



## Supplementary Submission

### SHOOTERS FISHERS AND FARMERS PARTY

The first recognisable pump action shotgun was invented by Christopher Spencer (inventor of the civil war era Spencer Rifle) in 1882. John Moses Browning invented a superior model for Winchester in 1893 and improved it again in 1897. These were the first commercially successful pump action shotguns.

After these were released to the market, John Browning left Winchester and went into partnership with a Belgium gun company and they released the Browning A5 in 1901. This shotgun sold more units than any other semi auto shotgun in history.

Around 1901, Winchester and a small number of lesser known manufacturers started to sell semi auto sporting rifles.

Shooters had access to all of these firearms for almost the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and yet, Tasmania did not have a gun massacre for 96 years after these were released.

### WE DID NOT NOW OR EVER HAVE A FIREARMS PROBLEM

After 20+ years under the National Firearms Agreement it is now time for all stakeholders to acknowledge the fact that the NFA has not saved one life or positively contributed anything tangible in relation to public safety.

Now that all of the submissions to the Legislative Council have been released to the public, it is appropriate to point out that one in particular has rubbery figures.

In the Mercury newspaper on the 19th June 2017, an article announced that Australia's murder rate hits a record low. This referred to year 2013/14. It reported that knives were used in 86 murders, beatings resulted in 37 deaths and firearms in 32.

The Medics table shows that firearms were used in 185 suicide deaths. I have verified that that is correct for that year. (It neglects to include that all suicides for 2014 accounted for 3027 people – this is call method substitution). The table 1 also includes firearms deaths 253 which is wildly inaccurate. All deaths by all methods for 2014 were 238 with only 32 caused by firearms.

These heavily referenced Phillip Alpers (the author of gunpolicy.org). A search of his site lists 31 firearm murders for that year.

Method substitution with regards to suicide renders any attempt to include firearm suicides moot. Australia has always had an historically high rates of suicide. Common sense dictates that anyone finding themselves in a dark space leading to suicide won't be deterred by not having access to a firearm.

At 1996 the suicide rate had been decreasing for a number of years. It decreased until 2008 at which point it started to increase and is now a higher rate than at 1996.

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The suicide rate is driven by a number of factors such as unemployment rate, mental illness, divorce rate, business cycles, soldiers returning from conflicts, poverty, average weekly earnings proportion of the population being in the 15 -24 years age zone etc.

Fixating on method rather than motivation will always lead to failure in fixing a problem. In their reference list, they have a study by Wang Sheng Lee and Sandy Saurdi of the Melbourne institute.

This is bizarre considering these 2 academics could not find a statistical break that would prove that the National Firearms Agreement saved any lives.

The study concludes "Although the firearm buybacks appear to be a logical and sensible policy that helps placate the public's fears, the evidence so far suggests that in the Australian context, the high expenditure incurred to fund the 1996 buyback has not translated into any reduction in terms of firearms deaths."

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The study lists 2 pages of non-gun and gun murders per 100,000 from 1915 to 2004. Firearm murders in every year were below 1 per 100,000 which is in contrast to the Medics for Gun Control's graph on page five of their submission. This shows a high of 4.3 per 100,000 in 1987 and most years above 1 per 100,000. Most studies post Port Arthur suffer from a lack of a control.

The country that most closely mirrors Australia's culture and character is New Zealand. New Zealand has rated 2nd in the Global Peace Index for the last 5 years ahead of Australia. In 2011 and 2012 New Zealand only recorded 3-firearm murders for those years and most years are single figure. Like Australia, New Zealand had a cluster of mass shooting that also resolved themselves. There were 3 mass shootings in New Zealand in 1997 and despite this; they did not conduct a buyback.

New Zealanders are allowed to own high-powered semi auto rifles on their ordinary Cat A license. This includes AR 15s and AK 47s. They disbanded their firearms registry in 1983, they only register Military Style Semi Autos i.e. large capacity magazines, handguns and light and heavy machine guns. This is further proof that taking firearms and registering the rest is a pointless exercise. It is high time that restrictions on law abiding citizen be removed and replaced with appropriate penalties for criminal use of firearms instead.

## Firearms Ombudsman

We ask for the appointment of a firearms ombudsman with the ability to fix the numerous complaints that we receive from disgruntled firearms owners

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One of the most numerous complaints relates to firearm owners not knowing that their license has expired until the Police turn up to confiscate their firearms.

The FAS has put a system in post April where they send emails or SMS if this information is supplied. The problem with that is the application form for a firearms license doesn't specifically ask for this information. It does ask home or work phone numbers so why can't these numbers be used to notify the firearms owners instead of waiting to use these numbers to confiscate their firearms? It is also becoming clear that inspecting officers don't have a SOP to conduct safe inspections. Safe inspections are a waste of limited police resources in any case.

With the passing of the 1903 Defence Act all 14 to 16-year-old students were required to undergo military training as part of every school's curriculum. Parents could be jailed for refusing to allow their sons to attend. Young men were required to join a militia between the ages 17 and 26. Tasmania had 108 firearm ranges. There were no school shootings or mass shootings despite being one of the most heavily armed societies similar to Switzerland. We did not have a firearm problem.

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At the end of the Second World War many troops came back to Australia with broken bodies and minds. Demobilised troops were permitted to keep their firearms and war trophies including captured firearms. Andrew Leigh and Christine Neill released a study on the effects of the NFA. They make an observation that the lowest level of firearm suicides happened in 1944 and one of the lowest level of firearm murders happened in 1950. They were obviously oblivious to the previous facts which throws cold water on the outcome of their study.

**We did not have a firearm problem, this is not Hollywood. Constant demonization of honest, men and women must stop. Law abiding firearms owners are valued positive contributors to society**

The ABS has tracked the causes of death from 1915 to the current day. In only 6 years did the number of firearm murders exceed 100 victims. The highest total was in 1988 at 127 and 1996 was 104. The firearm murder rates were falling from before even 1988.

The most recent homicide monitoring program report has the total at 32 firearm murder victims. This translates to 0.00013% of the 25 million population. 90%+ of firearm murders are committed by an unlicensed perpetrator with an unregistered firearm. If every recorded firearm murder in Australia were added together, it would not amount to the death toll from smoking for one year. We do not have a firearm problem.

The National Firearms Agreement has been a huge waste of money and Police resources. The firearm buyback cost \$500 million, the handgun buyback cost \$69 million and it is estimated that the total cost of running all registries has increased the collective cost to over \$1 billion. The NFA is an indulgence that the taxpayer can no longer afford.

This money could have saved countless lives by opening many hospital beds and supporting our overwhelmed health system.

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## References:

- Melbourne Institute Working Paper Series Working Paper No. 17/08 The Australian Firearms Buyback and Its Effect on Gun Deaths, Wang-Sheng Lee and Sandy Suardi, August 2008
- Police Statistics on Homicide Victims in New Zealand 2007 - 2014. A Summary of Statistics about Victims of Murder, Manslaughter, and Infanticide POLICE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS March 2017

**END**

## **For Further Comment....**

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