

THE JUNIOR Shooter

An introduction for Junior Shooters & Hunters

Issue 22



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Editorial

Teenager Lachlan Adolph takes centre stage in Issue 22 of *The Junior Shooter*. The talented 13-year-old SSAA member was crowned junior world champion earlier this year when he competed in the Fifty Calibre Shooters Association championships in New Mexico and clearly has a bright future ahead.

Young Carl Redlich goes bush hunting with dad Chris and discovers that shadowing his dad is the best way to learn not just hunting but everything that goes with it, including how to stay safe in the wild.

And talking of safety, Dick Eussen has some timely advice on that very subject as we move into spring

and more of us take to the great outdoors. Our Communications Officer Sam Talbot takes us on a virtual reality hunt as he samples the wonders of the VR Experience by Aimpoint.

For all you youngsters out there taking to the range for the first time, have a look at some great pointers and advice from Ben Jimenez on the importance of gun range etiquette.

And don't forget to enter our juniors-only competition which this time has a pretty cool 170mm halogen 110w light with alligator clip, kindly donated by Lightforce and valued at more than \$125.

Welcome aboard Junior Shooter 22 - enjoy!

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Shadowing dad a great way to learn

by Chris Redlich



Chris hunts in the early morning with Carl close by.

The smell of the campfire began to weaken as we rounded the bend of the track and down into the creek gully. On our side of the creek bank were fresh red deer footprints. They disappeared into the water but made their impression in the mud on the other side. My son Carl crouched down, looked at the prints and noted: "Dad, the deer are going this way." This way meant towards the hill in the direction of our travel, north-east of camp.

We were here for the roar and had to be on the lookout for any sight or sound. A couple of hours earlier upon entry to the private property, we'd found a fresh rub on a tree made by a large, mature stag. The rub exceeded 2m from ground level. By the volume of prints on the ground it was reasonable to believe we were in the thick of it and Carl knew to keep a low profile and stay quiet.

Up the hill we followed the footprints out of the heavily timbered valley floor to more open grazing country, until we



decided to rest against a tree to listen and glass. Carl took up position opposite me against another tree and kept watch down the track we'd just travelled. He took his role seriously and responded with a thumbs up.

We usually hunt deer from a high ground advantage but things played out differently this time and we found ourselves hunting from below but still with a backdrop up high from a second ridge. From this position and the nature of the terrain though, it enabled us to still have most of our arcs covered.

We sat patiently for a while and kept glassing up the rise to the top of the hill. I'm not sure why but the hairs on the back of my neck suddenly stood up. We were now on high alert and looking intently with the binos picking up movement through the trees.

In a flash the first deer appeared as the white tips of antlers bobbed up and down above the tall grass heading towards us. Carl was now looking the same way and knew it was 'on'. With one hand on the rifle and the other hand free I slowly pulled my earmuffs into place, Carl following suit almost in tandem.

The young, big-bodied stag came into view from the grass about 80m away and on to the track, walking our way. With rifle aimed at the stag I was able to assess his antlers through the Swarovski scope and he was not an even head.

He came to within 70m of us and paused, looking in our direction. We remained calm during the stand-off and all the while I had a bead on his chest. Carl whispered: "Shoot him, dad." I'd already made the decision to cull the stag and fired and an audible thud could be heard as the 140-grain Nosler AccuBond entered his shoulder.

The stag leapt in the air and disappeared over the hill. We didn't panic as I knew the shot was good and he wouldn't be far away. Carl felt the same confidence, calling: "You got him!" He also made mention he could feel the power from the muzzle blast from sitting beside me and enjoyed the experience.

We made our way up the hill to the point of impact and found a blood trail. A few paces off the edge of the hill we spotted the deer lying dead with the distinct smell of rutting stag in the air. The shot was a cracker. Once again the 140-grain AccuBond from my .284-calibre rifle performed well,

The result of a joint effort.



passing through both shoulders and piercing the heart. With a few back slaps and congratulations, Carl and I had a stag on the ground for meat. He was excited and I was happy to have him with me for our first red stag stalk together.

We snapped the all-important photos but as the afternoon daylight would soon be disappearing we needed to retrieve the meat as soon as possible. It was a tough task on the side of the steep hill and not unusual for this place.

With as much meat as we could carry and the head taken for a Euro-style mount, we began the hike back to camp. Carl was eager to bear some of the weight and asked to carry the head on his shoulders 'just like dad' did. I loaded him up but a few paces later he decided it wasn't as much fun as he thought and let me hump it out instead. I applauded his enthusiasm though and was proud of him for offering. On the way back he wanted to use the torch but with the light of a full moon we could navigate the track safely.

Once out of the little creek crossing close to camp, the smell of the campfire was the 'welcome home' we needed. We stoked the fire and prepped our venison for



Carl inspects a fresh rub made by a mature stag.



In a flash the first deer appeared as the white tips of antlers bobbed up and down above the tall grass heading towards us.

the fridge. While doing so we could hear young stags roaring around the hills close to camp. For some kids not used to that sound I'm sure it could be a bit frightening at first, but Carl and I sat by the fire with a feed and enjoyed the entertainment the roars from the reds provided.

Later that night as Carl slept and I sat by the fire, I reflected on the exertions of the day. I guess it shouldn't be a surprise but I was proud of how my son had conducted himself during the hunt. He was checking the trail for signs and clearly identifying fresh deer footprints and their direction of travel. He displayed noise discipline, made quiet steps and never complained about the distance travelled.

Once in our position by the tree he accepted the task I gave him responsibly. He carried the wooden rifle I made for him as a training aid seriously and I never had to correct him about muzzle awareness. To top it off he was keen on helping share the workload, retrieving our deer.

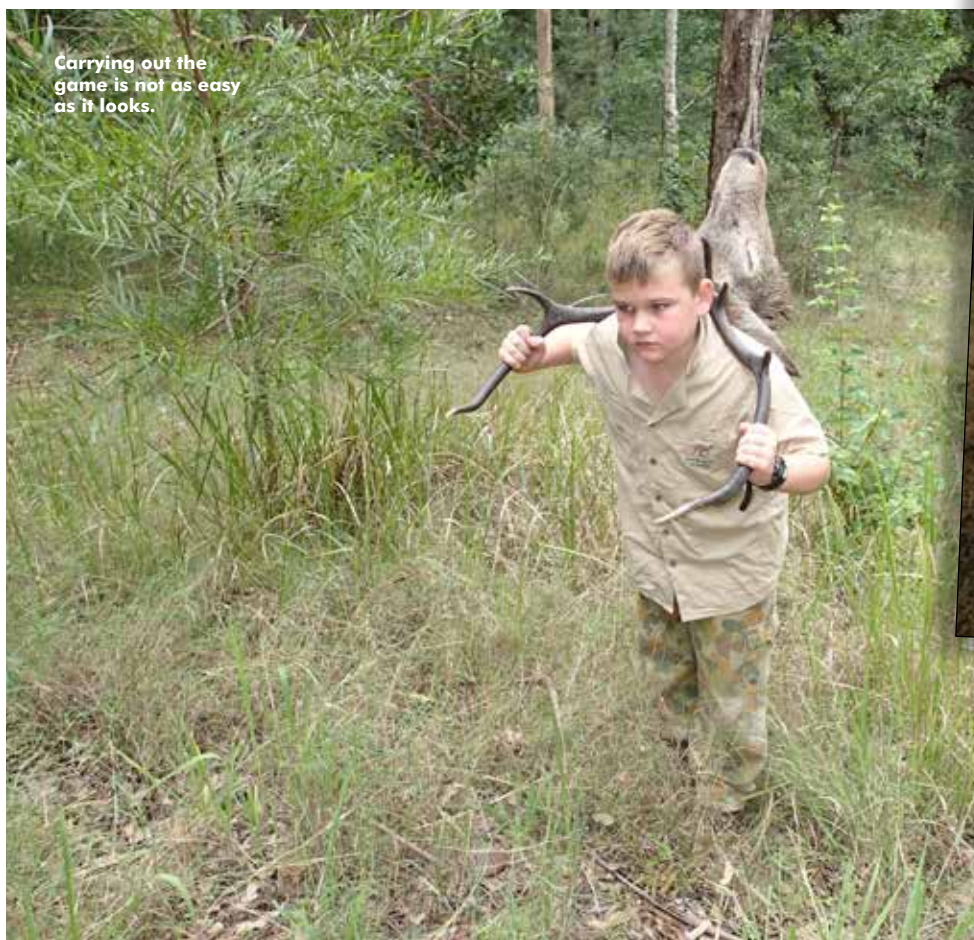
A week earlier I had my first win of the season with a nice 12-pointer and now my son was with me for our second success. The next morning turned out to be unproductive but it was an enjoyable hunt walking the bush before packing up and returning home. Using an old circular saw blade as the mount for the skull, the antlers now serve as a hat rack by the back door and a reminder of a great hunt.

The trip back drove home to me how important it is as parents to be good role models for our children and teach them the fun aspects of hunting along with the serious side as well, like the enormous responsibility that comes with handling firearms. Come to think of it, both Carl and my daughter Rachel developed a keen interest in shooting from their early days, falling asleep in the back seat with earmuffs on while my wife and I were spotlighting for foxes.

Carl has been my shadow since he could walk, and the stalk was evidence of his maturity and all he has learned from a young age just by following me. It doesn't have to be just hunting though. These experiences can also be drawn from other activities such as target shooting and sporting clays. The same principles apply.

Sadly, a lot of children don't get to experience days like those and are content spending hours in front of a screen. That's not to say Carl doesn't enjoy playing the odd computer game, he certainly does, but he'd much rather be my 'shadow' in the outdoors. Here's hoping it's something he'll enjoy for the rest of his life. ●

The hat rack with saw blade mount.



On target *for bright future*

YOUNG JOSH DAWSON from Armidale in New South Wales proved he's one to watch for the future after an outstanding display at the SSAA NSW Benchrest Score Championships hosted earlier this year by SSAA Coffs Harbour.

Competing in tricky conditions, Josh was a runaway winner in the Junior Two-Gun category with a total score of

983.18, and in the Heavy Rimfire 100 yards competition shot an aggregate 498.15 to finish just outside the top five, exceptional shooting given the company he was competing in. Josh is pictured receiving his medals from Rod Madeley, President of the Coffs Harbour branch.



Lachlan

on top of the world

by Communications Officer Sam Talbot



Being in the right place at the right time has certainly paid off for SSAA junior member Lachlan Adolph, who was recently crowned junior world champion at the Fifty Calibre Shooters Association (FCSA) titles at Raton, New Mexico in the US. Despite his impressive achievement, the humble 13-year-old is quick to note that shooting is a great excuse for he and his dad, Owen, to share an activity together.

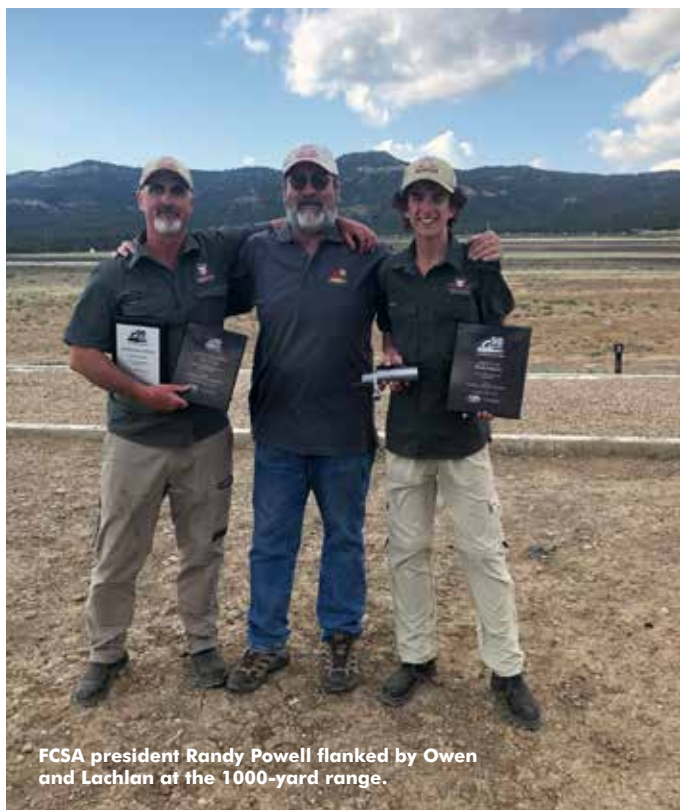
Lachlan became interested in shooting after discovering his dad's trophies while the pair were cleaning up. "That was enough to make Lachlan keen," said Owen, a proud 25-year card-carrying member of the SSAA who previously served as a National Discipline Chairman and has been heavily involved in junior development. Owen has shot a number of disciplines during his career but in recent years long-range shooting has been his focus, which Lachlan has also embraced.

"Lachlan wasn't bored shooting .22s, he just wanted to try some bigger stuff and have a go at longer shooting as well.

We started going to the SSAA Long Range Shooting Club in Mildura which shoots all the way up to .50 Browning Machine Gun. The Mildura club has a close relationship with the FCSA and that's how Lachlan's world title started," said Owen.

Lachlan and Owen shot in a 1000-yard competition held by the Mildura club in association with FCSA, planning to compete in just the all calibre event. But after winning the junior competition Lachlan caught the eye of FCSA president Randy Powell and was offered a shot with a .50 calibre rifle. The youngster took his first shot from the 1000-yard line and scored an X followed by a 10 then another X. That was enough for Randy to offer Lachlan a spot at the junior world titles along with a rifle and handloaded ammo when he got there - a great example of talent and skill coupled with being in the right place at the right time.

"We thought about it for roughly two seconds then said yes," said Owen. A number of shooting communities helped raise funds for Lachlan's trip, which more than paid off when



FCSA president Randy Powell flanked by Owen and Lachlan at the 1000-yard range.

Proud as punch with world title certificate.



he dropped just nine points on the first day before being even more accurate on day two, dropping only four points to surge ahead.

Junior placement at the championships is based on a combination score after judges measure the distance between five shots. They then add the average number of points dropped per target. Lachlan's combination score was 12.917 for a points total of 287/300 with an average group size of 10.75 inches. This was enough to earn him the title of junior world champion and eighth place overall in a highly competitive field of 80 shooters.

"I kept my composure on the second day, dealt with being a bit nervous and came out well," he said. "Even though the competition was full of high-quality shooters, everyone was very nice and helped each other, which made the whole competition a lot of fun."

Along with the title Lachlan received a McMillan 50-calibre target action rifle worth about \$5000. And just as Lachlan

and Owen were figuring out how they'd get the action back to Australia from the US, they were again in the right spot at the right time when they met world-famous gunsmith John Buhay.

"John said if I trusted him with that one he'd make me a custom-built 50-calibre target rifle that would be worth 15 to 20 grand - I was even more speechless after that," said Lachlan. "He said he'll have it waiting for me when I returned for next year's competition so we'll definitely be going back."

Despite the accomplishments, Owen and Lachlan still mostly enjoy the challenge of long-range shooting. Being able to learn about the discipline and how to shoot with scopes, calculate MOA and determine windage has brought the pair closer together.

Lachlan will now focus on making more representative teams and preparing to defend his title in 2019. We wish him all the best with his sport. ●

It pays to be bush-ready *always!*

by Dick Eussen

Hunting, fishing and other bush-related activities are considered high-risk by urban standards. A mate of mine was panning for gold when a big king brown snake slithered between his legs from behind - talk about holding your breath!

Such an episode highlights the reason why you need a first-aid kit when in the bush, whether hunting, hiking or mountain biking. It's always a good idea to carry a snake bite kit or even a small personal pouched first-aid kit when on extended treks. And it's not a bad plan to take a Personal Locator Beacon either.

Specialised first-aid kits are readily available for home and outdoor use, but personal carry kits are a little harder to come by. However, manufacturers are beginning to realise there's a market for people looking to head bush, either for a weekend or an extended holiday trip. Hunters are generally safety conscious, especially when travelling with dogs, and some pack kits not only for their own use but also for the dog.

Survival Emergencies Solutions has addressed the issue and has compact bush kits on offer for hunters. The Survival Explorer First-Aid Kit is an ideal small, solid kit for serious hunters and bush-goers. It packs away easily and is stocked with some serious items to help anyone hurt in an accident or for removing a nasty splinter or a foreign body from the eye.

Contents include sunscreen, insect repellent, antiseptic cream and gels, tweezers with bandage shears, first-aid book and pen, emergency blanket, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) kits and instructions, major and minor wound closures, plus triangular dressings, swabs, safety pins, bandages, wound wash, gloves, cleaning wipes and eyepads. All this is housed in colour-coded packages for easy-to-follow emergency use and contained in a 230 x 180 x 80mm zippered cotton pouch with belt loop and carry strap.

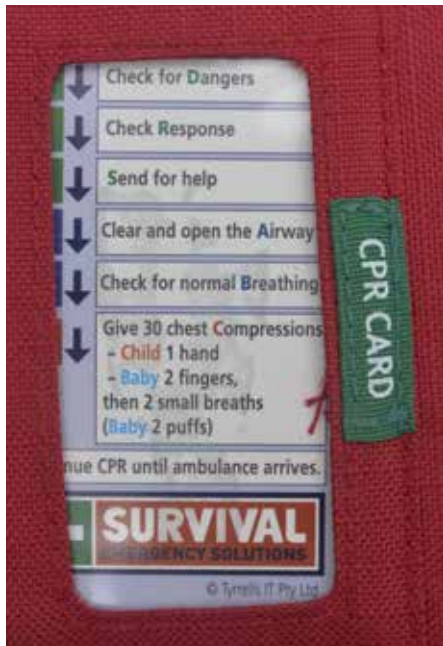
It will treat most injuries incurred from bites, abrasions, falls and foreign body penetrations. The instructions manual is simple to follow but I suggest you sign up for a first aid course at a venue near you and learn how to properly help injured people, including yourself.

For hunters and fishers the compact Survival Handy

First-Aid Kit is better suited when space and weight is a problem. It's another trim carry kit that contains gloves, CPR kit and instructions, wound wipes, adhesive dressing, hypo-allergenic tape, eyewash, triangular bandages (sling, pressure and head), gauze swabs, bandage shears, tweezers and safety pins. It too is colour-coded for easy use and is housed in a 180 x 150 x 70mm zippered cotton pouch fitted with belt loops and carry strap.



Unless you practice first-aid regularly, having CPR instructions on the kit is vital.



Both kits have colour-coded guides on their sides while CPR instructions are highlighted ready for use in a clear window pocket. Replacement items are swiftly available from SES.

Snakes and ticks

There are snake bite deaths on the east coast almost every year, most of them occurring in the suburbs. One bloke in Cairns died after being bitten by a taipan - one of the world's deadliest reptiles - after trying to remove it from his kitchen with a pair of barbecue tongs!

My mate is a full-time gold prospector who comes across death adders on an almost daily basis when using his metal detector. I hunt in the same area and have never seen one, but the death adder is a master of camouflage and I've probably stepped over a few without realising it. But when you poke a metal detector in a snake's face I suppose you should expect a reaction.

And it's for that reason he carries a snake bite pressure bandage and wears snake-proof leggings. Survival Emergencies Solutions offers a unique pressure bandage, 10cm x 2m unstretched. It has tension squares that are used for the correct tautness to treat bites from venomous snakes and funnel-web spiders and can also be used to help sprains or hold dressings in place.

Another SES kit consists of a two rolls of 10m x

100mm wide pressure bandages. Treating a poisonous snake bite is not that difficult. All that's required is to wrap the bitten limb with a wide pressure bandage, immobilise it and seek medical help - fast.

Ticks are a problem in many parts of our wild country and there are lots of methods of removing them from human and animal bodies. Some ticks can make you so ill you can die from their poison and SES has the answer to dealing with them - a simple spoon-shaped tick remover with full instructions on how to detach an offending insect.

I was unable to test how effective it is as I avoid ticks by applying Bushman insect repellent gel on

my feet and legs and the outside of my boots, socks and leggings when hunting in known tick terrain. But the tick remover is a very worthwhile addition to a bush first-aid kit for human and animal use. If you ever needed an excuse to buy a compact first aid kit, check out the range at SES.

Most people I meet in the bush don't have a first-aid kit at all. I had a bloke walk into our camp once with a fishing hook embedded in his hand yet it took only a few minutes to remove it, then clean and dress the wound thanks to the comprehensive first-aid kit I carry with me.

So whether hunting with an adult or just enjoying the bush with your mates, be prepared. You just never know what's around the next bend. ●



A good tool to have in tick country that also works for the dog.



Beretta's Niccolo Scribani Rossi sets Sam up to go shooting.

The VR Experience by Aimpoint

by Sam Talbot

Earlier this year while wandering through the halls of the SSAA SHOT Expo in Sydney, I was transported to another world. I suddenly went from being in the exhibition centre to a snowscaped wilderness surrounded by a wooded forest on all sides. I then heard the unmistakable sound of grumbling wild pigs.

Fortunately, a rifle had also been transported with me and I instinctively started shooting at the pests as they appeared from hiding places both close by and far away. I took out as many as I could but, despite my best efforts, I ran out of ammo. That meant it was 'game over' and time to take the headset off and get back to reality.

Of course I was transported by the power of a virtual reality headset and game. *The VR Experience* was created by GAIM, a division of Aimpoint, with the goal of showing off their sights in the most entertaining way possible. Additionally, the game aims to introduce people to using Aimpoint sights while keeping both their eyes open. *The VR Experience* is arguably the most realistic hunting video game simulator ever made.



Federal Sports Minister
Bridget McKenzie shows the
game isn't just for kids.



While the game is a lot of fun, it's hard to say how much crossover there is to shooting in the real world. When I had the headset on my rifle appeared to have a bolt even though the pretend rifle I was holding didn't. There was also no recoil after firing a shot, but this was more than made up for by the 360-degree view and how realistically the pigs acted.

For example, they would all start running at full pace after a shot was fired. The animal models used in the game are all anatomically correct and behave just like their real counterparts.

Plus the game encourages proper shot placement, rewarding players for hitting the lungs as opposed to the leg of the pig for example. If nothing else this is a valuable learning tool for hunters which they can use in a fun and engaging way. The game also does a great job of forcing players to lead their shots properly and offers a few different scenarios and animals to shoot at.

It appears the 'GAIM KIT' which includes a hunting rifle for VR, headset, sensors and laptop will be available to buy eventually, but not just yet. In the meantime, Aimpoint have a 2D app available (you can find it on their website too) called *The Driven Hunt Experience*, which is basically a 2D version of the virtual reality game. While many of the gameplay concepts carry across, the 2D version, while fun, is not nearly as immersive or cool as *The VR Experience*.

Video games and shooting have gone hand-in-hand for about as long as video games have been around. However, try as they might it seems impossible to capture all the nuances of real-life shooting in a game.

Despite this the game is a lot of fun and could help at the range or in the field in some ways, even if virtual reality is no substitute for the real thing. However, there's no doubt this shooting is much closer to reality than *Fortnite* or *Call of Duty*. ●



The importance of gun range etiquette

by Ben Jimenez

A day at the range should be enjoyable, whether it's a family affair or you're looking to put in some much-needed practice. No matter the reason, you'll be sharing the space with a number of people and don't want to be the disruptive or unsafe person on the range.

There are certain things you can do to ensure everyone has a safe and fun time. Following these gun range etiquette tips will not only keep you safe and secure, it will show commonsense, courtesy and safety towards your fellow shooters.

Principal gun safety rules

The most basic gun range protocol follows four safety rules. It is important, no matter how experienced you are, that you always adhere to these guidelines:

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.

- Never point your firearm at something you do not intend to shoot.
- Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until you intend to fire.
- Always know your target and what lies behind it.

These basic rules should apply to every shooter on the range to ensure the safety of all. If you're a new shooter it's important to commit them to memory.

Learn the range rules

Whether you have never been to a gun range or you're visiting a new one for the first time, there may be additional rules specific to that location. Adhere to each particular range's safety rules as some may allow different things. For example, some ranges may let you draw your gun from an inside the waistband holster while others may require holsters on the hip. Other ranges may not allow you to pull your gun from the holster at all.

Juniors-only competition

Only junior SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on a piece of paper and mail it to us at:

October 2018 Junior competition
SSAA National
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at ssaa.org.au/win

Competition closes October 31, 2018



**WIN a 170mm
halogen 100w light
with alligator clip**

Valued at \$126.50
Kindly donated by
Lightforce
lightforce.com



Listen to the Range Safety Officer

The Range Safety Officer is responsible for the safety of everyone at the range. They are almost always certified instructors who have been through a detailed gun safety course. They are in place to protect the wellbeing of everyone on the range.

Don't be offended if they yell at you for an unsafe action. Everyone is wearing hearing protection, so they need to speak loudly to be heard. Secondly, they want to make sure you are safe, so will make any calls they deem necessary.

The Range Safety Officer is the one in charge but this doesn't make him the only person who can call cease-fire or stop unsafe actions. Every person on the range is responsible for his own actions, and if you see something that's unsafe you should call a cease-fire.

Make sure to check with the Range Safety Officer to ensure you are following all rules. They can offer a wealth of information for any firearms questions, so feel free to seek out their expertise. They often enjoy sharing their knowledge and you may learn something new for staying course-compliant or improving your shot.

Empty chamber indicator

It's a good idea to buy an empty chamber indicator. This lets everyone on the range know the guns you have on the rack are empty. Some ranges even require them when a firearm is not in use.

It adds an extra safety feature that helps keep everyone accountable. If you plan to go to the range with more than one firearm you'll need to have one for each. Even with the indicator in place, any firearms not in use should not be handled until it's time to use them.

Another thing to remember is to never touch a firearm during a cease-fire. Even if it's unloaded with the empty chamber indicator in place, someone may not be able to see the indicator and will not know your intention. Wait until the Range Safety Officer has cleared the line. After the line is cleared to shoot you can resume handling your firearms.

Clean up after yourself

Every time you go to the range make sure you clean up your mess. Most ranges have a broom and dustpan, so cleaning up your brass is simple. Since it's a shared community space, leaving it a mess is not only rude, it can lead to safety concerns if people slip on spent shell casings.

It is not the responsibility of the Range Safety Officer to clean up after you. Leave the range how you found it or go the extra mile and make it look nicer than when you arrived. Not only is this a common courtesy, but the staff will appreciate your willingness to clean up after yourself.

This is also a great time to pick up brass if you reload your own ammunition. You can even ask your neighbours if they mind giving you their cartridges. This will help you save money and give you more ammo to reload on your own.

Have fun

Going to the firing range should be an enjoyable experience. Everyone wants to have a good time but it's important you exercise caution when using any kind of firearm. Strict adherence to gun safety rules is critical to protect everyone on the range. Pair it with good etiquette and you'll earn the respect of your fellow shooters and the Range Safety Officers. ●

Sponsor a JUNIOR

SSAA National's 'Sign up a Junior' campaign was launched to help introduce youngsters to recreational shooting. Juniors are essential to the ongoing strength and vitality of the SSAA and we are seeking your support to protect and ensure the future of the shooting sports in Australia.

Photo: Nicholas Loakim

☐ \$25 - includes 11 issues of the Australian Shooter

☐ \$54 - includes 11 issues of the Australian Shooter and 4 issues of Australian Hunter magazine

Has the junior been a member before? Yes/No

Membership No.

Details of junior being signed up (must be under 18)

Branch (if known) Sex (please circle) M / F

First name Middle name Last name

Home address P/C

Date of birth Phone

Email

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Details of sponsoring member

First name Middle name Last name

Membership No.

Payment options

Enclosed is payment for the amount of \$.....

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Card number

Expiry date Signature.....

Cheques payable to the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Inc.

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