunting viewpoint.

The thesis is a series of assumptions supported either by Schuller's own opinions or the opinions of selected others, designed to inevitably move the reader to anti-hunting conclusions. Pro-hunting

arguments are either marginalised or ignored. Finally, Schuller draws on a patchwork of animal

activist perspectives, oblivious to the inconsistencies between them and the ethical position she advocates.

To develop her argument that animals are like us and therefore should not be hunted, Schuller quotes Donald Griffin. Griffin argues for (self)consciousness in animals. Fine, except that Schuller ignores the opposing arguments such as those presented by Professor John Kennedy in his book *The New Anthropomorphism*

(1992).

An example of Schuller's use of assumption supported by opinion can be found in the following passage drawn from *Linkletter Down Under* (1968):

"...But gradually her pace slowed, her hops became shorter and shorter and finally when she realised the chase was over, she ejected her baby, thereby giving it chance of survival. She then hopped on perhaps a hundred yards where she stopped, turned and stood offering herself as a sacrifice..."

The passage refers to a chased kangaroo doe with pouch young. The kangaroo is chased to exhaustion and, as kangaroos are wont to do, discards her pouch young. Schuller's conclusion is that this "touchingly reveals how animals may feel a strength of attachment to others and display altruism", accepting Linkletter's comment that the doe is offering herself as a sacrifice.

This of course is nonsense. In the first place, no-one knows what may or may not be going through the brain of a pursued kangaroo. What we do know is that if a predator were to catch the doe, then both the doe and pouch young would die. Alternatively, if the pouch young is evicted, then the predator must choose one or the other. The doe without the weight of the pouch young accelerates away. Pouch young do not have the ability to match even half the pace of the adult animal, which means that they become hot dinner for the predator courtesy of mum. Altruism? Humbug!

Schuller unsurprisingly portrays only negative consequences of hunting for the environment. Correctly, she points to the introduction of pest species by Australian acclimatisation societies. However, to place all the ills of inappropriate introductions at the feet of hunters is unfair - cane toads for example are hardly a game species. Even if Schuller's claim that "in the two hundred years of white settlement in Australia recreational hunting has had far-reaching and detrimental effects on the Australian biota and land environment" was to be correct, it would be because of the damage caused by the introduced game animals and not by hunting per se.

Irrespective of how undesirable introductions of two centuries ago were, the question now is what to do about them? Schuller maintains that recreational hunting has "altered population distribution and brought about localised bird and mammal extinctions" among our native

wildlife. But to both 'have her cake and eat it', she goes on to claim that "recreational hunting is not an efficient eradication strategy" if used against feral pest species. The truth is that, depending on hunting pressure, recreational hunting can be either effective or ineffective as a population management strategy. Consequently, recreational hunting is a useful tool among a range of options open to ecosystem managers.

The most confusing aspect of Schuller's thesis is that although she appeals to the ethics of Singer and Regan, which preclude the slaughter of both domestic and wild animals, at the same time she advocates commercial slaughtering of domestic animals. Schuller (p.44) alludes to Singer's sentience argument that, in summary, states that if it is morally permissible to kill animals then it is also morally permissible to kill seriously mentally defective people. Schuller finds that "this is an extremely persuasive argument". While Singer has no intention

One gains the overwhelming impression that the work is not a critical analysis at all but rather a critique designed to support the author's anti-hunting viewpoint.

of advocating infanticide or the killing of senile people, what he does do is establish his ethical argument for not killing animals, wild or domestic. Singer (1990) is quite clear that within his ethic there is no difference between the hunter who shoots a deer for meat and the person who buys meat from a local butcher. Schuller, on the other hand, appears to have no problem embracing both Singer's argument and the commercial use of animals.

On a final point, Schuller mistakenly contends that abattoir killing is justified while field shooting is cruel. Her argument is that abattoir killing is humane because it is less painful and less stressful for the animals. While this basic assumption is very much open to challenge, it is not the ethical point. Ethically, both abattoir killing and field shooting are humane because in both cases they do not put an animal through any greater pain or distress than would normally be encountered by that animal dying at the hands of nature. The problem with Schuller's pain-and-suffering argument is that she is trying to place responsibility for the mortal condition of game animals onto hunters. The critical issue that Schuller does not evaluate is what happens to the animals if they are not

hunted? Do they simply disappear into the sunset?

For example, a rabbit may be eaten by a fox or an eagle and in that process be shredded alive; it may contract myxomatosis and die a miserable lingering death with swollen face and closed eyes; it may suffer one of several acute diseases and die in one or two days; it may just starve to death when times are tough and food is scarce; or it may die a miserable death from old age with worn-out organs and none of the nursing infrastructure that we humans take for granted.

Who has not had an aged pet that needed to be put out of its misery? Mother Nature is not so kind as to provide a local vet to euthanase wild animals. To establish a possible pain and suffering case against hunters, Schuller needs to demonstrate that death at the hands of a hunter is in fact worse when compared with death at the hands of nature. She fails to do so.

In summary, recreational hunters are moral agents. As such, it is their responsibility to make hunting as stress free as is reasonably possible. They should employ high-tech equipment and exercise adequate skills as part of their duty of care to the animals they hunt. They should accept

and abide by regulations and laws designed to ensure that their sport does not endanger the community or have negative ecological impacts. Conversely, their right to hunt should be respected by people who do not wish to hunt themselves. They should not be vilified, nor should unreasonable or unnecessary restrictions be placed on the taking of game. Dubious arguments about animal rights have no place in sound, scientific game-management strategies.

References:

- Griffin, D.R. (1984) *Animal Thinking* Harvard University Press: Massachusetts.
Kennedy, J.S. (1992) *The New Anthropomorphism* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
Regan, T. (1983) *The Case for Animal Rights* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Schuller, C. (1998) *Killing for Sport: A critical analysis of recreational hunting in Australia* PhD Thesis Macquarie University: Sydney.
Singer, P. (1990) *Animal Liberation* 2nd Edition London: Harper Collins. ●



Keith Tidswell
Executive Director
Public Relations and
International Affairs

The international arena

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Elaboration of a Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, operating with the assistance of the Secretariat of the Commission of International Crime Prevention (CICP) out of Vienna, has been meeting throughout a period of three years now. The Convention has three protocols attached to it, one of which covers illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

The Ad Hoc Committee met in Vienna during October 2000 and most meetings on firearms went late into the night, with one session ending at 2.50am on Saturday. They managed to cram in an extra week of meetings, but were still unable to reach consensus on the firearms protocol.

The Committee is dedicated to presenting the convention, and whatever protocols are finished, to a high-level political signing conference but, at the time of writing, they are only able to present the convention and two protocols - one on illegal trafficking in and transporting of migrants and one on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

The Ad Hoc Committee can only suggest to the general assembly that it be given an extended mandate to continue its work on the firearms protocol. If their mandate is extended, the Ad Hoc Committee may then be able to meet again in January 2001 to try and complete its work.

There are basically two major issues that are causing delays. The first is the scope of the protocol and the second is the issue of marking.

Basically, as far as scope is concerned, states (ie, countries) want to leave state-to-state transactions free from compliance with the provisions of the firearm protocol. It appears that a number of countries have deep concerns that issues of national security may be involved or compromised in some way.

Marking of firearms seems to fall into the area of difficulty as well because some countries fear that marking might give away information that may be considered a national security issue. One country even suggested that states should be able to sanction the illicit trafficking in and manufacturing of relevant devices. Relevant

devices being a term to try and overcome the objections of some countries to the inclusion of the words "any other weapon or destructive device such as an explosive bomb, incendiary bomb or gas bomb, grenade, rocket, rocket launcher, missile, missile system or mine".

Now, as a Non Government Organisation, it seems clear to us that this is supposed to be a convention and protocol that focuses on transnational organised crime. Issues regarding disarmament should have nothing to do with this convention, but if criminals are using firearms, ammunition and other items like those mentioned above, it seems obvious that we need to have an impact on their activities.

The position of the SSAA, the National Rifle Association of America, the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities and the industry people who met in Sardinia, Italy is that all firearms should be marked at time of manufacture.

The other issue that is of interest to shooters around the world is the date for the antique definition and although the protocol is still not set in concrete, there has been a consensus reached for a date of 1899. The intention being that a firearm manufactured before 1899 can be considered an antique and therefore is not subject to the same import or export provisions as set out in the protocol.

Consensus has also been reached on the clauses that give recognition that states have developed different cultural and historical uses for firearms and that the purpose of enhancing international cooperation to eradicate illicit transnational trafficking in firearms is not to discourage or diminish lawful leisure or recreational activities. Activities such as travel or tourism for sport shooting, hunting and other forms of lawful ownership and use of firearms that are recognised by state parties.

Further consensus has been reached that "state parties may also adopt simplified procedures for licensing or authorisation in cases involving the temporary transfer of firearms for the verifiable lawful purposes of hunting, sports shooting, exhibitions or repairs."

So let's hope that the Ad Hoc Committee can reach consensus and finish the work on this protocol early in 2001 and that the final product can be put to productive use as soon as possible in combating organised crime. ●

Parting shots

The good:

In the November issue of the *ASJ*, we ran an article called 'Animal Liberation and Lord Howe Island' by Terry Shulze. The court case the article referred to ended in a positive note. Here is another positive twist to that tale...

Mark Pearson, the Animal Libber who initiated the court action against Lord Howe Island over a goat cull, has had his status as a 'special constable' revoked by the Commissioner of Police. Pearson was also fined \$400 by the Newcastle Local Court for unauthorised use of the Court's letterhead and seal, which he used to send letters to various parties, including the Lord Howe Island Trust.

Police prosecutor Sergeant Phil Lloyd said he believed the use of the Court stamp as a letterhead (listing Pearson as a 'special constable') was intended to make the letters seem "more significant or influential in the eyes of the recipients". Magistrate Steve Jackson did not give Pearson the benefit of the doubt in the matter, noting that Pearson had had such benefit when up on a trespassing charge at the Parkville Piggery in 1995.

The bad:

Gun Control Australia - at it again

Hysterical overstatement has become something of a hallmark where John Crook and Gun Control Australia are concerned. Even among their fellow travellers in the anti-gun movement, Crook and his followers are generally thought of as a fringe element. However, the following extract from the September 2000 edition of the group's newsletter shows just how over-the-top they can be.

Before everyone reaches for the phone to ask if we're going to sue, yes, we have had our legal people look at the article and, yes, parts of it sail pretty close to the wind as far as defamation is concerned. At this stage



no decision has been made about pursuing the matter further. However, we now have two CD's worth of press clippings and correspondence centred on Gun Control Australia, including a large number of documents where they have

maligned the SSAA and its officers. According to our lawyers, when Crook or one of his 'disciples' eventually goes too far, we will have more than enough evidence to make a case for sustained, systematic vilification. So John, if you're reading this - keep 'em coming.

The ugly:

Jaimie Whitham of NSW recently took part in a hunting expedition in Mozambique and, just as most hunters do, he photographed his hunting successes. When he returned to Australia to develop his film, he was not given the service he had become accustomed to from his local photo lab.

After processing some of his film, Rabbit Photo of Macquarie Shopping Centre in North Ryde, NSW asked Mr Whitham to refrain from bringing in future hunting photos because the operators found them "distressing".

As per Rabbit Photo's request, Mr Whitham took his business to nearby Metrophoto where again he was refused service. The lab's digital operator found Mr Whitham's hunting photos offensive and took it upon himself to return the order minus the prints.

Mr Whitham was offended by the unwillingness to process his hunting photos because he had taken the animals legally and ethically, the meat was used to feed the local villagers and the photos were in no way gratuitous.

When Metrophoto management was made aware of the situation, they sent Mr Whitham an apology and agreed to process the material without question, saying, "It is not our corporate policy to refuse such orders and we are embarrassed about the situation."

While credit must be given to Metrophoto for correcting the initial error and expediting Mr Whitham's order, we wonder how the staff at Rabbit Photo would feel if they were served a meatless Big Mac at McDonald's because the cashier was a vegetarian.

One of Mr Whitham's 'offending' photos.



PUT YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE!



BUFFALO SAFARIS

Australia's premier big game safari operators offer a range of premium hunting adventures in Northern Australia and Africa



To get the full picture on our range of hunting opportunities:

Phone: 03 5728 2097
Fax: 03 5728 2097
Write: PO Box 488
Beechworth Vic 3747

E-mail us at: buffalos@netc.net.au
or visit our website at:
buffalosafaris.netc.net.au