

ASJ

AUSTRALIAN SHOOTERS JOURNAL

The political voice of the SSAA

in the right hands *international firearm safety seminar*

solid research, not pious hopes

**A selected summary
of international
academic papers
presented at the
2006 International
Firearm Safety
Seminar**

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In this issue

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of the SSAA**

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This issue of the *ASJ* features a selection of edited international papers presented at the 2006 International Firearm Safety Seminar held in New Zealand. With close to 20 speakers, we have chosen just a handful for this edition and attempted to summarise their reports. All of the unedited reports can be accessed via the internet on <http://www.firearmsafetyseminar.org.nz/>

SSAA attended and sponsored the seminar, whose catch cry was: *solid research, not pious hopes.*

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The British handgun ban

- Logic, politics and effect

by Colin Greenwood

I want to look at the 1997 ban on handguns in Britain, and to explore the logic behind the event and the effect it has had, but that ban must not be seen in isolation and it is necessary to look at a bit of history to see how that situation developed.

Early legislation

In real terms, there were no controls on firearms in Britain until 1920. Earlier legislation was directed towards poaching or revenue raising with a single piece of 'pious hope' legislation called The Pistols Act 1903, which was remarkable only for its obvious impracticability.

The situation until 1920 was that, arising from a duty to keep arms that existed from the 13th century and before, there was in England a right to keep arms which was very fully expressed in the doctrine of the Common Law set out in textbooks such as that by Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* in 1765.

So well founded was that doctrine that during the major industrial disorder of the early 19th century, the Government sought to pass a Seizure of Arms Bill. They applied it only to certain parts of Britain and built in what is now called a 'sunset clause'. The Bill was passionately challenged in Parliament as a breach of the Constitution. George Bennet argued that "The distinctive difference between a free man and a slave is the right to possess arms, not so much, as has been stated, for the purpose of defending his property as his liberty. Neither can he do, if deprive[d] of those arms in the hour of danger."

Blackstone's exposition of the right to keep arms as part of the Common Law is almost certainly the source of the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution, but we need to be careful about such rights. We may note that the British right

applied only gradually to Scotland following the Disarming Act of 1746, that it never applied to Ireland and that it was applied very selectively in the Colonies.

Despite some fairly feeble attempts at gun control, no legislation escaped the Constitution bar, but as World War I drew to a close, governments began to prepare for the Peace Conference. The British Government's Sub Committee on Arms Traffic drew attention to the fact that the end of the war would leave all belligerent countries with vast stocks of arms and ammunition and they feared that some would attempt to sell those to recoup at least some of their losses.

The Sub Committee suggested that the British Government should ask all belligerents to undertake not to sell surplus arms or ammunition and to regulate the domestic manufacture of automatic pistols and ammunition. They suggested that British Self Governing Dominions should be asked to endorse these ideas, explaining how New Zealand was also pushed into firearms legislation at this point.

An internal Home Office Committee, reporting in 1918, endorsed those concerns and added its further concern about allowing those returning from military service to keep possession of firearms. They advocated a form of licensing by the police of all rifles and pistols, and their ammunition, but said that it was neither necessary nor desirable to control shotguns.

Nothing happened for more than two years then, quite suddenly, and as a panic measure, the 1920 Act surfaced and was rushed through Parliament. The argument raised in Parliament was the need to control crime. Some selected statistics were quoted to support that concern but examination of those statistics shows that they actually proved the opposite. Crime in general, and armed crime in particular, was falling. Debates on the Bill were short and the right to keep arms was barely mentioned. ►

THE BRITISH HANDGUN BAN

The Firearms Act 1920 set a true precedent for virtually all the firearms legislation that has followed.

- It was panic legislation, enacted without a proper appreciation of the problem.
- The politicians of day lied to both Parliament and the people.
- It was badly drafted and had to be amended time and again over the next few years.
- There was no consultation with user groups.
- It had no honestly stated objectives and there was no method by which its success or failure could be measured.
- It produced no measurable benefit in terms of crime control, reduction of disorder or safeguarding the public.
- It gave civil servants power to effectively change the law by administrative means.
- It created restrictions designed to be manipulated by both politicians and administrators.

In 1934, some of the work that should have been done before the 1920 Act came into effect was carried out by a Departmental Committee on the Statutory Definition and Classification of Firearms and Ammunition under Sir Archibald Bodkin. This Committee did seek some statistical evidence, but only to compare controlled and uncontrolled firearms. They also took evidence from some outside witnesses including representatives of the gun trade. But they started from the premise that the principles of the 1920 Act were sound and merely needed adjustment.

The Committee noted that the controls imposed by the 1920 Act had “reduced considerably the market for firearms in this country and the trade has suffered accordingly. Manufacturers and dealers have nevertheless borne their losses with resignation and have loyally cooperated with the authorities.” The demise of the British Gun Trade, which once dominated the world, resulted from a complex series of factors including their failure to compete with the factory-produced weapons of the United States and the complacency brought about by secure markets in the Empire. There can be no doubt, however, that the Firearms Act 1920 was a significant nail in their coffin.

The result of the Committee’s deliberations was a consolidating Act in 1937, which brought some consistency to a system which, though fairly generously administered, continued the decline in legitimate firearms ownership and use. The very low rate of armed crime, coupled with a poor system of recording, makes it virtually impossible to identify any public safety benefits that might have accrued.

Shotguns, which have always made up the major part of the guns owned in Britain, remained outside the system of controls. Armed crime remained low until, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a detectable and real increase began. One or two MPs asked about controls on shotguns. In 1965, the then Home Secretary told Parliament that he had carefully considered extending controls to shotguns but the burden which certification would impose on the police would not be justified by the benefits that would result.

The subject was reviewed by the next Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, and on 23rd June 1966 he announced that he would not impose controls on shotguns on the ground that “The police do not consider that it would be right to make an extension of controls at the present time.”

On 12th September 1966, less than eight weeks later, Mr Jenkins announced that he was drawing up plans to end the unrestricted purchase of shotguns. Why this total about-face in a few weeks? On 12th August 1966, three London policemen were shot dead by a group of petty criminals whom they decided to check. Capital punishment had been abolished in 1965 and there was a public outcry for its return. Mr Jenkins was a leading abolitionist and wished to divert attention from the capital punishment issue. His response to the public outcry was controls on shotguns - but the three policemen were shot with pistols.

Controls on shotguns were introduced on the back of an omnibus Criminal Justice Bill which contained a large number of controversial measures. Shotgun controls were hardly debated and they were not opposed by the shooting organisations. The system introduced was ultra simple, amounting to licensing anyone of good reputation whose application was supported by a referee of similar qualities. There were no direct police inquiries. The system was planned to be so reasonable that it would meet little or no opposition, but it is clear that, from the start this was planned as a first step and measures for more stringent controls were already prepared.

The opportunity for this further legislation did not come until 1987, following the Hungerford Massacre of 19th August 1987 when Michael Ryan ran amok in a small rural village with an AK47 and a pistol, both of which were licensed to him by the police. In a period of less than one hour, 16 people were killed and 15 more were injured. The perpetrator committed suicide. There was criticism of the police response and somewhat muted criticism of the fact that police had granted a firearm certificate to this man. It was alleged that he did not fulfill the normal criteria because he was not a full member of an approved club and that the certificate should not have been granted. These matters were the subject only of internal investigation and a later inquest.

The now inevitable response to a high-profile firearms incident followed with a new law to ban all self-loading rifles except those of .22 rimfire calibre and added a series of other restrictions that had formed part of the Home Office agenda for imposition when an opportunity arose. Shotguns were redefined so that some types were banned and others were raised to the same status as rifles. Those shotguns remaining in the lower category were subject to registration and the process of obtaining the certificate was strengthened. Of course shotguns had nothing to do with the Hungerford incident, but there was an opportunity when shooting as a whole could be demonized.

Then came Dunblane. A small town close to Stirling, which is known as the gateway to the Highlands of Scotland, gave its name to a massacre of small children and to further knee-jerk reactions against guns. On 13th March 1996, Thomas Hamilton went to the primary school in Dunblane. He cut telephone wires

outside the school though, in fact, they were not those serving the school. He then went inside with two 9mm self-loading pistols, two revolvers and over 700 rounds of ammunition. He opened fire on children aged 5 or 6 who were in the gymnasium. Most were shot several times and Hamilton stood over wounded children to shoot again and again into their bodies. One teacher and 16 children were killed. Three other members of staff and 10 children were wounded. Hamilton killed himself at the scene.

There was understandable outrage and it is perhaps to the credit of the Conservative Government that, possibly to gain time or possibly from a real desire to know about the background, they immediately instituted a Judicial Inquiry. The Secretary of State for Scotland appointed a senior Scottish Judge, Lord Cullen, to conduct a public inquiry.

The media concentrated on two aspects. One was that Hamilton had been suspected of abuse of children at camps that he ran and a police officer had submitted a report saying that he was not a fit person to be allowed to have firearms and his certificate should not be renewed. The senior officer concerned had refused to take action on the report.

But the media mounted an unprecedented campaign calling for a complete ban on the private ownership of handguns, or in some cases all guns, and demonising all owners of guns. The shooting community found it hard to make their voice heard. That media campaign was maintained with undiminished fury throughout the period that followed.

In his report, Lord Cullen very clearly said that the banning of handguns for target shooting would not be justified. His reports suggests that consideration should be given requiring the disabling of pistols by removing a major part and leaving it at the club, or mandatory storage of pistols in a central location at the shooting club, but even these were not recommendations.

The Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee took the view that whilst Lord Cullen was concerned with the single incident at Dunblane, it was right for them to conduct an inquiry into the possession of handguns in the more general sense. I was appointed Specialist Advisor to that Committee. The Committee called witnesses and received a large number of written submissions. The Committee first sat on 8th May 1996 and presented its report to Parliament on 24th July, almost three months before the Cullen Report was available.

Parliamentary Committees are selected so that they reflect the political balance of the House as a whole. This Committee had 11 members including a chairman, though not all members attended every sitting. The Conservative majority produced a report, clearly supported by the weight of evidence from witnesses, that opposed the banning of handguns, and opposed other suggestions such as storage at central locations and a requirement to disable any handguns.

The Labour minority proposed amendments that amounted to a minority report. They proposed that the goal of responsible politicians should be to dramatically reduce the ownership of guns in private hands. They proposed a total ban on the private ownership of handguns unless particular gun clubs at particular

locations were prepared to build new and totally secure premises to store the guns that would be used there. They accepted the need for a few occupational exemptions such as slaughtermen, veterinary surgeons, etc.

The question of shotguns was not within the terms of reference of the Committee and no evidence had been called about them. Nevertheless they proposed that “methods of reducing the number of shotguns legally held must be looked at”. And suggested that, “Shotgun certificates should no longer be granted to those resident in urban areas”.

There had been no evidence on that issue. They went on to say that there was no justification for personal ownership of airguns, but occupational ownership might be justified. They suggested that airguns should be brought into the licensing system.

They then make a telling remark. “Opportunities for radical reforms of this sort have arisen in the past. We have in mind the 1972 Report by Sir John McKay (then HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary), which saw a reduction in the number of guns in private hands as a desirable end in itself, and the legislation arising from the killings at Hungerford in 1987. In both cases, the opportunity to strike at the gun culture in a big way was lost in general inertia. We believe that the opportunity afforded by the tragedy at Dunblane should not be missed; if action is not taken after such a disaster, it never will be.”

From an early age, Colin Greenwood has been involved with the private use of firearms. He has shot competitively with smallbore and fullbore rifles, pistols of all calibres and shotguns, and is also a keen handloader and a collector of firearms and cartridges, specialising in British rook rifles. His book, *The Classic British Rook Rifle*, is to be published by Safari Press.

In 1969, Colin was awarded a research fellowship at Cambridge University, Institute of Criminology, to study the development of firearms legislation and its effects on the use of firearms in crime, accidents and suicide. The results of this research were reported in a book, *Firearms Control* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972). He has continued to research this field and has written extensively on the subject.

Colin previously served in the Coldstream Guards in London and North Africa, and completed 25 years' service in the West Yorkshire Police, where he retired with the rank of Superintendent. Colin is also the author of three books on police firearms training.

Colin currently works as a freelance firearms consultant specialising in forensic firearms examination and as a research consultant to major shooting organisations. He is frequently involved in working groups with the Home Office, police, Health and Safety Executive, and others. He has acted as specialist advisor to one UK Parliamentary Select Committee and has given written and oral evidence to other such committees and inquiries.

Abstract: The British handgun ban - Logic, politics and effect

In July 1997, a ban on all centrefire handguns was imposed by the Conservative Government in the face of the conclusions of a public inquiry and a Parliamentary Select Committee report about the 1996 Dunblane massacre. Later that year, the ban was extended to all pistols by an incoming Labour Government.

The real effects of the handgun ban cannot be seen in isolation. Colin's paper explores the imposition of controls on firearms in Britain, examining them from their beginning in 1920 to the present time. That examination reveals a catalogue of panic legislation, and in no case has there been any logical evaluation of the problems.

Serious armed crime was increasing before the handgun ban was imposed and the 1997 legislation had no discernable impact on the rate of increase. The paper concludes that in terms of promoting public safety, the ban on handguns was 'a pathetic irrelevance'.



Some of the various brochures, booklets and DVDs available at the seminar.

They clearly saw the heightened emotions following a disaster as the only vehicle for pursuing their goals of eliminating, as far as possible, the private ownership of firearms. They almost welcomed the disaster as a means of overcoming logic.

Lord Cullen's Report was presented to the Secretary of State for Scotland on 14th October 1996 and to Parliament on 16th. That report said there was no justification for a ban on handguns, but consideration should be given to restricting access to them outside clubs. The Government also had a clear recommendation of a majority of a Parliamentary Committee that there should be no ban on handguns, no central storage requirement and no disabling requirement.

But the Conservative Government faced an imminent General Election and was conscious of the massive and quite hysterical anti-gun campaign in the media and of what seems to have been the general public view at the time that pistols should be banned.

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, decided that there would be no ban on handguns but that he would require storage

at secure accommodation within clubs for those held for target shooting. There was to be a scheme for special police permits to allow pistols to be taken out for target shooting at other locations. That idea would create targets for criminals and terrorists and would hardly be likely to prevent the determined owner getting his hands on a pistol. Lord Cullen had explored various aspects of this idea and reported that the police were opposed to it. Cullen also pointed out that few clubs would be able to provide such secured storage.

Despite all that, the original decision taken was that, instead of a ban, all handguns except those required by people like vets and slaughtermen were to be kept in secure storage at clubs. The idea came from the Home Office and was based on the requirements in Colonial Hong Kong.

But that is not what transpired and I may be asked how I know that this was the original decision. The Home Office, like all Government Departments has a system of unofficial briefing of journalists prior to any major announcements so that the media is prepared in advance and can have their reports ready.

Such a briefing was held on 15th October and the Home Affairs correspondents of two of the most prestigious newspapers in the UK telephoned me for comments about what was to be done. They told me in detail what would be in the announcement made the following day.

The decision actually announced by Michael Howard on 16th October was to ban all handguns except those in .22 rimfire. Smallbore handguns were to be restricted to storage on ranges with the complex system of authorities to remove them carried over from the original idea. There were minor exemptions for some occupational users and for some historic arms. There is ample evidence to support the explanation for this change. The final proposals were taken to Cabinet where Michael Forsyth, as Secretary of State for Scotland, had a seat. He was the Member of Parliament for the constituency covering Dunblane and is reported to have said that he had no hope of retaining his seat at the coming election unless there was a ban on handguns. He threatened to resign unless there was a ban on all handguns. The Prime Minister John Major was unable to accept a split in the Cabinet at that time and the 'compromise' that left .22 handguns available, but locked in clubs, was adopted and became the Firearms Act 1997.

And so the general ban on handguns came in with exemptions for various classes of pistol such as those used by slaughtermen and others and making a requirement for .22 pistols to be stored at clubs. All other handguns were to be confiscated and an enormously complex compensation scheme was set up.

The Government sought, at first, to offer only half the value of the gun by way of compensation, but were advised that such a policy would be unlawful under the Human Rights Act and they then created a scheme which involved a basic payment of £150 for any gun, but payments according to a valuation for guns worth more than £150. A detailed list of values was published and provision was made for individual valuations of guns not listed. In addition, compensation was paid for ammunition, reloading equipment, holsters and other accessories.

The ban on large-calibre handguns was scheduled for July 1997, and owners were given until 30th September to hand in their guns.

The General Election took place on 1st May 1997 and the Conservative Government was swept from power. In particular, Michael Forsyth, who had been influential in changing Government proposals, lost his seat and has since disappeared from the political scene. Labour was elected with a massive majority and from the very start of the process had said that, if they came to power they would complete the ban by removing .22 pistols. They kept their promise and one of their first legislative measures was a Bill to complete the ban with a law that received the Royal Assent in November 1997 and came into effect in February 1998, when a new surrender and compensation scheme was generated.

Fifty-seven thousand people were compelled to hand in 162,000 pistols, 700 tons of ammunition, propellants and related equipment. Owners had to make appointments at local police stations. Payment was painfully slow and some compensation had

not been paid over a year after the items had been handed in. An army of bureaucrats had to be assembled at the Home Office to handle a vast amount of paperwork. The police resources required to collect, check, store and then dispose of all these firearms, ammunition and equipment were enormous. The whole process of confiscating virtually all legally held handguns took place between July 1997 and February 1998.

The Home Office estimated that the total compensation paid was £87 million, their own costs were £4.6 million and they paid police forces £3.4 million for a total of £95 million. Police forces complained bitterly about the enormous cost to them and the Home Office figures are suspect. I would at least double those estimates to give a total cost around £200 million (NZ\$452 million).

The confiscation did not significantly reduce the number of active shooters. Most pistol clubs turned to shooting pistol-calibre carbines which are more powerful and have a larger magazine than most pistols. The total number of licence holders was reduced by only about 2000.

All pistols were individually recorded so that there was no question of people failing to comply. In any event, licensed shooters are so thoroughly vetted that there was little prospect of non-compliance. There was, however, massive resentment that remains to this day.

It is my own very strong view that the ban on handguns was nothing more than dirty politics and if a general election had not been in the offing, there would have been no ban.

The situation is not, as some people have claimed, that the ban on handguns caused an increase in their use in crime. The truth is that it is a total irrelevance. Crime and the use of pistols has been increasing continuously over the period and everything that politicians and police have done has tended to exacerbate rather than tackle the problem, but the ban on handguns is neither here nor there in the equation.

The increased use of handguns tells us something about the nature of the crimes in question. These are not, for example, domestic homicides or amateur robbers. What is increasing is hardcore robbery and killing. Britain is become progressively more lawless with larger and larger numbers of people who believe that they are above the law. Police, courts and politicians are failing to cope.

The fact that the ban on handguns would have no effect was entirely predictable. Many years ago I attended a conference at which a substantial number of anti-gun groups were present. I asked if anyone present could give me one example at any time in history or in any country where tightening restrictions on legally held firearms could be shown to have had any beneficial impact on armed crime. No-one had a single suggestion to make. I wonder if anyone present today can point me to any verifiable example of reductions in armed crime attributable to gun control legislation. ●

Hubris in the north - the Canadian Firearms Registry

by Gary A Mauser

Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.

- CS Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: WB Eerdmans, 2002), p 292.

This paper is a preliminary effort to evaluate the effects of the 1998 firearm registry on public safety. The approach is preliminary. For the present, I have just examined broad trends in the overall national rates, although, a few trend analyses have been conducted. Clearly, further work needs to be done to confirm these preliminary findings.

The firearm registry is the focus of this paper because it is the key to the government's plan to combat criminal violence and to save lives through reducing impulsive suicides and firearm accidents. For the Federal Government, the key to improving public safety lay in controlling the availability of firearms, and they believed firearm registration was the way to achieve this. Registration would control the availability of firearms, which would reduce firearm misuse, which in turn would reduce criminal violence, not just gun violence, and total suicides, as well as domestic abuse.

At the time this legislation was introduced into the Canadian Parliament, expert opinion was divided on the question of the potential of firearm registration.

One prominent Canadian criminologist thought the legislation to be more symbolic than substantial (Gabor, 1995). While he supported firearm registration because of its symbolic value, he doubted it would have any sizable impact. On the other hand, Professor Gary

Kleck thought the basic elements of this legislation, ie, screening prospective firearm owners and licensing owners, were among the most promising ways to reduce homicide and suicide (Kleck, 1991 and 1997).

The results show that since the firearm registry was implemented, the number of firearm owners has significantly declined, as well as the number of firearm crimes and the number of firearm-related deaths. While the fall in firearm owner numbers appears to have contributed to the drop in firearm-related violence and suicide, this does not appear to have caused any recognizable reduction (or increase) in the overall homicide or suicide rates. My analysis did not find evidence that the firearm registration was an important cause in the small increases or decreases in homicide or suicide rates.

On the basis of my results, public safety cannot be said to have improved because overall criminal violence and suicide rates remain stubbornly stable. The violent crime rate has declined by 4%, but the homicide rate has actually increased by more than 3% since the registry was implemented. Perhaps the most striking change is that gang-related homicides and homicides involving handguns have increased substantially. Overall suicide rates have declined by 2% since the registry was implemented. Despite a drop in suicides involving firearms, hangings have increased, nearly cancelling out the drop in firearm suicides. No persuasive link was found between the firearm registry and these small changes. The provincial hunter-safety programs, in comparison, have more modest goals, to reduce hunting and firearm accidents, but limited evidence suggests that these programs have been effective.

As New Zealand discovered decades ago, a firearms registry is an expensive proposition that may not be worth the effort. It is exceptionally difficult to maintain such a large detailed database, which of course also ensures that it is necessarily expensive. Most importantly, benefits are difficult and perhaps impossible to demonstrate.

My conclusions, although they may be somewhat pessimistic, are consistent with other research on the general ineffectiveness of most gun laws (Kleck, 1997, op cit; Wellford, 2004; and Hahn, 2003). As noted earlier, a large body of research has been unable to find a strong empirical link between firearm ownership and either criminal violence or suicide. These conclusions imply that more and better research is required before governments embark on massive expenditures on gun control programs (Wellford, 2004).

Gun laws that are generally believed to be beneficial may not actually be found to be effective. For example, it is widely believed that safe-storage laws, ie, laws that require guns to be stored unloaded and with a trigger lock, help to reduce firearms accidents. Only one methodologically solid study of safe storage laws could be found in the literature (Lott, 2003, Chapter 7, pp. 137-189). In this study, Lott compared the impact of safe-storage laws in 16 states on accidental death rates with states without similar laws. Despite analysing the results in various ways, he could not find any convincing evidence that these laws had any statistically significant impact on accidental gun deaths. This finding may be counter-intuitive, and it is certainly discouraging.

The Canadian government's approach to public safety relied upon an analysis of firearms and violence that greatly exaggerated the dangers of firearm ownership.

In this paper I have set out to draw attention to the way that this misrepresentation stemmed from public health researchers who ignored basic scientific principles in favour of advocacy. These activists drew conclusions that were not supported by their research studies, and they compounded their errors by recommending legislative solutions that fell outside the boundaries of their research. Such studies are not properly scientific but sage craft, ie, the use of the scientific trappings of research to 'prove' their claims rather than testing hypotheses. The public health approach to public safety often results in a moralistic campaign and may be contrasted with more consultative approaches, such as community-oriented policing or 'crime reduction'. As shown by the campaign against alcohol early

in the 20th century in the United States, high moral aims do not guarantee success.

Despite costing an estimated \$C2 billion, the firearms registry remains notably incomplete and has an error rate that remains far too high to be of any practical use. This legislation was flawed from the beginning in that it was a moralistic approach to a complex social problem.

Seven years after the firearms registry was introduced, it has failed to win the trust of the public or the police. The legislation remains controversial among government officials, the police, the general public, and of course firearm owners themselves. Perhaps the public fails to understand the logic that banning a particular type of firearm will protect public safety. The 1995 Canadian legislation prohibited small (calibre) handguns as a crime prevention measure. Interestingly, Australia has done exactly the opposite - banning large calibre handguns - for allegedly the same reason. How can such divergent laws be justified by the same argument?

Unfortunately, no strong empirical justification can be found for banning either type of handgun. This has been called the Goldilocks approach to firearm legislation: 'some guns are too large, and some guns are too small'. And none are 'just right'. This arbitrary approach to firearm legislation violates common sense.

The firearm registry does appear to have one clearly demonstrable effect: a large number of formerly law-abiding firearm owners have declined to cooperate with the new licensing or registration. It is difficult to accurately assess the percentage of firearms owners who are participating, but between 900,000 and 2.5 million hunters and target shooters have failed to obtain a licence or register a firearm. Despite its limitations, or possibly because of them, the legislation appears to have contributed to the decline in the number of people who own firearms and who hunt.

The decline in the number of firearm owners has exacerbated the problems caused by the declining numbers of hunters. This decline in hunters has reduced provincial revenues, increased human-wildlife conflict, and has harmed conservation efforts. The collateral damage from the gun legislation is rarely considered, yet, paradoxically, such consequences may be more readily determined than are changes in criminal violence or suicide.

One of the conclusions that I draw from this research is that policy-makers should be more cautious in applying moralistic or simplistic solutions to complex problems. Solutions are elusive. Research to date has not been able to demonstrate convincingly that sweeping gun laws of general application are effective in reducing general homicide or suicide rates. These substantial uncertainties remain largely unacknowledged in the public health community. The low incidence rate of firearm misuse means that there are large numbers of false positives, with substantial attendant financial costs, as well as implications for democratic society. We lose much of the British political tradition if we treat mature citizens as if they were patients rather than responsible adults.

Editor's note: Since this paper was presented, Canada's new government has tabled legislation to have its firearms registry scrapped. For more information about this, go to <http://www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/media/nr/2006/nr20060619-en.asp> ●

Gary Mauser is a full professor in the Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies, and the Faculty of Business Administration at Simon Fraser University in Canada. He earned his doctorate in Psychology from the University of California, Irvine.

Gary has written two books and more than 30 academic publications on criminology, economics and political science, and has testified before the Supreme Court of Canada and the Canadian Parliament on firearms issues. Trained in quantitative methods, survey research and interdisciplinary social science, Gary analysed electoral campaign strategy early in his career. In mid-career, he studied the linkage between public opinion and governmental policy, and for the past 25 years has focused on analysing attitudes towards gun control and evaluating firearms legislation.

Abstract: Hubris in the north - the Canadian Firearms Registry

This paper shows that since the 1998 Firearm Registry was implemented, the number of firearm owners and the number of firearm crimes and firearm-related deaths has significantly declined. However, as Gary explains, public safety cannot be said to have improved because overall criminal violence and suicide rates remain stubbornly stable.

Gary's paper criticises public health research methods as being moralistic and pseudoscientific, and concludes that no convincing empirical evidence can be found to support the claim that the firearm program has improved public safety.

The incident scene will speak to you;

Rod Slings is in his 33rd year with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He currently supervises six specialised recreational safety officers (RSOs) in the Law Enforcement Bureau, and oversees the DNR's safety education programs, including Hunter Education.

Rod's first training in hunting incident investigation came in 1987 from Homer Moe, from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, then a national leader in hunting-related investigations. Rod used that training to successfully investigate hunting-related shootings in Iowa, and to learn why and how they occurred. In 1993, Rod assisted in the first Hunting Incident Investigation Academy at Central Missouri State University (CMSU) in Warrensburg, Missouri.

Rod has investigated and reviewed hundreds of hunting incidents, and has taught nearly 350 wildlife officers from the US, Canada and Mexico at CMSU. He is the Zone III Vice President of the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA), and the chairman of the IHEA Incident Investigation and Research Committee.

Rod has received many awards, including the Shikar-Safari International Wildlife Officer of the Year and various recognitions from the IHEA.

Abstract: The incident scene will speak to you; you must listen for the sake of prevention

As hunting receives increased scrutiny, the safe use of firearms becomes more of an issue. Annually, there are 5.4 hunting incidents per 100,000 hunters reported to the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) in the US. Knowing how hunting-related firearm incidents occur is vital to helping prevent them. A proper investigation consists of a fact-finding mission of collecting data, recording information and drawing a conclusion based on facts. The concluding information detailing all incidents should be placed in reports and funnelled into the hands of hunter education instructors for curriculum in hunter education programs focused on creating hunter awareness for responsible firearm safety. The information gathered can also be used to support considerations for legislative change. Because accurate investigations are critical to incident prevention, administrators of firearm safety or hunting safety programs must budget and commit appropriate resources and qualified staff to hunting incident investigation.



by Rod Slings
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
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The International Hunter Education Association's definition of a Hunting Incident: *An occurrence or an event that results in the physical injury or death of a person or persons which involves the discharge or use of hunting implement while engaged in hunting activity.*

As hunting receives more scrutiny, the focus on safe use of firearms becomes more of an issue. The skill and knowledge of safe firearm handling is the foundation of keeping hunting the safe activity it has become. Research indicates there are 5.4 hunting incidents per 100,000 hunters per year reported to the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) in the United States.

If we do not know how hunting-related firearm incidents occur, we cannot prevent them. A good investigation will result in a fact-finding mission of collecting data, recording information and drawing a conclusion based on facts. The information gathered detailing the incident is then provided to Hunter Education Program for curriculum focus to create hunter awareness to the importance of responsible firearm safety and considerations for legislative change.

Planning for data collection

Research of hunting-related incidents is the key to prevention. There are a number of issues that must be considered. What are the rules or mandates set by the government agency overseeing this effort, or are there any? Policy, past practice, reporting procedure as to who, what, when, where and how? Who will respond to the incident when it is reported? What is the background and training of the investigator called to the incident?

Sometimes it gets down to the interest or commitment of the investigator. With a multi-agency investigation, what has been the level of cooperation between these groups? Are the 'skids greased' to make the investigation run smoothly? These are all legitimate questions in the search for facts.

It has been said, 'investigators are only as good as their training'. Administrators of firearm safety or hunting safety programs must be

you must listen for the sake of prevention



prepared to budget and commit to make all investigators knowledgeable and prepared with the most up-to-date information available.

One issue that must be considered when choosing investigators is are they mentally and physically prepared to meet the stress and demands of an investigation? Incident scenes can be overwhelming. The environment can be harsh based on temperature, terrain and what the human eye and mind can digest at the sight and condition of the victim involved.

Equipment will sometimes be the ultimate test of an administration's commitment to the investigation. Does each investigator have the necessary tools in each district or region to locate, protect, record, measure, recover, analyze and preserve the facts when the call comes? Is the investigator proficient in the operation of these tools? Are all tools in good working condition? Are backup tools available if needed in the case of equipment failure? Will these tools work properly in all types of environmental conditions? Are the tools readily available at a moment's notice? This can mean transporting them to remote incident locations.

Facts collected at an incident scene can be considered evidence. The proper care, recovery and preservation of evidence must be followed. Certain evidence may need to be submitted to a laboratory for analysis or evaluation. Following the chain of custody of this evidence to and from the lab is very important. Photographs and other documents generated during the investigation will help tell the story of the incident. This information becomes pieces of the puzzle creating the picture of the incident. This picture will create a clear view of what occurred.

The media has a strong interest in firearm-related incidents. The spin in which a particular reporter or news agency puts on an incident may vary. When it comes to hunting, the story should be 'It is not news because there are so many; it should be looked

upon because there are so few'. It is important to provide credit to all agencies when providing information to the media. In some cases, hunting incidents may be an attempt to cover something else. Do you have more than a hunting incident? A term used today, is 'recreational homicide'. This term is when someone [tries to] mask the premeditated intent by saying, "it was just an accident". These types of actions have no place being blamed on 'it was just an accident'. Good investigations must keep suicides and homicides from the statistical data of hunting incidents.

the report is only as good as the investigator's signature at the bottom

Gathering facts may result in identifying a problem, and a solution. A lack of being seen by fellow hunters can be addressed through legislation. When it comes to hunting-related incidents, blaze orange has had a major positive impact. Being seen does make a difference. If a hunter has chosen not to wear the required blaze orange, law enforcement can step in to ensure compliance.

The final incident report should be a recipe of the facts that can be recalled to help prevent future incidents. Data exported from reports should be collected into an annual report and funneled into the hands of hunter education instructors. This recap of events should allow anyone to understand the sequence of events and the lessons learned from the incident. A key thing to remember is the report is only as good as the investigator's signature at the bottom. Remember, the incident scene will speak to you; you must listen for the sake of prevention. ●

The firearm safety equation

by Richard Patterson, managing director of Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute

The reason for this conference - firearm safety - is a topic of great importance to us. Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute - SAAMI - is an association of the US manufacturers of firearms and ammunition. We were founded in 1926 at the request of the US federal government to create voluntary standards in firearm and ammunition design, and to promote safe operation of firearms. Everything we do has safety as a prerequisite.

We have had great success in the US in reducing the tragedies of firearm accidents. We have worked with many partners, including other shooting sports organizations and government agencies.

Our approach can be duplicated in other countries, as well. I recognize there are regulatory issues specific to the different countries and the contexts can vary, but firearms all work essentially the same way and the safe handling of firearms is universal.

Although it is not a safety issue, the seminar's title 'In the Right Hands' begs the question 'What are the wrong hands?' In the US anyone with a documented mental health disorder or a convicted felon (or someone convicted of certain other misdemeanor crimes) cannot purchase a firearm. Period. In addition, the law does not allow anyone less than 18 years old to purchase a long gun or ammunition and less than 21 years old to purchase a handgun or handgun ammunition.

Every time a firearm dealer sells a firearm - new or used - the purchaser is checked through the FBI's National Instant Check System (NICS) to ensure the purchaser is old enough, has a clean criminal record and does not have a mental health disorder. The FBI computer scans millions of records in a tenth of a second. 92% of the transactions take less than 15 minutes to complete. Once cleared, an approval is given to the dealer to go ahead with the transaction.

Now let's focus on safety, starting with a definition. When we talk about firearm safety and safety education we are working to prevent accidents. Accidents are unintended events - typically a chain of events - that lead to unplanned and unwanted outcomes. The wilful misuse of a firearm to intentionally cause harm to an innocent victim or to one's self is an entirely different subject.

A firearm is a tool and like any tool it can be used for great good or great harm. Also like any tool, it is guided by the hand, which is controlled by the mind. We cannot change fundamental behaviors - the actions of the mind - by focusing on the tools. As previous presenters have identified, the human mind will find a way to do what it wants to do. Rope is cheap and golf clubs are effective weapons. It is the criminal misuse of firearms that is typically discussed in the public forum. This is unfortunate because the media tends to focus on this criminal misuse and they miss a golden opportunity to help educate the public on the safe handling of firearms. Even in this seminar, which is dedicated to safety, the complex political and social issues have been part of the discussion. Let me be clear about this point: If you want to successfully reduce the number of firearm accidents, your efforts must focus on firearm safety and exclude discussions of criminal misuse and political agendas.

The goal of firearm safety and safety education is to prevent accidents by interrupting the chain of events that can lead to an unplanned, unintended and unwanted outcome.

The first thing to know is that safety is not a singular issue. In fact, safety is the result of a simple equation. $Safety = design \times operating\ procedures$.

Safety is a function of both design and operating procedures working together. One does not - cannot - take precedence over the other.

Interestingly, the safety equation applies to shooting ranges as well. Different range designs must be compatible with operating procedures such as different range uses, users, types of ammunition, firearms, etc.

Firearm design

Firearm design can be defined as the equipment functioning in a reliable and consistent manner within parameters that will ensure structural integrity. The focus on firearm and ammunition design is unique to SAAMI and our standards-setting role.

Why is reliability and consistency important? Let's take the example of a sharp knife versus a dull knife. Everyone knows you're more likely to get cut - have an accident - with a dull knife. The reason is because a sharp knife is more consistent and reliable in doing what it was meant to do. When you use a dull knife the action is inconsistent - resulting in a need to use extra force. Then it starts to cut, at which point the extra pressure results in the blade going out of control.

A firearm also must operate consistently and reliably to ensure safety. Since a firearm requires both the gun itself and the ammunition to operate, there is the added dimension of interchangeability.

The most basic SAAMI task ensures, for example, that a .30-06 Springfield cartridge manufactured by one company will operate safely, consistently and reliably in a firearm manufactured by another company. This sounds simple enough, but the execution of even this basic task means there must be agreement on dimensions of the firearm chamber, throat, barrel lands, barrel grooves, and headspace. At the same time there has to be standard dimensions for the cartridge case, primer, bullet and overall cartridge length. All of these factors affect the pressures generated by the expanding gases of the burning powder. We address structural integrity through establishment of standards for maximum pressure and pressure curve for each cartridge. Since ammunition for a specific cartridge will not exceed established pressure parameters, a firearm manufacturer knows how strong to make the barrel and action.

As an accomplished author, editor and producer, Richard Patterson frequently communicates on issues relating to firearm and ammunition assembly, use, safety, promotion, environmental management and regulation of both domestic and international scope. He has addressed trade conferences worldwide, all levels of legislative bodies, courts and assemblies of the United Nations.

Richard is an avid hunter, shooter and angler, and is personally active in wildlife conservation. He is a recipient of the US Environmental Protection Agency's prestigious 'Environmental Excellence Award', and in his home state of Connecticut in the US, his efforts helped establish new precedents in case law, balancing municipal water rights with ecosystem health.

Richard is presently the managing director of the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI) - an organisation noted for its dedication to promoting all aspects of firearm safety. He also directs the National Association of Shooting Ranges and all facility development programs for the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

Abstract: The firearm safety equation

Firearm safety and safety education focus on the prevention of accidents. Accidents are unintended events, typically a chain of events, which lead to unplanned and unwanted outcomes. Safety has two components: design and operating procedures. Setting standards to ensure that firearms and ammunition work in harmony is what the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI) is all about. Since 1926, SAAMI has established the standards that ensure safety and reliability. On the operating procedures side, there are only 10 simple rules to safe operations of a firearm. Communicating safe operating procedures to the public can be difficult. The media spends more time on the unrelated issue of the wilful misuse of a firearm to intentionally cause harm to another or to one's self. The firearms industry and its partners in the US have found ways to get the message out and have been very successful in their efforts to prevent unintentional consequences.

Of course, measurement is a critical aspect of all this work. How you measure something, what equipment you use to make the measurement, how you calibrate the equipment, where you take the measurement, etc, are all critical to ensure reliability, consistency and interchangeability. Where possible SAAMI adopts existing standards, such as those established for dimensions and mechanical drawing protocols. We create the reference, if it doesn't exist. SAAMI has standards for the dimensions and operating procedures for the test barrels that ammunition manufacturers use to test the operating pressures of each lot of ammunition. SAAMI establishes pressure reference ammunition that is used throughout the industry to ensure consistency with pressure testing equipment. This consistency throughout the industry promotes safe interchangeability. We also establish proof loads that firearm manufacturers use to test their firearms before shipment. These proof loads are loaded to a much higher pressure than ammunition loaded to SAAMI specifications will ever generate. Manufacturers use these proof loads to identify potential defects before the firearms leave the factory.

These standards establish consistency, reliability and interchangeability without being overly prescriptive. We could create standard on top of standard that addresses every possible aspect of design, but like any overregulation, it would become cumbersome and confusing. Perhaps worse, it would inhibit innovation and technological advance. And let's not forget the firearm industry has been a leader in new technology development in everything from mass production techniques, metallurgy, chemistry, ergonomics and structural design.

One of the challenges to creating safety-based standards is well-intentioned but uninformed and myopic interference in the design of firearms. For instance, some have suggested a minimum trigger pull weight heavy enough that a child can't operate it. The problem is, as every shooter knows, the secret to accuracy is a crisp and light trigger pull. I can't imagine how large the cone of fire would be with a heavy trigger pull. The design being proposed to prevent an unintended use of the tool renders it unacceptable for use in its intended purpose and may even create a safety hazard. It may sound good to the uninformed, but in reality it wouldn't work. Reality is not always popular, and the Law of Unintended Consequences is very real.

One of my favorite examples of the Law of Unintended Consequences occurred in the State of Massachusetts. We had been working with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection on environmental management of shooting ranges, another issue that we have championed. Mass DEP wanted to promote recycling of shotgun wads, the plastic cup that holds the shot pellets. There was no recycling use for this material. University of Massachusetts-Amherst has a leading plastics research lab, and it wanted to work on the problem. However, the state legislature had recently passed a sweeping 'zero-tolerance' anti-gun bill that prohibited - among other things - anyone from bringing any part of a firearm or ammunition onto a state-owned campus. As a result, we couldn't legally get the wads to the lab so they could develop a way to recycle and reuse the plastic wads.

THE FIREARM SAFETY EQUATION

Adding what some would term 'safety devices' can actually make a firearm less safe and increases the potential for unreliable operation. A magazine disconnect device sounds good on paper. If a magazine isn't in the firearm, it won't fire. The FBI has done a number of studies on magazine disconnects and will not put magazine disconnects on the firearms they issue to officers. The device adds moving parts and increases the chance for a misfire - which is unacceptable reliability. In addition, the more gadgets you put on a firearm, the more complicated its operation and the more opportunity for an accident.

Operating procedures

You cannot by definition design against operator input unless the firearm can be designed to operate on its own. I'm quite certain the technology for artificial intelligence is not there yet - and frankly I hope it never gets there. The subject, however, makes for great science fiction horror movies.

In order for the operating procedures to be effective, they must meet five criteria. The procedures must:

1. be consistent with the design
2. be simple
3. be clearly and consistently communicated from multiple credible sources
4. be practiced
5. put the responsibility solely in the hands of the user

Firearm design is pretty simple and straightforward. Different types of firearms have different types of actions, but all firearms are similar in their basic function - which dates back to the 12th century. Still, the user must familiarize herself with the basic operating procedures as well as features unique to a particular firearm. Every firearm comes with its own operating manual. Anyone can get a copy from the manufacturer. You can also get copies of firearm operating manuals on the SAAMI web site.

Must be simple

There are a couple of basic rules for the safe operation of firearms. These rules are redundant. As several speakers have pointed out, you have to break several at the same time in order for an accident to occur. These basic rules show up everywhere. They are cornerstones of firearm safety and hunter education seminars. A copy of these rules (in the form of the booklet 'Firearms Safety Depends on You') is packaged with nearly every firearm sold in the US, the rules are posted at the range and are typically displayed at gun shops and frequently show up in shooting sports publications.

Communication and education

Education is a key component to the safe operation of firearms.

The firearms industry has created and distributed tens of millions of videotapes and publications that directly address firearms safety. Other pamphlets provide clear guidance on the storage of ammunition and specific components like propellant and primers.

Firearm safety videos have been incorporated into the curriculum at many schools. These videos have exposed untold thousands of children to the message of what to do if they come across a firearm. Specifically, leave the area and tell an adult. While children cannot purchase a firearm, we leave it to the parent or guardian to decide if a child should be introduced to firearms and when that should happen. Firearm use requires responsibility, and since children mature at different rates it's the parent who is in the best position to make that call. We have worked with wildlife agencies and legislatures to create mentor programs that allow parents to introduce children to hunting under close supervision.

Government agencies - at the federal, state and local level - have been important partners with the firearms industry. The most recent of these safety partnerships is Project ChildSafe. Project ChildSafe is an award-winning program that distributes free firearm safety kits, funded in part by the United States Department of Justice. The distribution of these kits is done in large part through local officials



A practical example of a range safety course was held during the seminar.



and US law enforcement agencies. In the last two years, Project ChildSafe has distributed more than 32 million firearm safety kits to the public - free of charge.

I would be remiss in not giving a great deal of credit to participant organizations like the National Rifle Association of America, which has done so much to promote firearm safety among the shooting participants. The International Hunter Education Association, started with funding from the industry, is another organization that has done great work in teaching gun owners how to safely handle firearms.

Practice

Anyone who has ever had the experience of traveling somewhere where they drive on the other side of the road knows the value of practice. When you first start out, things are uncertain. You see cars coming over the hill and it gives you a little jump. Keep in mind that everything is working exactly the way it's supposed to, but it still seems uncomfortable. As you get more time driving, you become more relaxed and confident. As a result, you make fewer mistakes and are better prepared to properly handle sudden changes in the environment.

Shooting ranges are critically important to firearm safety. As other speakers have pointed out, ranges are the place where people can learn and practise the safe handling of firearms. The issues related

to operating a safe and successful range are many and varied. We have co-hosted many seminars on shooting range operations with shooting sports associations, wildlife agencies, law enforcement agencies, environmental agencies, and many others to ensure ranges fulfill their role safely. As we heard, accidents on recreational shooting ranges are almost unheard of.

Responsibility

Finally, to be effective operating procedures must place responsibility solely in the hands of the person holding the gun. Vice President Cheney had it right when he said "The responsibility is mine and mine alone." It doesn't matter if the other hunter was in the wrong place (he was) - the responsibility lies with the person who pulls the trigger.

I heard a story not long after cruise control came out on vehicles. Someone was driving a motor home, set the cruise control and went back to take a nap. We all know what happened next. Fortunately, as the story goes, no-one was seriously injured. The message was simple: in this person's mind, the responsibility of operating the vehicle had switched to the cruise control system. Because the driver no longer felt responsible, he no longer felt obligated to remain alert. An accident followed.

The responsibility belongs solely in the hands of the person holding the firearm. The results of all these efforts clearly justify our efforts. For example:

- Firearm-related accidents in the US have been decreasing consistently over the last 25 years, and dramatically in the last 10 years.
- Over the last decade, the rate of firearm-related injuries declined by 67 percent.
- Firearms accidents and accidental fatalities are at the lowest number since the US National Safety Council began keeping these records in 1903.
- Today, firearms are involved in less than 1 percent of all accidental fatalities in the US.

This success is even more impressive when you realize that during this same time both the National Sporting Goods Association and American Sports Data surveys have shown target shooting was one of the top five fastest growing sports. In other words, these historic reductions in firearms accidents have occurred at a time when more people are using more firearms, more often. I would be remiss in not pointing out that violent crime, already low in the United States, has also consistently dropped in that same time period.

These programs work. They save lives and prevent needless tragedies. SAAMI is proud of our work in this important arena. We know these programs can make a difference and we want to see them expanded through strategic partnerships.

Safety is part of an equation that includes design and operating procedures. Implementation is most successful when we all come together. This issue has been a focus of the shooting sports community working with government agencies. Other people may talk about firearms safety, we do it. ●

Promoting firearms safety

by Mark Barnes, Attorney at Law

Mark Barnes presented his paper - *Promoting firearms safety* - via a PowerPoint presentation. We have transcribed this presentation into the text below.

I'm an attorney located in Washington DC, and I represent many businesses and individuals involved in all aspects of the firearms business - from sole proprietor, one-gun dealers, all the way up to major defense firms.

As a person who has worked for many years on issues related to firearms and individual rights, I am concerned that firearms users observe the best safety practices for their own sakes and for the sake of their community.

I work with my clients on a daily basis to promote conditions under which firearms are used safely and legally in sport and for the security of their owners.

I am going to try to place the issues of firearms safety in the context of how firearms are used and the relationship between ordinary people and their governments. I recognize that different countries, different governments and different people may approach these issues from the perspectives of their own particular concerns. And they may come to distinct conclusions about the appropriateness and need for government to set limits on who can own or who can use which firearms. However, the safety issues transcend these differences because although governments can adopt laws and

**Chief Inspector Joe Green presented his paper
The New Zealand Arms Control Regime at the
seminar. This paper was published in ASJ
(volume 7, issue 1) in July last year and is
available to read on the ASJ links via our
website at www.ssaa.org.au**



**Dr Jenny Mouzos, Senior Research Analyst of the
Australia Institute of Criminology presented
An Overview of Firearms Theft in Australia.**

rules, only good practices can lead people to use guns in a safe way. Governments cannot, and frankly in free societies, should not be spending significant resources to monitor their citizens' basic safety practices. Instead, the more important question is: How can we encourage individual firearms users to adopt safe practices? This issue transcends regulatory regimes. Ultimately, teaching people how to use guns safely and encouraging them to do this is a much better use of scarce government and public resources than passing legislation that seeks to make people both civilly and criminally liable.

Promoting firearms safety is, at the end of the day, a question of how to best use our scarce resources. Whatever laws or regulations we adopt, safety depends on public adoption of, and compliance with, safe procedures. We know what works. The question is: how will we get people to do it? We have to promote:

- Safe handling
- Safe storage
- Limiting access of firearms to those who might not be able to understand their power - like children, impaired adults and those with a history of instability or criminal behavior.

Above all, we need to invoke a spirit of seriousness and care among people who handle and use firearms. We cannot rely on regulation. Rather, effectiveness will hinge on convincing people to act responsibly. The vast majority of gun owners are solid responsible citizens who use guns safely for sport and security. The question is: What steps do we have to take to promote responsible

and safe practices? Regulations can punish those who do not follow safe practices, but they are a wasteful way to convince people to act responsibly because they take a large amount of resources to enforce. These same resources can be used more effectively to teach safe practices. Furthermore, regulation without safety education often fails to promote safety.

I am going to focus on safety and review what promotes it. Let's consider what works and what does not work. We can rely on research studies that have looked at the measures that are effective in promoting safe use. While there are a large number of studies, I am going to talk about a few of them and focus on the broad assessments of their results conducted by expert panels in two non-partisan organizations in the United States.

As you know, this is an issue that has many sides and has attracted a lot of attention in the US. Several groups of American experts have evaluated the evidence. These groups were not convened by people with particular interests - those who favor or oppose the rights of individuals to use firearms. Rather, they were brought together by impartial bodies - such as the US government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and our National Academy of Sciences. They looked at the relationship between injuries and gun use. We are going to draw on their findings as we explore the safety issue.

I think it is important that we understand that the amount of regulation and the kinds of rules government enact reflect their understanding of the relationship between people and their governments. These depend on the particular history of each country.



The seminar was held at The Chateau on the Park Hotel, near the centre of Christchurch.

SSAA National President Bob Green is greeted at the Maori Welcoming Ceremony.



PROMOTING FIREARMS SAFETY

In the current international regime, these kinds of decisions are best left to the people within a country to decide. This means that different governments approach the role of personal responsibility differently. Some believe that more rules and more laws will promote better lives and others are more reliant on individual responsibility. Regardless of how you come out on the role of government in people's lives, promoting safe use of guns through education and information is the key to promoting safety.

Safety education is vital even if there are very burdensome laws and regulations - and the research shows that if people don't know what to do and how to do it, even the most restrictive laws won't promote safety.

In order to promote safety, we need to understand what leads to safe use of guns. Here, we can rely on statistical data to show us the way. The data shows that the greatest risks from gun use do not come from the legitimate use of guns in sport or for protection. Rather, they arise from other social problems - which are not a direct result of gun use. These social problems are, unfortunately, very costly and cause terrible disruption in many parts of the world - including the US. But, firearms are only one of the implements that people can abuse if they are afflicted by these problems. Limiting gun use will not end these problems - they will only be manifested in other ways.

Crime accounts for a major part of the injuries and deaths from gun use and mental illness or personal dislocation for another large part. Next to these, accidental injuries are only a small part of the problem. In fact, in the US, in 2003, there were about:

- 700 deaths due to firearms accidents but
- almost 45,000 due to motor vehicle accidents
- about 2600 deaths due to fires
- about 4300 deaths due to accidental ingestion of food or objects

[Source: NSSF Industry Intelligence Reports June 2005 - provided by Frank Briganti]



Thus, the way people intend to use guns is the key factor in how safe they are. But it can also be the key factor in how safe any potentially dangerous implement is - this applies to cars, knives, hatchets, ropes, food, water and many other common and not so common objects.

The key is to convince people to commit themselves to safe and responsible use - and to focus scarce government resources and strategies on addressing the problems of crime, mental illness and other social problems. We must and should do this in a positive effective way.

As you may know, in the US, we have a federal system of government and laws. This means that to a large extent our criminal and civil laws are locally determined.

Consider the total number of injuries and deaths that can be traced to legal gun use. When we look at data drawn from all of our states we find:

- The legal use of firearms in the US is a much safer activity now than in previous years and accidents cause some - but few injuries or deaths
- More problems with firearms are the result of crime and mental illness.

This is not to say that safety is unimportant. We have achieved it through hard work and it's important to keep up our efforts.

In order to understand how I came to these conclusions, it is important to review where the information comes from. The underlying data for these assertions does not come from the industry. Nor does it come from gun rights advocates or from gun users. Rather, it's drawn from the health and safety data compiled by researchers working in federal, state and local government health departments.

As is the case in large parts of the world, over the past century, the US built a system for recording so-called 'vital events' - births, deaths, marriages and divorces. This system relies on the reports filed by doctors, hospitals and registrars who record details about these events. The data about deaths includes information about the cause of death and tracks the involvement of firearms.

More recently, public health officials in the US have started to collect information about injuries - from hospital emergency departments, physicians and other caregivers. Both these sources are pulled together in statistical compilations at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This data is public information, placed directly on the internet and available for all to see. They help us track risks to life and wellness that come from various threats including unsafe use of firearms in legal activities. Using them we can place the impact of firearms injuries in the context of a host of other risks.

The two tables show the leading causes of all injuries in the US as compiled by our government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Legal firearms use simply does not appear among the leading causes of death or non-fatal injuries regardless of age. Other factors, like crime, mental illness, driving motor vehicles, falls, and poisonings are much more common.

Every death is tragic. Every accident is harmful to people. But, firearms accidents in the US as we have seen above account for only a small proportion of the deaths and non-fatal injuries.

But, even if firearms accidents only cause a small percentage of the injuries and accidental deaths in the US, it is still important to work on reducing them. To do this effectively, we must ask:

- What works?
- How much of our efforts to reduce these injuries and their bad effects should go into enforcement of laws and regulations and how much should go into spreading the word among gun users?

What research shows is:

- Education does work
- It takes less money and fewer social resources - because it's more effective to persuade people than to force them
- There are important differences among groups of people, which can give us an idea about how to approach safety

Actually, we can use the different approaches in different parts of the US to see what works.

The US provides what social scientists call a 'natural experiment' for the application of laws to social problems. We can look at differences between states where there are stricter regulations on gun ownership and those with more individual freedom to see if there are any systematic differences in gun safety and use.

It's far better to prevent accidents than to punish people for careless use of firearms. It simply saves more lives.

In the last decade of the previous century, CDC organized a taskforce on community preventive services. This panel consists of leading physicians and scientists who are experts in preventing violence. They certainly are not gun use advocates.

In 2003, the panel concluded that there was 'insufficient evidence' that these laws actually reduce injuries or cut violence. In other words, while restrictive laws may make it harder for people to buy or use firearms, they do not seem to be associated with a reduction in injuries or deaths. We have to look elsewhere to achieve these goals.

These experts looked at the host of studies that attempted to trace the effect of restrictive firearms laws on reducing injuries and violence. To do this, the underlying studies typically looked at the laws in various jurisdictions and the rate of injuries and violent acts involving firearms.

10 Leading Causes of Injury Death by Age Group - 2001 Highlighting Unintentional Injury Deaths

Rank	Age Groups										Total
	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
1	Unintentional Suffocation 614	Unintentional MV Traffic 558	Unintentional MV Traffic 660	Unintentional MV Traffic 884	Unintentional MV Traffic 10,513	Unintentional MV Traffic 6,759	Unintentional MV Traffic 6,891	Unintentional MV Traffic 5,422	Unintentional MV Traffic 3,328	Unintentional Fall 11,623	Unintentional MV Traffic 42,443
2	Unintentional MV Traffic 139	Unintentional Drowning 458	Unintentional Drowning 168	Unintentional Drowning 165	Homicide Firearm 4,200	Homicide Firearm 3,308	Unintentional Poisoning 5,036	Unintentional Poisoning 3,547	Suicide Firearm 2,083	Unintentional MV Traffic 7,256	Suicide Firearm 16,869
3	Homicide Other Spec. Class. 117	Unintentional Fire/burn 230	Unintentional Fire/burn 164	Suicide Suffocation 163	Suicide Firearm 2,130	Suicide Firearm 2,564	Suicide Firearm 3,030	Suicide Firearm 3,023	Unintentional Fall 1,004	Unintentional Unspecified 5,806	Unintentional Fall 15,019
4	Homicide Unspecified 107	Homicide Unspecified 146	Homicide Firearm 59	Homicide Firearm 121	Unintentional Poisoning 1,362	Unintentional Poisoning 2,507	Homicide Firearm 1,978	Suicide Poisoning 1,439	Unintentional Poisoning 798	Suicide Firearm 3,943	Unintentional Poisoning 14,078
5	Unintentional Drowning 68	Unintentional Suffocation 138	Unintentional Other Land Transport 48	Suicide Firearm 90	Suicide Suffocation 1,235	Suicide Suffocation 1,373	Suicide Poisoning 1,541	Unintentional Fall 1,024	Suicide Poisoning 578	Unintentional Suffocation 3,204	Homicide Firearm 11,348
6	Unintentional Fire/burn 50	Unintentional Pedestrian Other 81	Unintentional Suffocation 44	Unintentional Fire/burn 88	Unintentional Drowning 596	Homicide Transportation-Related 842	Suicide Suffocation 1,534	Suicide Suffocation 952	Unintentional Fire/burn 395	Adverse Effects 1,995	Unintentional Unspecified 7,218
7	Undetermined Suffocation 47	Homicide Other Spec. Class. 80	Unintentional Fall 33	Unintentional Other Land Transport 83	Homicide Cut/pierce 481	Suicide Poisoning 753	Undetermined Poisoning 1,121	Homicide Firearm 934	Suicide Suffocation 392	Unintentional Fire/burn 1,147	Suicide Suffocation 6,198
8	Homicide Suffocation 40	Homicide Firearm 55	Unintentional Pedestrian Other 26	Unintentional Suffocation 68	Suicide Poisoning 337	Undetermined Poisoning 549	Homicide Transportation-Related 1,061	Undetermined Poisoning 761	Unintentional Unspecified 385	Unintentional Poisoning 722	Unintentional Suffocation 5,555
9	Adverse Effects 26	Homicide Other Spec. NEC 49	Unintentional Struck by or Against 25	Unintentional Firearm 39	Unintentional Fall 256	Homicide Cut/pierce 472	Unintentional Fall 647	Homicide Transportation-Related 644	Adverse Effects 384	Unintentional Natural/Env. 621	Suicide Poisoning 5,191
10	Unintentional Fall 23	Unintentional Natural/Env. 42	Unintentional Other Transport 22	Unintentional Pedestrian Other 38	Unintentional Other Land Transport 250	Unintentional Drowning 374	Unintentional Drowning 462	Unintentional Suffocation 461	Unintentional Suffocation 381	Unintentional Other Spec. NEC 578	Unintentional Fire/burn 3,423

Note: Homicide and suicide counts include terrorism deaths associated with the events of September 11, 2001, that occurred in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. A total of 2,926 US residents lost their lives in these acts of terrorism in 2001, of which 2,922 were classified as (transportation-related) homicides and 4 were classified as suicides.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, (NCHS) Vital Statistics Systems.

Produced by: Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.

National Estimates of the 10 Leading Causes of Non-fatal Injuries Treated in Hospital Emergency Departments, United States, 2002

Rank	Age Groups										Total
	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
1	Unintentional Fall 126,459	Unintentional Fall 870,950	Unintentional Fall 676,444	Unintentional Fall 659,923	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 51,581	Unintentional Fall 702,946	Unintentional Fall 765,275	Unintentional Fall 684,042	Unintentional Fall 490,737	Unintentional Fall 1,638,883	Unintentional Fall 7,410,159
2	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 33,023	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 390,945	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 449,222	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 622,615	Unintentional MV-Occupant 902,186	Unintentional Overexertion 701,783	Unintentional Overexertion 656,122	Unintentional Overexertion 393,539	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 185,922	Unintentional MV-Occupant 193,068	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 4,490,051
3	Unintentional Fire/burn 13,193	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 126,710	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 135,098	Unintentional Overexertion 288,074	Unintentional Fall 794,288	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 671,811	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 609,021	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 385,139	Unintentional MV-Occupant 179,527	Unintentional Struck by/ Against 190,501	Unintentional Overexertion 3,286,856
4	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 10,926	Unintentional Foreign Body 106,331	Unintentional Pedal Cyclist 118,046	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 170,062	Unintentional Overexertion 758,312	Unintentional MV-Occupant 609,636	Unintentional MV-Occupant 515,768	Unintentional MV-Occupant 332,260	Unintentional Overexertion 175,009	Unintentional Overexertion 156,231	Unintentional MV-Occupant 2,988,064
5	Unintentional MV-Occupant 9,336	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 87,836	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 96,330	Unintentional Pedal Cyclist 142,085	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 492,172	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 461,058	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 394,133	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 272,953	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 142,911	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 115,708	Unintentional Cut/Pierce 2,278,105
6	Unintentional Poisoning 8,814	Unintentional Poisoning 78,828	Unintentional MV-Occupant 79,531	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 129,388	Other Assault ^ Struck by/ Against 445,965	Other Assault ^ Struck by/ Against 271,774	Other Assault ^ Struck by/ Against 228,208	Other Assault ^ Struck by/ Against 102,941	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 57,805	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 70,093	Other Assault ^ Struck by/ Against 1,270,224
7	Unintentional Foreign Body 8,776	Unintentional Overexertion 74,530	Unintentional Overexertion 76,811	Unintentional MV-Occupant 115,920	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 174,572	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 121,398	Unintentional Other Spec- ified 129,831	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 94,895	Unintentional Other Spec- ified 37,399	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 47,825	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 880,910
8	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 6,916	Unintentional Fire/burn 62,073	Unintentional Foreign Body 54,164	Other Assault ^ Struck by/ Against 114,891	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 126,498	Unintentional Other Spec- ified 110,163	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 115,409	Unintentional Other Spec- ified 93,356	Unintentional Other Trans- port 34,315	Unintentional Other Transport 44,759	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 742,188
9	Unintentional Inhalation/Suff. 6,452	Unintentional MV-Occupant 50,331	Unintentional Dog Bite 51,882	Unintentional Other Trans- port 65,375	Unintentional Other Trans- port 125,085	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 109,749	Unintentional Poisoning 97,480	Unintentional Poisoning 74,802	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 28,358	Unintentional Poisoning 31,073	Unintentional Other Trans- port 594,127
10	Unintentional Overexertion 6,336	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 48,293	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 48,079	Unintentional Other Bite/ Sting 60,780	Unintentional Other Spec- ified 111,000	Unintentional Other Trans- port 95,680	Unintentional Unk./Unspec- ified 92,403	Unintentional Foreign Body 57,803	Other Assault ^ Struck by/ Against 26,969	Unintentional Foreign Body 28,723	Unintentional Foreign Body 577,622

^ The 'Other Assault' category includes all assaults that are not classified as sexual assault. It represents the majority of assaults.
 Data Source: National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program operated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission
 Chart developed by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.

The panel identified 51 studies that examined the effect of laws on injuries. They looked at several types of laws including those that banned certain types of gun ownership or use, imposed waiting periods, required registration or licensing, and those that specifically concerned carrying concealed weapons.

After years of reviewing these studies, the panel concluded that their results were 'inconsistent' and not sufficient to assert that there was any effect. In short, there is no good evidence that stricter laws solve the problem. We have to look elsewhere to understand how to promote gun safety.

In 2005, a panel formed by our National Academy of Science reported on their review of studies and data concerning the factors that reduce gun violence. They said that there was not enough information to come to a firm conclusion. However, looking at the existing evidence, the chairman of the panel concluded that the studies show 'demand-side enforcement' is more effective. Demand-side enforcement means focusing police activity on criminals who abuse guns and health care resources on treating mental health problems. This, rather than restrictive gun ownership laws, seems to work better. A key factor is the support from the community for better safety and less violence.

But, what are the conditions that lead people to have accidents when they use guns? One study reported in 2004 by Professors Rick Ruddell and Larry Mays looked at differences in the behaviors of people living in our 50 states. They used advanced procedures that attribute the amount of change to various forces. What they found was that firearms accidents are more likely to occur where people engage in other risky behaviors. In other words, states with:

- High alcohol use
- More tobacco use
- More reported sexually transmitted diseases
- Higher rates of teenagers having children

Firearms accidents are a part of a broader pattern of risky behavior.

The authors concluded that to reduce firearms accidents, we need to address the full range of risky behaviors. Promoting a more serious, careful and disciplined life is a key to all kinds of safe behaviors including firearms use. In other words, promoting a culture of personal responsibility. This kind of inner strength comes from strong families and teaching people how to take care of themselves.

Given the need to build safety on stronger values, what can we do? Does the research show us any methods that really work?

Advocates for individual freedom have long called for using our resources to teach children about the dangers associated with firearms. We have called for early education that focuses on what we would like children to do if they find a gun or are tempted to take one.

The NRA's Eddie Eagle Program in the US was introduced in 1988. Since then, the program has been taught to over 18 million children, in all 50 states. The purpose of the program is not to teach whether guns are 'good' or 'bad', but rather to promote the protection and safety of children. The program features four key messages about what children should do if they see a gun:

- Stop
- Do not touch it
- Leave the area
- Tell an adult

The Eddie Eagle Program has been a great success, and has been lauded through awards and recognitions.

Another program in the US, entitled Project ChildSafe, was created by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), in 1961. The program's purpose is to promote safe firearms handling and storage practices among all firearms owners through the distribution of free gun locking devices. Project ChildSafe places an emphasis on preventing children from accessing a loaded firearm in the home. By the end of 2005, more than 32 million firearm safety kits, including a gun lock, were distributed in all 50 states.

**there is no good evidence
that stricter laws
solve the problem**

More terrible situations can be avoided if children know how to react than from any other approach. Studies have shown that this kind of teaching works. For example, one test study used a controlled environment to see what effect teaching children has on them. One group of children were told how to react to guns and another was not. The groups were randomly selected to avoid biases. What this study, reported in the journal *Pediatric Emergency Care* found was that the children who were appropriately taught changed their behavior and reacted appropriately when given the opportunity to find a gun. Of course, the guns they used were disabled so that no-one would get hurt.

Another study (reported in the journal *Education and Treatment of Children*, 2004) showed that building awareness and knowledge is not sufficient. Rather, they need to be taught how to react using appropriate behavioral models. This involves:

- Showing children dangerous situations
- Showing them how to react to them
- Asking them to rehearse what they would do

When this behavioral skills approach was tested, the researchers found that children improved their responses and reacted appropriately.

There are differences in the approach to regulating firearms. These differences reflect different views on the role of government and individuals. Regardless of our approach to regulation, effective promotion of firearms safety rests on better teaching and the actual adoption of safe practices. Focusing on people who commit violent acts is a very effective way of dealing with the problems, but unfortunately, it comes after the fact, after the harm has been done. Incapacitating criminals, of course, prevents further harmful acts. Providing mental health services to those who would harm themselves is a much better way of dealing with their problems. Finally, using advanced training methods to model behaviors and teach children how to react when they find a firearm is a key strategy.

Different countries might require different approaches to training people about firearms safety. So, before a specific approach is adopted, it is important to craft it for the specific conditions. We need testing, information and research to support any new approaches.

What we have learned in the US is that there is a great benefit from community support - which can only grow out of the specific conditions in different places. I think the main point stands - education, training and modeling behavior is a more effective method. But, the specific type of modeling, education and training should be developed for each country. ●

Mark Barnes offers legal services to clients who need representation before the federal executive and legislative branches of government on regulatory or policy matters.

Mark received his Juris Doctor degree from the UCLA School of Law in 1981 and his Bachelor of Science degree in political science from Arizona State University in 1978, where he graduated summa cum laude and a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

He has held many commendable positions including Counsel to the Secretary for Drug Abuse Policy at the US Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, DC, and Associate Director for the Administration Group at the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM). He was also an Associate at Davis Wright and Jones in Anchorage, Alaska, one of the largest law firms in the Pacific Northwest, where he practised commercial litigation and admiralty law.

Mark is admitted to practise before several state and federal courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States

Abstract: Promoting firearms safety

Laws and regulations differ by country, but the need for firearms safety is global. Firearms safety critically depends on the behavior of gun owners, regardless of where they live. Risk factors grow out of the particular circumstances of individuals in society and the extent of their responsible behavior. But no amount of responsible behavior can totally prevent accidents. And unfortunately, in the United States, some state governments now punish such accidents with criminal, as well as civil, penalties.

Mark's paper argues that teaching people to use their guns safely and encouraging them to follow safe practices is a more effective way of preventing injuries than any regulatory regime. The paper reviews the findings from a number of studies that focus on unintentional gun injuries. These studies show that gun-related accidents cause fewer injuries than other risks and that appropriate educational programs can promote appropriate handling and reduce these injuries. Mark's paper concludes that any country would be better served by more education, and less legislation.

SSAA - what we do

The Sporting Shooters' Association was established in 1948 in order to promote the shooting sports and protect firearm owners' interests. Those roles remain the same today and with more than 120,000 members the SSAA is the premier body representing licensed firearm owners in Australia.

Our Publications

The SSAA produces a range of national publications, including *Australian Shooter* magazine, the *Australian Shooters Journal*, *Hunter* and *Australian & New Zealand Handgun*. *Australian Shooter* has an audited monthly distribution figure of more than 98,000 copies.

www.australianshooter.com.au

United Nations & Lobbying

The SSAA has official Non-Government Organisation status within the United Nations. It also lobbies state and federal governments on behalf of its members.

Research

The department is responsible for gathering data from a range of sources, providing material for publication in the *Australian Shooters Journal* and coordinating various research projects and initiatives.

H&C

The SSAA has won national recognition for its participation in the control of feral pests in both national parks and on pastoral lands throughout Australia. The SSAA has recently purchased two large tracts of land with a view to preserving a number of endangered species.

Youth Development and Gun Safety Education

The SSAA conducts regular safety seminars and practical instruction on firearm safety. The Association works closely with the firearm industry in the promotion of responsible firearms handling among junior shooters across Australia.

Competition

The SSAA manages more than a dozen handgun, rifle and shotgun shooting competitions at the local, state, national and international level.

Insurance

The SSAA provides all general insurance for most major shooting organisations within Australia.

Industry Liaison

The SSAA is closely involved with the firearms industry, both at a national and international level. The SSAA has also worked closely with the National Firearm Dealers and Traders Council and the office of the Minister for Justice and Customs in the formulation of workable import regulations.

SSAA Website - www.ssaa.org.au

Through its website the SSAA makes extensive use of the Internet to keep members and supporters informed of legislative developments, media reports and general matters of interest. The Association is also in regular contact with firearm dealers across Australia.

Join TODAY!

Secure your gun Secure your sport



The security of your firearm is your responsibility.

Failure to secure your firearm in accordance with the law attracts heavy financial penalties and possible loss of licence.

Stolen firearms could result in death or injury to members of the public.

Be responsible.

Secure that gun.

For information on correct firearm storage contact your local SSAA organisation or local police.

Police firearm registry contact details

ACT 02 6245 7405 actfirearmsregistry@afp.gov.au www.afp.gov.au	SA 08 8204 2495 sapol.firearmsbranch@police.sa.gov.au www.sapolice.sa.gov.au
NSW 1300 362 562 (local callers only) interstate callers: 02 6670 8590 firearmsenq@police.nsw.gov.au www.police.nsw.gov.au	TAS 03 6230 2720 firearms@police.tas.gov.au www.police.tas.gov.au
NT 08 8922 3543 pfes.firearms@pfes.nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/pfes	VIC 03 9247 3227 firearmsregistry@police.vic.gov.au www.police.vic.gov.au
QLD 07 3015 7777 weaponslicensing@police.qld.gov.au www.police.qld.gov.au/pr/default.htm	WA 08 9223 7000 firearms.branch@police.wa.gov.au www.police.wa.gov.au/firearms

SSAA

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