



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into Legislation on proposed firearms reform

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SSAA ACT Inc.

Submission

Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026



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SSAA ACT Inc. Executive Committee

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Section 1

Executive Summary



Opening Statement

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia ACT Incorporated (SSAA ACT Inc.) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make this submission on the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026*.

SSAA ACT Inc. supports the objective of improving public safety. Our members live, work and raise families in the ACT, and we share the community's expectation that firearms regulation must be effective, proportionate and grounded in evidence. SSAA ACT Inc also has a vested interest in raising awareness and promoting public confidence in the safe and lawful use of firearms for legitimate purposes in the ACT, to maintain the reputation, viability and sustainability of firearms sports and other established recreational and professional activities.

Our submission demonstrates that several key elements of the Bill, particularly arbitrary ownership caps, broad recategorisation measures and strict liability offences, are not supported by ACT-specific evidence, are inconsistent with established risk-based regulatory principles and risk imposing significant unintended consequences on highly compliant licence holders without delivering commensurate public safety benefit. Public Safety is a critical imperative and is too important to allow ideology to take precedence over evidence-based policy.

We submit that effective firearms regulation is achieved not through symbolic or arbitrary measures, but through robust suitability assessment, intelligence integration, registry capability and targeted enforcement against demonstrable sources of risk. The aforementioned regulatory characteristics are enhanced and enabled through the earned autonomy of licenced firearms owners who have earned the privilege of legally owning firearms legitimate activities. Our recommendations are directed toward strengthening those mechanisms, while preserving fairness, proportionality and community trust in the regulatory system.

Position Statement

SSAA ACT Inc. supports the stated objective of improving community safety; however, we have significant concerns that several key elements of the Bill, as currently drafted, are not evidence-based, justified, rational or proportionate, and are likely to result in unintended consequences that will inevitably undermine the desired outcome of improved public safety.

In particular, the Association is concerned about:

- The introduction of arbitrary limits on firearm ownership without transparent evidence that it will result in improved public safety outcomes,
 - Moving away from the intrinsic existing cap that possession of every firearm requires the justification of a Genuine Reason for a Genuine Need, to the proposed imposition of a 5-10 firearms limit for each of the 7,000+ licensed ACT Firearms Owners, provides tacit government acceptance of up to 35,000-70,000 firearms in the community. This acceptance contradicts the stated concern that the current number of 23,000 firearms in the community poses a compelling risk to public safety that requires immediate mitigation.
 - The most likely outcome of the imposition of arbitrary limits on the number of firearms a licensed owner is permitted to possess, is an increase in both the number of licensed firearms owners in the ACT and an increase in the raw number of firearms in the community to significantly above the current number of just over 23,000.
- The actual impact of recategorisation of legitimate sporting and occupational firearms,
- The limited public reporting and evaluation mechanisms currently in place,
- The financial impact that may be imposed on the ACT and Australian taxpayer resulting from a hastily developed and expensive gun buyback scheme that has not been costed and will likely result in demonstrably unfair financial detriment to thousands of law-abiding ACT residents, and
- The risk that tranche regulatory reform poses to legitimate ownership and the compounded erosion of established legal privileges and personal property rights.



We are concerned that the proposed measures will impose substantial compliance burdens on low-risk, highly compliant licenced firearm owners, while not sufficiently addressing high-risk pathways such as theft, diversion, trafficking and illicit manufacture.

SSAA ACT Inc. Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. recommends that the Committee:

Numeric Ownership Caps:

1. Reject the introduction of arbitrary ownership caps, and retain the existing individualised, risk-based licensing framework under the *Firearms Act 1996*, based on genuine reason, genuine need and rigorous suitability assessments for every firearm owned or purchased within the ACT.
2. Affirm that public safety is best advanced through individual assessment rather than through arbitrary numeric thresholds, noting the absence of any national or ACT-specific evidence linking the raw number of lawful firearms in the community to increased public safety risk.
3. Redirect proposed regulatory and enforcement resources toward higher impact public safety measures, including intelligence integration, enhanced registry capacity and capability, improved suitability monitoring and targeted compliance.
4. Require that any future proposal to limit lawful ownership be preceded by transparent, ACT-specific evidence, including a publicly available cost-benefit and human rights impact analysis.
5. Ensure that any reform affecting existing licence holders includes clear transitional arrangements, procedural fairness protections and review rights.

Recategorisation of Firearms

1. Acknowledge that straight pull and button and lever release firearms are established technologies, not new or emerging, and do not pose an inherently greater risk to public safety when held by licensed, compliant owners.
2. Reject blanket recategorisation based on action type or magazine capacity, and instead retain assessment through existing genuine reason, genuine need and suitability processes.
3. Ensure that sporting, occupational, agricultural and competition pathways are preserved, including clear statutory mechanisms allowing lawful access where genuine need is demonstrated.
4. Require a comprehensive assessment of the fiscal, sporting, cultural and environmental impacts of any firearms regulation, including potential buy-back costs and impact on local, interstate and international competition pathways.
5. Avoid reforms that retrospectively criminalise or prohibit lawfully acquired firearms without compelling evidence of necessity and proportionality.

Digital Blueprint Offence

1. Limit the use of strict liability offences in accordance with Australian Law Reform Commission guidance, particularly where offences carry significant custodial penalties.
2. Narrow the definition of “digital blueprint” in the Bill and Explanatory Statement to ensure it captures only files clearly intended to facilitate unlawful firearm or regulated firearm part manufacture.
3. Introduce a clear “reasonable excuse” defence for licensed and authorised persons, including for legitimate sporting, occupational, educational, research, maintenance and historical purposes.
4. Consider adopting elements of the South Australian legislative model, while addressing identified shortcomings, to provide lawful regulatory pathways rather than blanket criminalisation.
5. Require the Explanatory Statement to acknowledge that the offence significantly limits freedom of expression, and to include a full proportionality analysis under section 28 of the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004*.



Compatibility with Human Rights and Administrative Law

1. Ensure that all proposed reforms are demonstrably proportionate, evidence-based and rationally connected to identified public safety risks.
2. Ensure that regulatory changes do not create unjustified differential treatment between compliant licensed firearm owners, particularly where distinctions are not grounded in individual risk or conduct,
3. Require that the Explanatory Statement be amended to include a sufficient assessment of human rights, including:
 - a) A full proportionality assessment under section 28 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*,
 - b) Explicit consideration of equality before the law (section 8),
 - c) Cumulative impacts of staged or tranche reforms.
4. Preserve access to procedural fairness, merits review and transparent decision making wherever discretionary powers or divestment obligations are introduced.

Proportionality and Enforcement

1. Prioritise investment in enhancing the capacity and capability of the ACT Firearms Registry, including staffing, training, digital systems and intelligence integration.
2. Require that section 28 *Human Rights Act 2004* assessment be conducted and published before further consideration, not deferred to enactment or implementation of the Bills provisions.
3. Ensure enforcement resources are directed toward illicit firearms, diversion, trafficking and suitability failures, rather than targeting low risk, compliant licence holders.

Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

1. Require that any significant reform to firearms legislation be developed through a structured, transparent and inclusive consultation process, conducted prior to the introduction of legislation and not retrospectively through inquiry alone.
2. Ensure that consultation is meaningful rather than perfunctory, including:
 - a) early engagement before policy positions are settled,
 - b) access to draft proposals and supporting evidence,
 - c) reasonable timeframes for submissions, and
 - d) genuine consideration of stakeholder feedback in final policy outcomes.
3. Engage directly with affected stakeholders, including licensed firearm owners, sporting organisations, professional and occupational users, rural and agricultural representatives, clubs, dealers and industry participants, recognising their operational knowledge, their subject-matter expertise and their legitimate role and interest in compliance and public safety.
4. Avoid reliance on consultation processes undertaken in other jurisdictions as a substitute for ACT-specific engagement, acknowledging that differences in geography, population size and demographics, regulatory frameworks and compliance cultures require tailored policy development.
5. Publish the evidence base, policy rationale and regulatory impact analysis underpinning proposed reforms prior to legislative drafting, including:
 - a) identified risks being addressed,
 - b) alternative regulatory options considered,
 - c) expected public safety benefits, and
 - d) anticipated economic, social and administrative impacts.



6. Ensure that consultation processes comply with ACT best practice regulation principles, including those articulated in the Australian Government Guide to Regulatory Impact Analysis, and the ACT Government's own commitments to transparency, proportionality and evidence-based lawmaking.

Economic, Social and Community Impact

1. Commission an independent assessment of the full economic, social and community impacts of the proposed reforms, including impacts on:
 - a) Sporting participation and youth pathways,
 - b) Regional and agricultural communities,
 - c) Professional and occupational users,
 - d) Volunteer capacity and community organisations,
 - e) Local businesses and tourism.
2. Ensure that environmental management, pest control and animal welfare outcomes are explicitly considered in any regulatory impact statement.
3. Avoid reforms that unintentionally undermine volunteer engagement, community safety culture and cooperative compliance.

Alternative Policy Approach

1. Ensure that policy objectives support targeted investment in identified risk areas, such as illicit firearm manufacture, trafficking and inter-agency information and intelligence sharing networks.
2. Prioritise investment in the ACT law courts and tribunals by reallocating funding currently proposed for ownership caps, gun buybacks and recategorisation measures, to address existing under-resourcing and ensure the courts and tribunals are equipped to manage current caseloads.
3. Expand firearms education, secure storage and safety programs, delivered in partnership with shooting clubs, industry participants and community organisations, directed at improving public awareness and knowledge about the licencing systems and obligations of firearms licence holders.
4. Enhance early intervention mechanisms relevant to firearms risk management, including pathways for timely identification, referral and support where risk indicators emerge.
5. Prioritise regulatory modernisation initiatives to improve administrative efficiency, transparency, accountability and long-term compliance outcomes.

Section 2

About the SSAA ACT Inc.



Our Organisation

The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia ACT Inc. represents licensed firearms owners across the Australian Capital Territory.

The SSAA ACT Inc. was first discussed on 2 September 1965 when a group of 13 people met at the board room of the YMCA and agreed to form a committee to discuss the formation of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Australian Capital Territory.

From then onwards, the Association continued to grow, until in 1968-69, the committee negotiated with the Department of Interior for land in the ACT for a dedicated shooting range.

Shooting activities commenced in 1969 with one rifle range, one pistol range and one shotgun trap. Over the following years, the SSAA ACT Inc. and members have grown the facilities to provide four rifle ranges, shotgun facilities for Down-The-Line, 5-stand, Skeet, Trench and Sporting Clays, 10 pistol ranges catering for all SSAA pistol shooting disciplines, and two air rifle and air pistol areas including a dedicated air shed and an air rifle field target area.

Among our members are sporting and recreational shooters, primary producers, pest management professionals, collectors, and volunteers involved in land management.

SSAA ACT Inc. is committed to the highest standards of firearms safety, training, compliance and ethical conduct. Our members operate within one of the most highly regulated firearms frameworks in Australia and maintain strong partnerships with regulators, law enforcement, and community organisations.

SSAA ACT Inc. leases from the ACT Government over 90 hectares of land and manages and maintains one of the most comprehensive privately funded and owned shooting complexes in Australia. The SSAA ACT Inc. Range Complex is used by many as a firearms training facility, including local, territory, state and federal government agencies, security operators, animal welfare groups and other firearms safety training organisations.

As of 12 February 2026, our membership is 5,446 individuals. More membership statistics are available at Section 19A.

SSAA ACT Inc. has position statements published on our website. These can be found at:

<https://www.ssaact.org.au/position-statements/>

Our Commitment to Public Safety

SSAA ACT Inc. and its members are deeply committed to promoting the highest standards of public safety in all aspects of shooting sports and firearms use. Safety is the foundation of our activities, guiding our training programs, club practices and individual conduct, making shooting sports among the safest sporting activities in Australia.

Our members adhere to strict safety protocols, including the responsible storage, handling and use of firearms, as well as ongoing education on safe shooting practices. The SSAA ACT Inc. actively encourages continuous education and guidance to ensure that every participant – from novice to experienced shooter – understands and implements these safety measures.

Beyond the shooting range, our commitment extends to the broader community. We support responsible firearms ownership and comply with all relevant laws and regulations. We work collaboratively with law enforcement, regulators and local authorities to promote practices that reduce risk and help ensure that firearms are used safely and responsibly.

Through the dedication of our Association and its members, public safety is not compromised, and we strive to uphold a culture of responsibility, respect and vigilance in every aspect of our sports.



Our Members

SSAA ACT Inc. members comply with some of the most stringent regulatory requirements in Australia and maintain an exemplary safety record and commitment to ensuring community safety.

Our members are members of the local community who live and work in the ACT and surrounds. They are often overlooked in the community as being firearm owners because of public perception and are not likely to communicate their recreational and sporting performances to those from the broader community.

Within the SSAA ACT Inc. membership, there are barristers and lawyers, doctors and nurses, members of parliament, shop patrons, pharmacists, small business owners, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, emergency service workers, including military personnel, police, fire and ambulance, farmers, retail workers, green grocers, and public servants, among others.

Licensed firearms owners are ordinary citizens of the ACT and Australian community who have earned the privilege of legally owning lawful firearms for legitimate purposes.

Our members take their responsibilities to community and public safety seriously. They ensure that firearms are stored securely, handled with care and used only in approved settings such as registered ranges, approved sporting events or where hunting is acceptable.

They adhere to the principles of firearms safety, being:

- Treat all firearms as if they are loaded, even if they are not,
- Always point your firearm in a safe direction (never allow the muzzle to point at another person),
- Never load a round into the chamber until you are ready to shoot,
- Keep finger off the trigger until ready to fire,
- Know your target and what is beyond it, and
- Firearms safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our Approach to Firearms Reform

SSAA ACT Inc. advocates for firearms policy that is:

- **Evidence-based:** informed by accurate and objective ACT-specific data sets,
- **Justified:** to address objective and demonstrable public safety imperatives,
- **Risk-focused:** directed and centred on demonstrable sources of harm,
- **Proportionate:** aligned with the level of identified risk,
- **Fair and Transparent:** applied consistently and with procedural safeguards and fairness,
- **Supportive of Legitimate Possession:** recognising lawful sporting, occupational, cultural and environmental purposes.

We believe that effective regulation must clearly distinguish between compliant licence holders and criminal possession and misuse.

Support for Targeted and Effective Measures

SSAA ACT Inc. supports reforms that directly address demonstrable risk, including:

- Increased criminal penalties for theft and diversion offenses,
- Enhanced controls and criminal penalties for illicit manufacture and trafficking,
- Intelligence-led enforcement against organised crime and habitual criminals,
- Educating the general public about the firearms licencing process, and
- Transparent public reporting of enforcement outcomes.



We believe these measures offer the greatest potential to improve public safety and promote public and community confidence about the effectiveness of firearm laws in the ACT.

We believe a major contributor to the fear of firearms safety and crime stems from the lack of effective and genuine communication with communities. Sensationalism in recent media reporting has contributed to this by focusing on factors that do not represent law abiding firearms licence holders and owners.

Section 3

Principles of Firearms Regulation



SSAA ACT Inc. supports the following principles and statements in firearms reform:

- 1) **Safety first:** firearms regulation should prioritise public safety while recognising that responsible, licenced firearms owners already adhere to rigorous safety standards;
- 2) **Evidence-based policy:** laws and reforms must be guided by empirical evidence and proven effectiveness, rather than assumptions or community myths about firearms ownership;
- 3) **Responsible ownership:** regulatory measures must be proportionate, targeting risk without unnecessarily restricting lawful use or ownership;
- 4) **Transparency and fairness:** licencing and compliance processes must be clear, consistent and non-arbitrary, ensuring applicants and licensees understand requirements;
- 5) **Education and engagement:** ongoing education, support and community engagement strengthen compliance and reinforce safe practices;
- 6) **Collaboration with law enforcement:** effective firearms regulation depends on partnership between firearms licence holders, clubs and regulatory authorities to maintain safety;
- 7) **Preservation of sport and tradition:** reforms must safeguard lawful recreational, sporting and cultural uses of firearms in the ACT; and
- 8) **Minimal regulatory burden:** regulatory frameworks should not create unnecessary administrative or discretionary obstacles for lawful, responsible firearms licence holders.

Section 4

Overview of the Bill's Key Provisions



It is the understanding of the SSAA ACT Inc. that the Bill proposes to amend the *Firearms Act 1996* to:

- a) Arbitrarily limit the number of firearms someone can possess and use (Ownership Caps);
- b) Recategorise the types of firearms someone can possess and use (Recategorisation of Firearms);
- c) Prohibit belt-fed firearms; and
- d) Make it an offence to possess a digital blueprint to make a firearm using technology such as 3D printing (Digital Blueprint Offence).

Ownership Caps

The Bill proposes arbitrary ownership caps on new and existing firearm licence holders. The Bill proposes for genuine reasons of:

1. Recreational hunting be limited to 5 firearms,
2. Sport or target shooting, animal welfare, business or employment, occupational requirements relating to rural purposes, primary production or vertebrate pest animal control be limited to 10 firearms, and
3. Collectors, firearms dealers and composite entity licence holders be subject to no limitation.

It is acknowledged that the Bill attempts to propose the proscription of alternate limitations by regulation and subject to Registrar approval, however this still limits “*relevant genuine reason*” licence holders to “*not more than the greater of*” 10 firearms.

Concerns

SSAA ACT Inc. submits there are a number of concerns about the proposed implementation of arbitrary ownership caps, particularly around the arbitrary nature and the lack of supporting evidence that these caps are linked to defined outcomes relating to public safety.

The following concerns are highlighted for the Committee:

- a) There is no clear ACT-specific data, or indeed Australian evidence, that demonstrates that lawful firearm ownership levels correlate with or cause increased public risk and there is a heavy reliance on assumptions and symbolic policy responses rather than demonstrated safety outcomes.
- b) ACT Police has publicly stated that most gun crime in Canberra involved unlicensed or illegal firearms, not those held by licenced firearm owners.¹
- c) The proposed numerical ownership caps do not adequately reflect the diversity of sport shooting, or rural needs, and disproportionately impact those that are highly engaged in existing legal and lawful activities.
- d) The introduction of arbitrary limits undermines the existing and legally tested public interest and public safety test of the genuine reason and genuine needs assessment for the purchase of a firearm, and the objects of the *Firearms Act 1996*² at Section 5(2) specifically:

(c) to require each person who possesses or uses a firearm under the authority of a licence to establish a genuine reason for possessing or using the firearm; and

(d) to provide strict requirement that must be satisfied in relation to the licensing of firearms and the acquisition and sales of firearms

- e) It is said that the limitation will impact around 20% of licenced firearm owners who likely have the most diverse needs of firearm ownership, creating an adverse outcome for a significant portion of the firearms community without any specific associated risk assessment or justification.

¹ [Five-firearm limit for gun owners and tighter controls under proposed new ACT laws - ABC News](#)

² [Firearms Act 1996 | Acts](#)

- f) The inclusion of alternate limitations as prescribed by the regulations introduces uncertainty to licence holders and is subject to potential arbitrary approval or rejection.
- g) There is a disproportionate impact on existing compliant licence holders, without analysis of individual compliance history or risk profile.
- h) Arbitrary ownership caps on firearm ownership are not supported by ACAT following *Q v Registrar of Firearms*, where the Tribunal found “it is preferable to manage the number of firearms Q owns through permit decisions under section 145” rather than the “imposing of such a condition.”³ This case was an appeal of an ACT Firearms Registry decision to impose arbitrary conditions on a licence holder who had applied for permit to acquire for his 80th, 81st and 82nd firearm. The Tribunal found that limitations on the number of firearms a person possesses is not the sole reason to justify the public safety rationale, rather finding that storage and other factors, including assessment of a licensee’s suitability, play a more significant role in determining risk to public safety.
- i) Relevantly, this is supported by:

*41. That is the ‘proliferation’ argument is relevant if based on the interests of public safety, since this is in turn relevant to whether there is a ‘good reason’ for the acquisition. Intuitively it would seem that a limit on the number of firearms possessed by a licensee promotes public safety, however the legislation achieves the end of public safety by providing for the good reason test, rather than by placing a general numerical limit on ownership, or prescribing a mathematical formula or sliding scale of need against risk to do so.[39] Although the test of ‘good reason’ for acquisition may in practice become more difficult to satisfy as the number of firearms already in the licensee’s possession increases, this is generally not because of any express or implied limit, but a consequence of public safety considerations being relevant to whether there is such a good reason.*⁴
- j) The addition of limitations on existing licence holders implies that the licence holder is now no longer a person who satisfies the obligations of the *Firearms Act 1996*. This was discussed in *Q v Registrar of Firearms* where it was found “the imposition of a condition, especially at a time after the licence has been granted, is subject to a requirement to provide procedural fairness to the licensee; that is an opportunity to be heard on that issue before the decision is taken.”
- k) There are adverse and unassessed impacts to businesses (firearms dealers, gunsmiths, outdoor recreation businesses) and disruption to sporting competitions, training pathways, and volunteer engagement.
- l) There is community harm through financial loss through forced disposals and reduced sporting and community participation.
- m) Arbitrary ownership caps, with variations on these caps dependant on genuine reason, introduces different treatment based on activity and, in effect, creates a class system within the current legislative framework designed to assess individuals as individuals.
- n) There will be unintended consequences and negative impact to police intelligence through reduced interactions between licence holders and the ACT Firearms Registry, impacting data quality, compliance monitoring and early risk detection.
- o) Through a lack of understanding of the current licensing system, the drafters of the Bill have introduced contrary provisions for minor permits with the inclusion of numeric ownership caps for these types of permits.
- p) It appears unclear what the impact to the ACT budget will be from the introduction of these arbitrary limits and the reduction in permits, especially for an uncosted gun buyback scheme.
- q) It introduces inconsistencies with ACT policy approaches and diverges from the established risk-based, proportionate models used in other ACT policy.

³ *Q v Registrar of Firearms (2015)*

⁴ *Q v Registrar of Firearms (2015)*, paragraph 41



- r) Legislation of this form was introduced to the NSW Parliament with no consultation, at a time where emotions were high, following a terrorist incident that rocked the Country. The timing of these laws has resulted in significant unintended and unforeseen consequences that the NSW Government are now scrambling to understand.

The SSAA ACT Inc. has collated a high-level overview of the current, established licence application, permit to acquire (PTA), storage, compliance and refusal and cancellation framework. This can be found at Section 19D.

Registered User Implications

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the introduction of arbitrary numerical ownership caps will have significant and unintended consequences for registered and compliant firearms users, particularly in relation to lawful sharing arrangements and the practical operation of existing compliance frameworks by what is now called “Registered Users”.

Including Registered Users in the numeric ownership caps, results in families that have structured their firearm ownership in the most simplified or suitable way, actually results in them being punished by further reducing the number of firearms that they can own for legitimate purposes. The implication of this creates another class of licence holders within a system that promotes inequality under the law. The introduction of numeric ownership caps therefore has the potential to threaten the right to recognition and equality under the law contained in s 8 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Disruption to Lawful Sharing and Cooperative Use

Under current regulatory arrangements, many licence holders lawfully share firearms within families, sporting clubs, farming operations and professional settings. These arrangements allow individuals to access specialised equipment for competition, training, pest control and property management without unnecessary duplication of assets.

Ownership caps risk undermining these cooperative arrangements by limiting the number of firearms that may be registered to a single individual or entity, regardless of operational need. As a result, families, clubs and agricultural cooperatives may be forced to restructure long-standing sharing practices, transfer ownership inefficiently or acquire additional firearms purely to meet existing genuine needs. In the case of junior sports, many families with multiple licence holders rely on Registered Users to support junior sporting participation. The shooting sports are not as simple to participate in as other sports where any parent or guardian is able to transport sporting goods.

The requirement for registered users is an existing significant point of difference between ACT and NSW. NSW allows the borrowing of a firearm by a licence holder, without any formal application process to the NSW Firearms Registry. The only time a licence holder can be in possession of a firearm without being either the licenced owner or a registered user is when the licenced owner is also present and only in limited circumstances (refer *Firearms Act 1996* Section 14). Again, this is a point of difference between the ACT and NSW, and deviation is an offence under the *Firearms Act 1996* and could result in up to 20 years imprisonment⁵.

Inheritable, Succession and Intergenerational Implications

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the introduction of arbitrary ownership caps would create significant and unintended difficulties for families with long-standing involvement in lawful shooting sports and firearms use, particularly in circumstances involving estate administration and intergenerational transfer.

For many families, firearms are not merely items of personal property, but form part of an established sporting, occupational and cultural legacy. Collections are often built over decades to support multiple discipline, professional activities or family participation. Under the existing *Firearms Act 1996*, firearms may be transferred to eligible family members through estates, subject to licensing and regulatory approval.

⁵ *Firearms Act 1996*, Section 42 and 43



Arbitrary Ownership caps would substantially disrupt this established and proven process.

Deceased Estates

Where a deceased person's estate includes firearms, beneficiaries who already hold firearms may be unable to inherit those items if doing so would exceed a prescribed cap. This creates several practical and legal difficulties:

- Executors may be forced to arrange compulsory sales or surrender of firearms against the wishes of the deceased,
- Estates may incur additional storage, dealer transfer and disposal costs,
- Delays may arise while beneficiaries attempt to restructure their existing firearm holdings to remain compliant, and
- Sentimental, historical or sporting value may be permanently lost.

These outcomes undermine ordinary principles of testamentary freedom and estate planning.

Disruption to Family and Intergenerational Participation

Many ACT families participate collectively in shooting sports, pest management and hunting activities, with equipment shared, inherited and adapted over time. Arbitrary ownership caps would disproportionately affect these families by:

- Preventing the orderly transfer of firearms between generations,
- Discouraging younger family members from continuing participation,
- Fragmenting collections designed for multiple disciplines, and
- Forcing families to choose between heirlooms and functional equipment.

Administrative and Compliance Burdens

At a time of grief and bereavement, arbitrary numeric ownerships caps would also impose new and complex administrative burdens, including:

- Urgent compliance obligations,
- Limited timeframes for disposal or transfer,
- Risk of inadvertent non-compliance, and
- Increased reliance on dealers and legal advisors.

These pressures are inappropriate in the context of estate administration and may lead to unnecessary regulatory breaches.

Policy Implications

The introduction of arbitrary ownership caps would transform ordinary family succession into a regulatory obstacle course, undermining legitimate sporting, occupational and cultural continuity without demonstrable community safety benefit.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that any regulatory framework that interferes with lawful inheritance and intergenerational participation must be supported by compelling evidence of necessity. In the absence of such evidence, arbitrary caps risk imposing unnecessary hardship on families, without any demonstrable evidence to public safety outcomes or measurable impact to criminal misuse.



Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. makes the following recommendations:

6. Reject the introduction of arbitrary ownership caps, and retain the existing individualised, risk-based licensing framework under the *Firearms Act 1996*, based on genuine reason, genuine need and rigorous suitability assessments for every firearm owned or purchased within the ACT.
7. Affirm that public safety is best advanced through individual assessment rather than through arbitrary numeric thresholds, noting the absence of any national or ACT-specific evidence linking the raw number of lawful firearms in the community to increased public safety risk.
8. Redirect proposed regulatory and enforcement resources toward higher impact public safety measures, including intelligence integration, enhanced registry capacity and capability, improved suitability monitoring and targeted compliance.
9. Require that any future proposal to limit lawful ownership be preceded by transparent, ACT-specific evidence, including a publicly available cost-benefit and human rights impact analysis.
10. Ensure that any reform affecting existing licence holders includes clear transitional arrangements, procedural fairness protections and review rights.



Recategorisation of Firearms

The Bill proposes to recategorise all straight pull and button and lever release firearms to Category C or D and recategorise other firearms depending on their fixed or detachable magazine capacity to either Category C or D, or to make them completely prohibited.

It has been broadly communicated that straight pull, button and lever release firearms are new, emerging technologies requiring a modern approach to regulation.

Concerns

SSAA ACT Inc. submits a number of concerns about the introductions of these new policy directives:

- a) First manufactured in the 1880's, the straight pull rifle has been a part of firearm history for almost 150 years.⁶
- b) The same can be said for the pump-action rifles, which date back to pre-1900.
- c) By making these changes, legally available rifles and shotguns that are based on technology developed 100-150 years ago will now become unobtainable to the ordinary licence holder with a Category A and B licence. The change to magazine capacity will also impact a number of these historic firearms where they have internally fixed magazines with a capacity of greater than 10 rounds.
- d) The scale and consequence of these changes have not been accurately investigated, nor have they been costed for the buy-back proposed by the Commonwealth Government, with only some states and territories agreeing to participate.
- e) As there is no provision for rim-fire rifles with a magazine capacity of over 10 rounds, which will all be prohibited under the proposed changes. This includes rifles that date back to the early 1900's. These firearms were previously registered under Category A.
- f) There are also a large number of pre-1950's centre-fire lever action rifles with internal and fixed magazines that will now become prohibited because of the inclusion of the magazine limits. These were previously registered as category B firearms.
- g) In 2018, when the ACT made a change to the *Firearms Act 1996* to limit detachable magazine capacity, a decision was made to ensure that the capacity only referenced these detachable magazines. The Explanatory Statement states: "*Amendment 4 is made to ensure that only detachable magazines come within the prohibition, not tubular magazines. Tubular magazines are integral to a firearm, being internal. Without the word 'detachable', clause 34 has the **unintended effect** (emphasis added) of prohibiting all centre-fire rifle magazines with a capacity of more than 10 rounds, and thereby any firearm of which tubular magazines with this capacity are a part.*"⁷ During this change there was no consideration of limiting rim-fire magazines further than the 15 round detachable magazine limit.
- h) The reclassification of straight pull firearms impacts Olympic sport. The Winter Olympics shooting event requires the use of straight pull rim-fire rifles for the biathlon. By effect, the recategorisation of this type of firearm results in any ACT competitor who has Winter Olympic aspirations not being able to train or compete with the equipment required. There is no pathway included in the Bill to allow the possession or use of these types of firearms by sport and target shooters.
- i) There appears to be no pathway for the possession and use of these types of firearms for any licence holder, including primary production or other use as prescribed by the regulation for category C firearms, or vertebrate pest animal control for category D firearms. There is no pathway for an application for the recategorized firearms.

⁶ [The Straight-Pull Rifle: From Past To Present | An Official Journal Of The NRA](#)

⁷ [Firearms and Prohibited Weapons Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 | Bills](#)

Recategorising legally available firearms undermines the existing genuine reason and genuine needs criteria. Each permit to acquire requires a licence holder to satisfy, to the acceptance of the Registrar, that the licence holder has a genuine need for each firearm being acquired and that it is attached to their licenced genuine reason. Through the permit to acquire process, the Registrar must also be satisfied that the licence holder is not a risk to public safety and will act in the public interest. This includes the Registrar being able to undertake the requisite checks into a person's criminal and personal conduct and assessing if they remain a "suitable person".

This is further supported by *Q v Registrar* where this was discussed at length in the decision. For example:

42. In a colloquial sense a reason will not be 'good enough' if the acquisition poses a risk to public safety. As noted, the fundamental principles of the Firearms Act 1996 refer to the overriding need to ensure public safety, and to improve public safety by imposing strict controls on the possession and use of firearms and promoting the safe and responsible storage and use of firearms. Further, the objects of the Act include to require each person who possesses or uses a firearm under the authority of a licence to establish a genuine reason for doing so. Where the addition of firearms to an already large collection poses a risk to public safety, this would suggest that there was in fact not a good reason for the acquisition.

Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. makes the following recommendations:

1. Acknowledge that straight pull and button and lever release firearms are established technologies, not new or emerging, and do not pose an inherently greater risk to public safety when held by licensed, compliant owners.
2. Reject blanket recategorisation based on action type or magazine capacity, and instead retain assessment through existing genuine reason, genuine need and suitability processes.
3. Ensure that sporting, occupational, agricultural and competition pathways are preserved, including clear statutory mechanisms allowing lawful access where genuine need is demonstrated.
4. Require a comprehensive assessment of the fiscal, sporting, cultural and environmental impacts of any firearms regulation, including potential buy-back costs and impact on local, interstate and international competition pathways.
5. Avoid reforms that retrospectively criminalise or prohibit lawfully acquired firearms without compelling evidence of necessity and proportionality.

Digital Blueprint Offence

SSAA ACT Inc. supports the intent of this offence and acknowledges that the illicit 3D printing of firearms and firearms parts creates a serious concern to ACT Police and the ACT community, including firearms licence holders. However, SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed prohibition on the possession, creation or distribution of digital blueprints and computer-aided manufacturing files for firearms and firearm parts raises concerns regarding proportionality, enforceability and procedural fairness, particularly in the context of strict liability offences and there not being a defined defence for licence holders.

Scope and Practical Implications

The Bill proposes to prohibit a broad range of digital files, incidental to 3D printing, including:

- 3D printing files,
- Computer-aided design (CAD) files,
- Technical schematics and templates,
- Digital instructions, and
- Related electronic data perceived to be capable of facilitating fabrication.

These materials are widely used across legitimate sectors, including engineering, education, manufacturing, research and hobbyist communities. Many files are generic in nature, multi-purpose or capable of being adapted for lawful applications unrelated to firearms manufacture.

The definition of “digital blueprint” remains over broad and is not sufficiently narrowed in the Bill’s Explanatory Statement. The breadth of the proposed prohibition therefore risks capturing individuals who have no intent to manufacture prohibited items and those who possess such material for legitimate professional, educational or recreational purposes.

Strict Liability and the Absence of Fault or Intent

Of particular concern is the proposal to designate offences relating to digital blueprints as strict liability offences, engaging s21 and 22 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*, though it is noted that the Explanatory Statements attempts to address this.

Under a strict liability framework, a person may be convicted without proof of criminal intent, knowledge, recklessness or negligence. In this case, liability may arise solely from possession or access of files, regardless of purpose or awareness.

This represents a significant departure from fundamental principles of criminal justice, which ordinarily require some degree of fault, culpability or intent.

The Australian Law Reform Commission provides the following guidance on when a strict liability offence could be considered:

- It should only be imposed after careful consideration of all available options, and where there is general public support and acceptance of the measure and the penalty.
- It should not be imposed for mere administrative convenience or based on a rigid formula. It is insufficient to rely on broad uncertain criteria (such as general public good or community interest), or solely on reduced resource requirements. Strict liability should only be imposed based on specific criteria/rationales.
- It should not be imposed, where schemes are so complex and detailed that breaches are virtually guaranteed, or where parties must by necessity rely on information from third parties.
- It should not be imposed, where it is accompanied by an excessive or unreasonable increase in agency powers of control, search, monitoring and questioning.

- It should only apply for offences where the penalty does not include imprisonment, and where there is a cap of 60 penalty units for monetary penalties.
- It should be accompanied by program specific defences which account for reasonable contraventions. These should be in addition to the defences in the Criminal Code.⁸

In addition, when discussing the length of sentences, the Security Legislation Review Committee found that “offences that carry penalties of 25 years (s 102.5) and three years (s 102.8) should not be subject to strict liability.”

The combination of:

- Broadly defined prohibited material.
- Digital storage realities, and
- Strict liability standards,

creates a substantial risk of unjust outcomes for compliant and law-abiding individuals.

Risk of Criminalising Innocent Conduct

The proposed framework risks criminalising conduct that is:

- accidental,
- historical,
- incidental to legal activities,
- professionally and recreationally necessary, or
- technically unavoidable.

For example, a licence holder may be exposed to criminal sanction due to possessing schematics for trigger fitment or replacing a barrel or an exploded diagram to support firearm maintenance or the purchase of replacement parts.

Other examples could include the legitimate manufacture or construction of unregulated firearm parts that do not meet the definition of *firearm part* contained in the Act. Where replacing parts, to ensure correct fixture, construction, alignment or tolerance, designs and diagrams are required. This could require doing something as simple as measuring a *firearm part* with absolutely no intention of manufacturing that specific part. However, there are also situations where measurements and diagrams are required of a firearm part to make another unregulated firearm part, such as custom grip panels.

In such cases, criminal liability would arise even with the absence of any demonstrated risk to public safety, or criminal intent.

As being a licence holder for a particular type or category of firearm is not a defence, the proposed provisions risk criminalising lawful firearms owners simply for being in possession of something without criminal intent or being a risk to public safety. This risks undermining the right to freedom of expression contained in s16 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*. The Bill’s Explanatory Statement only partially addresses this risk as it frames the s228A offence as imposing only “minor limitations on freedom of expression”.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the limitation is not minor, as it criminalises possession of certain forms of information (namely legitimate firearm blueprints) and carries a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

The Explanatory Statement merely states that “it is not envisaged” that the offence will apply to representations of firearms for artistic, scientific, or general interest reasons, however nothing in the proposed offence limits it from actually applying to these materials or in these circumstances.

⁸ [Justifications for imposing strict and absolute liability | ALRC](#)

The proposed offence's definition of "digital blueprint" remains overly broad, with the Explanatory Statement containing no objective criteria for distinguishing between harmless digital material from prohibited files. Furthermore, although the Explanatory Statement has considered the limit the proposed offence imposes on artistic expression, it fails to address the use of digital files for the purpose of academic research that does not seek or meet the requirements for Registrar approval, journalism and public-interest reporting on firearms, historical/military documentation, or educational use.

This presents a major risk to the right to freedom of expression contained in the Act as this right extends to expression "of all kinds", not just art.

The Explanatory Statement has also failed to explain why such a broad definition is required and why less restrictive means cannot be implemented to achieve the same objective.

Enforcement Challenges in a Digital Environment

Digital files are inherently mobile, easily duplicated and commonly stored across multiple platforms, including personal devices, cloud services, email accounts and shared servers. As a result, effective enforcement of a blanket prohibition presents significant practical difficulties.

Licence holders, businesses and community organisations may unknowingly retain prohibited files through:

- Automatic cloud backups,
- Archived emails,
- Legacy data storage,
- Shared databases,
- Software repositories.

In this context, individuals may be exposed to criminal liability without any deliberate act, criminal intent or awareness of wrongdoing.

South Australian Context

SSAA ACT Inc. notes that South Australia has proactively addressed the emerging challenge of digitally enabled firearm manufacturing by the introduction of specific legislation targeting the criminal possession of digital blueprints and design files that enable 3D printing of firearms, firearm components and related items.⁹

Under their model, firearms licence holders and other authorised persons may possess relevant files within defined parameters, and written permits can be issued for scientific, educational or licensed manufacturing purposes, subject to conditions such as secure storage and breach of reporting requirements.

This approach recognises the legitimate uses of digital and CAD data while directly responding to the risks posed by unregulated digital manufacturing technologies that can circumvent traditional serialisation and licencing controls.

South Australia's model appears to therefore offer a more balanced, evidence-informed framework that integrates digital technology safeguards with clear regulatory pathways for lawful activity and is worthy of detailed examination in considering analogous provisions in the ACT.

SSAA ACT Inc. does not submit that South Australia has it completely correct as there are still issues with potentially criminalising a person for possession if they are not licenced for a particular firearm. For example, a licence holder might be interested in supporting a friend through some challenges with their licenced firearm, requiring detailed technical drawings.

Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. makes the following recommendations:

⁹ [SAPOL - New Legislation 3D Digital Blueprints for Firearms](#)



1. Limit the use of strict liability offences in accordance with Australian Law Reform Commission guidance, particularly where offences carry significant custodial penalties.
2. Narrow the definition of “digital blueprint” in the Bill and Explanatory Statement to ensure it captures only files clearly intended to facilitate unlawful firearm or regulated firearm part manufacture.
3. Introduce a clear “reasonable excuse” defence for licensed and authorised persons, including for legitimate sporting, occupational, educational, research, maintenance and historical purposes.
4. Consider adopting elements of the South Australian legislative model, while addressing identified shortcomings, to provide lawful regulatory pathways rather than blanket criminalisation.
5. Require the Explanatory Statement to acknowledge that the offence significantly limits freedom of expression, and to include a full proportionality analysis under section 28 of the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Section 5

The Data



SSAA ACT Inc. submits that any discussion about firearms policy must be informed by robust evidence regarding how firearms are used in crime and where the principal risks lie. The following facts and figures provide context for understanding the scale, patterns and drivers of firearm related crime in Australia.

Australia's Firearm Related Death and Offence Trends

Australia's firearm homicide rate is exceptionally low by international standards, with an estimated 0.09 firearms homicides per 100,000 people between July 2023 and June 2024. In the same period, the overall homicide rate was 10 times higher at 0.98 per 100,000.

Over the longer term, firearm death rates, including homicide and suicide, have fallen substantially. National statistics show a decline in total firearm death rates from 2.6 per 100,000 in 1995 to around 1.6 per 100,000 by 2022. There was also a recorded decrease in firearms deaths between 1980 and 1995 of 46% (from 4.9 to 2.6 per 100,000¹⁰).

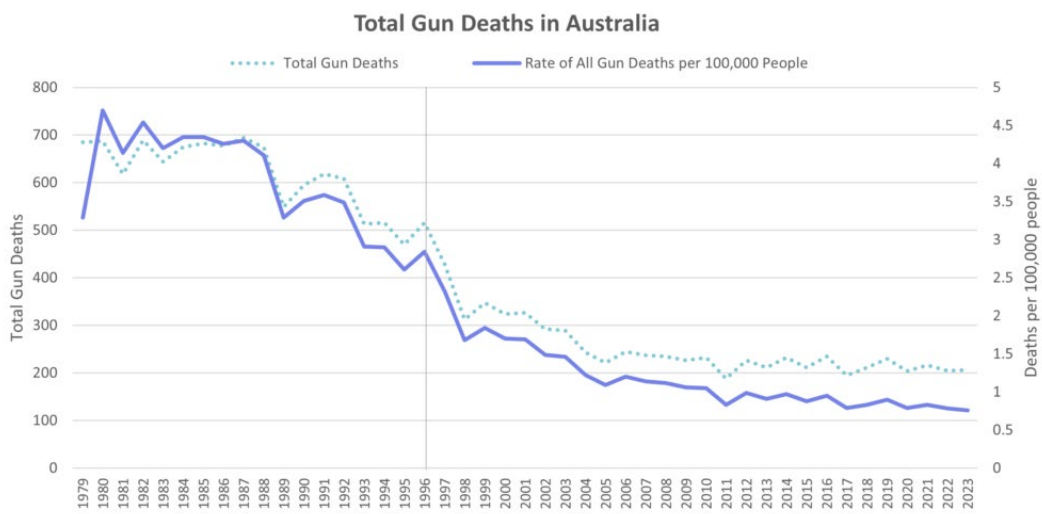


Chart 1: Source: Data extracted from gunpolicy.org; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023 and courtesy of Australian Gun Safety Alliance

Separately, suicides involving firearms has decreased from 3.8 per 100,000 (n=412) in 1995 to 0.8 per 100,000 (n=178) in 2022, representing a 57% decline.

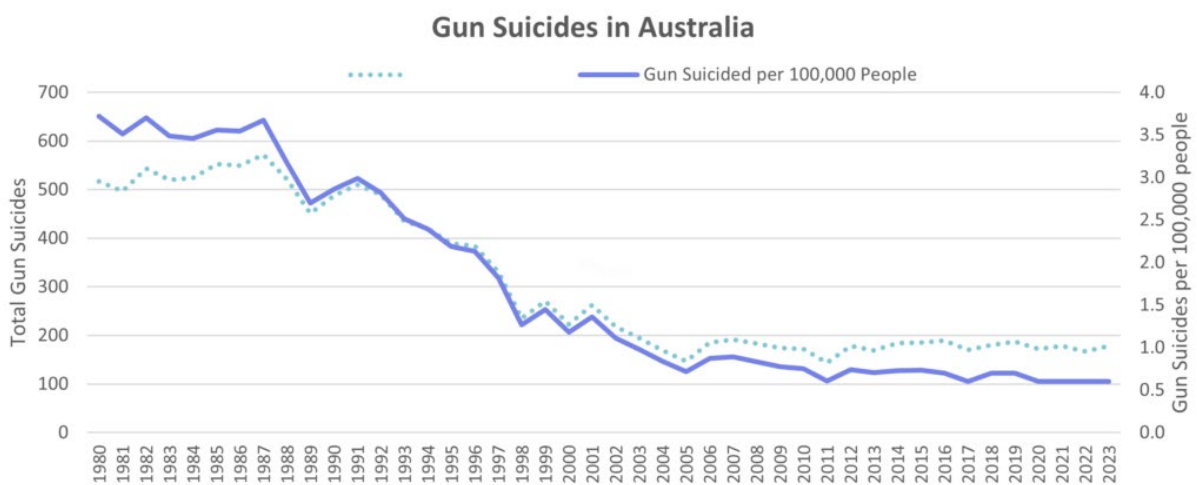


Chart 2: Source: Data extracted from gunpolicy.org; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023 and courtesy of Australian Gun Safety Alliance

¹⁰ [4397.0 - Firearms Deaths, Australia, 1980 to 1995](#)



Comparatively, in 1980 there were a recorded 700 firearm deaths. In 1995, it is reported that there were 479 firearms related deaths. Even with the increase in number of firearms and the general population since these years, the firearm's related deaths have still decreased by between 30 and 50%.

Firearm offences, including illegal possession, negligent handling, firearm assaults and robberies, have declined in recent years, with total firearm related offences falling by about 18% between 2021 and 2022.

These long-term declining trends suggest that existing regulatory mechanisms, including licencing, storage requirements and transfer controls, have contributed to restricting access to firearms for criminal use and have helped maintain low rates of firearm violence relative to other types of violent crime.

In 2022, it is reported that 78% of firearm offenses were committed by individuals with a prior criminal history involving firearms. It is also reported that 83% of seized firearms were unregistered and 17% had been illegally modified.

In the ACT, in the 10 years to 2023-24, firearm homicides account for 2 of the 30 deaths which is the lowest incidence of firearm homicide in all Australian jurisdictions at just 6.66%.

Illicit Firearms and Crime Drivers

- The Australia Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) estimates that there are hundreds of thousands of illicit firearms within the national illegal market, though understandably the exact number is difficult to measure. Conservative estimates previously cited about 200,000 illicit firearms; however, the Gun Safety Alliance stats suggest 250,000 to 500,000¹¹. Based on the United Nations Office of Drugs Crime estimates the global illicit market contains between 10 to 20% of the number of firearms in the licit market, the ACIC estimates this number could be between 300,000 and 600,000 firearms.¹² This exposes a significant issue – the firearms that are known are an easy target to reduce the number of firearms in the community.
- Theft from lawful owners is quoted as being a principal source of weapons that enter illicit circulation, with recent research estimating that 44,631 firearms have been stolen over the last 21 years.¹³
- The illicit market continues to attract some law enforcement focus: joint operations involving multiple jurisdictions have resulted in seizures of over 1,000 guns and parts, including homemade weapons and hundreds of arrests targeting illegal firearm manufacturing and possession.¹⁴

The ACT Minister for Police is quoted as saying 500-600 illegal firearms¹⁵ are seized in the ACT every year. In the 7 years to 2023, ACT Policing figures¹⁶ on firearm theft show a total of 114 firearms were stolen for an average of 16 per year. Assuming the same average this is a rate of 0.07% of total legal firearms, however ACT Policing has not differentiated between legal and illegal firearm theft.

Using the total theft number from 2023 of 2,035, this represents around 0.05% of total legal firearms Australia wide. In 2018 data from Australian Institution of Criminology shows that the mean number of firearms stolen per incident is between 1.9 and 3.4 across each jurisdiction with the National mean being 2.9¹⁷.

¹¹ [The stats - Australian Gun Safety Alliance](#)

¹² [illicit_firearms_in_australia.pdf](#)

¹³ [Firearm theft in Australia - The Australia Institute](#)

¹⁴ [More than 1,000 illicit firearms and parts, 3D firearms and parts seized in transnational week of action](#)

¹⁵ ABC Canberra Radio interview

¹⁶ [Firearm theft in Australia - The Australia Institute](#), page 17

¹⁷ [sr24_firearm_theft_in_australia_2018.pdf](#)



	Single-firearm theft		Multiple-firearm theft		Range
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
NSW	54	34.2	104	65.8	1–14
Vic	78	38.8	123	61.2	1–27
Qld	96	46.6	110	53.4	1–27
WA	66	42.3	90	57.7	1–14
SA	15	25.9	43	74.1	1–18
Tas	15	34.9	28	65.1	1–9
ACT	3	37.5	5	62.5	1–3
NT	12	70.6	5	29.4	1–9
Total	339	40.0	508	60.0	1–27

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Source: AIC Firearm theft 2018 [computer file]

Chart 3: Single versus multiple firearm thefts by jurisdiction, 1 January to 31 December 2018, Australian Institute of Criminology

Due to the change in reporting periods, in 2016 it is reported that between 2,752 and 3,637 firearms were stolen, represents between 0.07% and 0.1% of the total 3,500,000 registered firearms in Australia. This drop in firearm theft also demonstrates a decrease in illegal activity. Even as the number of firearms has increased over 2016 to 2024, the per capita rate of firearm theft has decreased.

While those figures underscore the importance of addressing illegal firearms supply and criminal trafficking, it is critical to recognise that this segment of the market is separate from lawful ownership and its regulation, and that the majority of firearms used in offences are not held as part of compliant licensed ownership as is discussed further in this section.

Legal vs Illegal Firearm Use

Criminological research consistently shows that the majority of firearms used in homicides and other serious crimes are not lawfully registered firearms held by legitimate licence holders. In older analysis by the Australian Institute of Criminology from 2006 data¹⁸ shows that offenders that use a handgun are “more likely to have a criminal history”. It is reported that 69% of offenders who killed their victim with a handgun had a prior criminal history, 30% having previous drug offences and 29% having property offences. It is also reported that 39% of firearm related homicides had prior assault charges, and of those 22% with property offences and 20% with drug charges.

These insights indicate that criminal access to firearms is overwhelmingly driven by illicit behaviour rather than lawful ownership as these offence types would preclude someone from being a licence holder.

Between 1996 and 2024 registered firearm numbers have increased by 700,000 in real terms and represents an increase of over 20%. However, what is missing is the representative increase in the Australian population of over 9,000,000 in the same period.

The firearm per population figures shows that there were 17,500 firearms per 100,000 in 1996 compared to 15,000 per 100,000 people in 2024.

¹⁸ [Criminal use of handguns in Australia | Australian Institute of Criminology](#)

Broader Crime Context

In 2024/25, weapons such as knives and physical force are involved in a larger share of violent crime than firearms. For instance, knives and other sharp instruments accounted for over 44% of weapon involved homicides, while firearms accounted for less than 12%.¹⁹

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Firearm	12	7	3	0	0	1	0	0	23
Knife/other sharp instrument	29	31	10	8	6	1	0	6	91
Blunt instrument	1	2	0	2	1	0	0	1	7
Hands and feet	16	8	6	3	2	0	0	3	38
Fire	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Drugs	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Poison	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle	2	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	6
Other	0	5	1	0	1	1	0	0	8
Multiple weapons	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	6
Weapon not stated	6	5	5	1	1	0	0	1	19
<i>Weapon used</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>205</i>
Weapon not used	9	18	0	7	0	2	0	0	36
Not stated/unknown	5	3	2	10	3	0	0	0	23
Total	83	82	35	32	14	5	0	13	264

Source: AIC NHMP 2024–25 [computer file]; see Table B8

Chart 4: Homicide incidents by weapon type and jurisdiction, 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025, Australian Institute of Criminology

Overall homicide and violent crime dynamics must be understood in context – the majority of violent offenders and victims involve non-firearm modes of violence.

Data Limitations and Reporting Caveats

Estimates of illicit firearms are inherently imprecise due to the clandestine nature of the markets; agencies such as the ACIC emphasise the challenge of definitive measurement.

Trends over time are influenced by changes in reporting, policing practices and legislation, not solely changes in underlying criminal behaviour.

¹⁹ Australian Institute of Criminology, Homicide in Australia 2024-25; [sr58_homicide_in_australia_2024-25.pdf](#)

Section 6

Events that Led to this Legislative Review

The introduction of this Bill arises from the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach, in Sydney, on 14 December 2026. That incident, while tragic and unprecedented in Australian history, must be understood in its full factual and regulatory context in order to inform proportionate and effective policy responses.

Pre-Attack Regulatory and Intelligence Factors

Publicly available information indicates that, prior to the attack, one of the perpetrators held a valid firearms licence issued under New South Wales law. That licence had been granted following earlier administrative delays and was active at the time of the incident.

It has also been reported that the second alleged offender and son of the licence holder had previously been the subject of a counter-terrorism investigation by the Australian Security Intelligence Agency (ASIO), which concluded without adverse findings. There has been no public evidence that this intelligence was integrated into firearms licensing risk assessments or triggered any enhanced monitoring or review process, however the Four Corners report suggests that this information was integrated into an NSW Police Intelligence database, the Known Entity Management System. It has also been suggested that the issuance of the firearms licence was at the direction of an authority.

This sequence of events highlights potential limitations in inter-agency information sharing and risk-based suitability assessment, rather than deficiencies in numerical ownership controls or bans on accessing specific types of firearms.

Two months after the ASIO investigation concluded, the father applied to NSW Police for a firearms licence.

It has been reported that around the same time, the son “trained” with a local hunting club and associates of El Matari were being banned from obtaining firearms licences. It has also been claimed that both the father and son attended the Al Madina Dawah Centre²⁰.

In 2022 terrorism was no longer the highest priority of ASIO, and resources were reallocated and the terror threat was lowered.

The father’s firearms licence was then approved and issued by NSW Police in 2023, 3 years after the initial application. It has also been reported that during the 2 years of the father’s firearms licence, there were 6 Permit to Acquires approved by NSW Police, including for 3 of the same firearm type and calibre. It has also been reported that the father and son were moving around between temporary accommodation with the firearms.

Evidence of Planning and Preparation

Subsequent investigations by the NSW Police Force identified that, in the period leading up to the attack, the offenders had engaged in:

- Firearms training and familiarisation,
- Reconnaissance of the intended target location,
- Ideological preparation including documentation of extremist motivations.

These activities demonstrate a sustained pattern of planning and intent that extended well beyond lawful firearms ownership. They also indicate that behavioural and intelligence indicators, rather than firearm quantity or access to certain firearm types alone, were central to the eventual risk.

The Incident and Immediate Government Response

Following the attack, state and federal governments moved rapidly to announce reviews of firearms regulation and licensing systems. The following day, the National Cabinet convened to consider coordinated national responses,

²⁰ [‘Factory of hate’: Inside ‘ISIS centre’ visited by alleged Bondi shooter | news.com.au — Australia’s leading news site for latest headlines](https://www.news.com.au/news/national/factory-of-hate-inside-isis-centre-visited-by-alleged-bondi-shooter/news-story/20261214-1234567890)



including proposals for ownership caps, recategorisation measures and expanded regulatory powers²¹. Part of this release was also the accelerated development of the National Firearms Register as an immediate priority.

Some public commentary in the immediate aftermath focused heavily on the number and type of firearms held by the offender, despite the fact that those firearms had been lawfully acquired and registered under existing legislation.

During press conferences, members of parliament repeated the same and similar lines, mentioning “ending open-ended licences” and “getting guns off streets”, but ignored the reality of firearms licencing and storage requirements in New South Wales and across Australia, including the involvement of NSW Police in the administering of the regulations.

This rapid policy response occurred in an environment of heightened public concern and media scrutiny, creating public support for visible legislative action, regardless of any demonstrable effectiveness in improving public safety.

On 17 December 2025, Premier Minns announced parliament would be recalled to table firearms laws and potentially protest laws. Then on 22 December, just eight days later, New South Wales government introduced legislation to the Legislative Assembly that it says would “*respond directly to lessons from the attack, where the offender brought multiple firearms into a public place, and are designed to limit access to high-risk weapons, strengthen oversight and put community safety first.*”²² These firearms laws were part of an omnibus bill titled “[Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2025 No 86](#)”. These laws passed, with minor amendments, in the early morning hours of 24 December 2025 when they also subsequently received proclamation.

On 29 December 2025, the Prime Minister announced the *Richardson Review*²³ to “undertake an [Independent Review into Australia’s federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies](#), to be completed by the end of April 2026.”

On 8 January 2026, it was announced that the Prime Minister had called for a Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion. The *Richardson Review* would now become part of this Royal Commission. It has been reported that Mr Richardson has since resigned his post saying, “I believed that it got to a point where my role was not significantly greater to that of a researcher,” and “The weight of any views that I might have had were limited compared to others in the Royal Commission.”²⁴

Shift Towards Broad Regulatory Measures

The legislative review process that followed has largely centred on:

- Proposals to impose numerical limits on firearms ownership,
- Expanded recategorisation of certain firearms,
- Increased discretionary powers,
- Removal of review rights and processes to NCAT,
- Limitation to Australian citizenship for firearms licences,
- Further magazine capacity reductions,
- Reducing licence terms from 5 years to 2 years,
- Mandatory club membership,
- Buyback and surrender schemes.

²¹ Prime Ministers Statement 15 December 2026, Meeting of National Cabinet

²² [NSW Government to introduce toughest gun law reforms in a generation | NSW Government](#)

²³ [Independent Commonwealth Review into Australia’s federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies terms of reference | PM&C](#)

²⁴ [Former ASIO boss Dennis Richardson reveals major issue concerning urgent findings of Bondi Royal Commission amid 'probable' terror threat | Sky News Australia](#)



However, these measures have not been accompanied by equivalent emphasis on the areas that seem to be failings, including:

- Strengthening intelligence integration with licencing schemes,
- Enhancing suitability assessment frameworks,
- Improving early intervention and monitoring mechanisms, or
- Resourcing specialist investigative and compliance units.

In addition, these measures have failed to understand the reality of existing firearms licencing regulations across Australia.

As a result, the focus of reform has shifted away from the specific systemic issues revealed by the attack and toward broad-based restrictions, affecting compliant licence holders, that are unlikely to result in any meaningful or measurable impact on improved public safety.

Policy Implications

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the events leading to this legislative review demonstrate that the primary regulatory challenges exposed by the Bondi Beach terror attack relate to:

- Information sharing failures,
- Risk assessment limitations,
- Gaps in behavioural and intelligence monitoring, and
- Insufficient procedural safeguards within licensing systems.

They do not demonstrate that compliant ownership levels among genuine sporting, recreational, or professional users were a causal factor in the incident.

Accordingly, reforms driven primarily by numerical caps and recategorisation risk focussing on peripheral issues and placating the community with symbolic but nugatory responses, resulting in no evidence-based improvement in public safety and leaving potential core structural vulnerabilities unresolved.

ACT Law Context

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the *Firearms Act 1996* already criminalises several of the firearms-related behaviours that occurred in the lead-up to the Bondi terrorist attack. These include:

- discharging a firearm in a public place without care or reasonable excuse,
- safe-storage offences,
- unlicensed possession of firearms (the son),
- providing firearms to an unlicensed person (the father), and
- failing to notify a change of storage address.

These offences exist in addition to the substantive offences of murder and attempted murder. The conduct in question is not representative of lawful firearms owners and is not supported by the firearms-owning community. Rather, it demonstrates that the father was not a lawful firearms owner and was not a suitable person to continue holding a firearms licence. Licensed firearms owners would expect that a firearms licence would be withdrawn for some of these offences, and charges considered if an ACT firearms owner committed any of the offences listed above

There are also several key differences between ACT and NSW law that are relevant. The ACT's permit to acquire system imposes a mandatory 28-day waiting period for all permits, whereas NSW does not. Each ACT permit requires the Registrar to be satisfied of genuine need, assessed individually on its merits; it is not clear whether NSW applies an equivalent level of scrutiny. In addition, permits are required to be submitted to the ACT Registry in person, whereas NSW has an online portal removing the human element of the transaction.

Section 7

Context and Observations



The ACT Government has a unique opportunity to be a leader in firearms reform, ensuring that the genuine focus is on demonstrable public safety while maintaining genuine reasonableness to all licensed firearms owners.

In other policy areas, the ACT has been at the forefront in establishing Nation leading laws and bucking the trend of passively following along with what other states and territories have implemented. In this case, the ACT Government appears to have succumbed to political expediency to prioritise nugatory responses based more on public perception than substantive initiatives to balance the imperative of public safety with the legitimate interests of law-abiding licensed firearms owners to lawfully possess and use legal firearms for legitimate purposes under the ACT *Firearms Act 1996*.

Political and Policy Context

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the development of the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026* must be understood within its broader political context, which raises concerns about whether the proposed reforms are primarily evidence-based and proportionate, or whether they are driven by short-term political pressure.

In recent years, firearms policy across Australia has increasingly been shaped by high profile incidents and associated public and media scrutiny, particularly in larger jurisdictions such as New South Wales. While such events understandably generate community concern, they also create strong incentives for governments to pursue highly visible legislative responses, often in advance of comprehensive consultation or rigorous impact analysis.

The ACT Government operates in a comparatively small, low crime jurisdiction with high levels of regulatory compliance among licensed firearms owners. The ACT has historically maintained strong public safety outcomes under its existing regulatory framework. There is therefore limited evidence that sweeping additional controls of the type proposed in this Bill, and of those implemented in New South Wales and West Australia, are necessary to address any demonstrable local risk.

SSAA ACT Inc. is concerned that elements of the Bill reflect a broader national trend toward “policy alignment by imitation”, where reforms developed in response to conditions in larger states are adopted in smaller jurisdictions without sufficient regard to local circumstance. The ACT’s demographic profile, crime rates, and firearms ownership patterns differ markedly from those of major states, and policy responses should be calibrated accordingly.

Furthermore, the timing and framing of the Bill suggest that political signalling and reputational considerations may be influencing its content. Measures such as numerical ownership caps and expanded discretionary powers are highly visible and easily communicated as “tough on guns”, yet there is limited publicly available evidence that such measures will deliver meaningful additional public safety outcomes in the ACT.

SSAA ACT Inc. also notes that sustained community confidence in firearms regulation depends on trust, transparency and procedural fairness. Reforms perceived as politically motivated, rather than evidence driven, risk undermining that confidence, particularly among compliant licence holders who have demonstrated responsible behaviour under existing laws.

The SSAA ACT Inc. submits that effective firearms policy should be grounded in:

- Robust empirical evidence,
- Genuine consultation with affected stakeholders,
- Clear articulation of identified risks, and
- Proportionate, targeted regulatory responses.

In the absence of these elements, there is a risk that legislative reform becomes a symbolic exercise rather than a practical improvement to public safety outcomes. This weakens the policy justification for several of its more restrictive provisions and supports reconsideration of their scope and necessity.



Social Context

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed reforms must be considered in light of prevailing community perceptions about firearms ownership, many of which are shaped by incomplete information, media narratives and misconceptions rather than by the operational realities of the ACT's regulatory framework.

A persistent public myth is that lawful firearm owners typically possess large numbers of firearms without adequate oversight. In reality, firearm ownership in the ACT is subject to stringent licensing, registration, storage and inspection requirements, and every registered firearm is already known to, and monitored by, the relevant authorities. Licence holders are subject to continuous eligibility checks and non-compliance can result in suspension or cancellation of licences.

Another common misconception is that reducing the number of firearms held by a licenced individual will, in itself, lead to improved community safety. There is no meaningful evidence that the mere quantity of lawfully owned and registered firearms held by a compliant licence holder correlates with an increased risk of misuse. Public safety outcomes are driven primarily by individual behaviours, mental health, criminal history, secure storage practices and regulatory oversight – all of which are already central features of the ACT framework.

The assumption that “fewer firearms equals greater public safety” risks oversimplifying complex risk dynamics and diverting attention from more effective protective measures, such as intelligence sharing, early intervention and targeted compliance activity. Numerical caps may offer symbolic (and practically hollow) reassurance, but symbolism alone does not constitute evidence-based policy.

The ACT community has developed its expectations around a regulatory system that focuses on responsibility, accountability and demonstrated suitability. Lawful owners, sporting organisations and professional users have operated successfully within this framework for decades, contributing to low rates of firearm misuse and high levels of compliance.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that policy responses driven by public misconceptions rather than objective risk assessment risk undermining confidence in regulatory institutions. Effective firearms policy should address genuine safety risks through targeted, evidence-based measures, rather than reinforcing myths that equate lawful ownership with danger.

Section 8

Contrasting ACT Government Policy



An examination of the ACT's policy frameworks reveals a notable contrast between how the Territory approaches firearms reform and other policy areas.

Territory Drug Policy

The Territories approach to drug policy differs from firearms policy, particularly in terms of proportionality, evidence-based decision making and individual risk assessment.

ACT drug policy, as articulated through harm-minimisation strategies – including the *Cannabis and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022* and supporting health interventions – reflects a contemporary public health model that prioritises evidence, proportionality, therapeutic responses and differentiated treatment based on individual circumstances. Under this model, possession of small amounts of certain drugs results in diversion to health and education pathways rather than automatic punitive sanctions. The Territory's approach recognises the complex social determinants of drug use and seeks to balance public risk with rehabilitation, community participation and minimising collateral harm.²⁵

In contrast, the proposed firearms reforms, including ownership limits, recategorisation and new strict liability offences, embody a prescriptive, one-size-fits-no-one regulatory approach that does not clearly distinguish between high-risk behaviours and lawful, compliant activity.

While public safety is a legitimate objective, the current framing of firearms policy in the ACT lacks the nuanced risk-based calibration evident in drug policy. For example, ACT drug reforms deliberately avoid blanket punitive measures in favour of tailored responses based on individual behaviour and harm potential; by contrast, numerical caps and broad prohibitions on certain firearm types and digital blueprints apply uniformly to all licence holders regardless of actual risk profile or compliance history.

This divergence raises questions of consistency in the Territory's regulatory philosophy. Where drug policy advances proportionate, evidence-informed and differentiated responses, the firearms proposal instead layers broad prohibitions and compliance obligations on a community that already demonstrates high levels of safety and responsibility.

Territory Crime Policy

The approach taken in the *Firearms (Public Safety) Amendment Bill 2026* appears inconsistent with the broader direction of recent Territory crime policy, particularly the Government's stated commitment to targeted, evidence-based reforms focused on demonstrable harm and risk.

Recent legislative reforms, including the *Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill* framework and the development of coercive control laws, reflect a policy approach grounded in clear evidence of harm, identifiable victim cohorts and well-established links to serious criminal outcomes. For example, the ACT Government's move to criminalise coercive control has been explicitly informed by research demonstrating its strong correlation with domestic and family violence and its role as a precursor to serious harm, including homicide.

The ACT Government has also established expert advisory mechanisms and consultation processes to ensure that such reforms are "safe, fair and informed by lived experience"²⁶, reinforcing a commitment to careful, evidence led policy development.

This approach contrasts with the measures proposed in the Bill, which apply broad, population level restrictions to lawful firearms licence holders without a clearly articulated evidentiary basis demonstrating that such measures will reduce criminal misuse or improve public safety outcomes. Unlike coercive control reforms, which are slated to

²⁵ [ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan - ACT Government Transparency Portal](#)

²⁶ [Coercive control - ACT Government](#)

target specific patterns of harmful behaviour supported by extensive research, the proposed firearms measures risk regulating based on status (holding a firearms licence) rather than demonstrated risk or offending behaviour.

Further, the Government's crime policy in areas such as domestic and family violence has emphasised the importance of proportionality, targeted intervention and avoiding unintended consequences, particularly where reforms may impact individuals who are not the source of harm²⁷. In contrast, the Bill may have diffuse impacts across a compliant and highly regulated cohort, raising questions as to whether the measures align with the same principles of proportionality and evidence-based intervention.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that this divergence highlights the need for a more consistent application of the Territory's stated policy principles. Where other reforms, are built on a foundation of clear evidence, targeted scope and extensive consultation, similar standards must apply to firearms policy. Without this alignment, there is a risk that the proposed measures represent a departure from the ACT Government's broader commitment to evidence-based, proportionate and targeted crime prevention strategies.

Best Practice Regulation

SSAA ACT Inc. acknowledges the ACT Government's long-standing commitment to best practice regulatory design, including principles of transparency, proportionality, accountability and evidence-based policy development. This commitment is reflected in the Territory's participation in regulatory quality frameworks and in legislative instruments such as the *Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*, designed to ensure that new laws deliver demonstrable public benefit without imposing unnecessary burdens on individuals, businesses or community organisations.

The ACT's approach to regulation aligns with the broader Australian Government's *Guide to Regulatory Impact Analysis*²⁸, which sets out clear international standards for regulatory policy. The Guide emphasises:

- Rigorous problem definition and evidence of market or regulatory failure,
- Identification and assessment of feasible policy alternatives,
- Comprehensive cost-benefit analysis, including distributional impacts,
- Transparent consultation with stakeholders affected by proposed regulatory change,
- Monitoring and evaluation of regulatory outcomes over time.

These core principles are intended to ensure that regulation is effective, efficient, proportionate to the problem being addressed and minimally disruptive to legitimate activity and interests.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed firearms reforms, particularly numerical caps, recategorisations, prohibition of digital files and the compensation (buyback) scheme, have not been evaluated against these well-established benchmarks. At present there is no publicly released cost-benefit analysis, no clear evidence demonstrating that the measures are proportionate to the risks, no clear link between the proposals and identified risks in the ACT context and limited transparent consultation. This stands in contrast to the Territory's own regulatory commitments and to the guidance set out in the Australian Government's *Guide*.

In order to uphold the ACT Government's professed standards, and to maintain the trust of affected communities, SSAA ACT Inc. urges that firearms legislation be subjected to the same level of scrutiny, evidence assessment and stakeholder engagement that the *Guide* requires. Doing so will ensure that reforms are not only well intentioned, but also well designed, proportionate and supported by clear, accessible analysis of both costs and benefits, reducing the potential for unintended consequences.

²⁷ [Government commits to coercive control Bill but evidence must support making it a crime | Region Canberra](#)

²⁸ [australian-government-guide-to-regulatory-impact-analysis.pdf](#)

Section 9

Compatibility with Human Rights and Administrative Law



SSAA ACT Inc. supports regulatory frameworks that are consistent with the *Human Rights Act 2004* and principles of natural justice, procedural fairness, administrative law principles and legal reasonableness.

We emphasise the importance of:

- Clear legislative drafting,
- Accessible review and appeal mechanisms,
- Proportional enforcement responses, and
- Safeguards against arbitrary or inconsistent decision-making.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed amendments raise serious concerns regarding compatibility with the human rights and administrative law framework operating in the ACT, particularly in circumstances where the proposed measures are not supported by clear, publicly available evidence and a comprehensive s 28 proportionality analysis on all rights effected.

Proportionality and Rational Connection to Public Safety

Under established human rights and administrative law principles, legislative measures that restrict lawful activity must:

- Pursue a legitimate objective,
- Be rationally connected to that objective,
- Impair rights no more than necessary, and
- Strike a fair balance between individual interests and public benefit.

While public safety is a legitimate objective, SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed ownership caps lack a clear, evidence-based connection to improved safety outcomes in the ACT context. Highly compliant licence holders, who are already subject to extensive vetting, registration and storage requirements, present a demonstrably low risk profile.

Imposing blanket numerical limits on this cohort represents a blunt regulatory response that is not tailored to identified risks. In this respect, the proposed measures fail to satisfy principles of proportionality and targeted regulation.

Equality Before the Law and Arbitrary Differentiation

The proposed caps create differential treatment between licence holders based solely on the number of firearms lawfully owned, rather than on individual risk, conduct or compliance history.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that this approach risks arbitrary differentiation between previously similarly situated individuals. The introduction of varying numeric ownership caps between genuine reasons effectively assumes that a person who is a collector has more of a genuine reason to own more firearms than someone who undertakes more shooting activities.

It also does nothing to differentiate between highly experienced, compliant and safety-conscious participants from less experienced licence holders, despite clear differences in risk profiles due to the limited evidence of continuing compliance of longer-term licence holders.

The introduction of discretionary increases to the numeric ownership caps on approval of the Registrar further introduces potential concerns about equality before the law. A licence holder that has the same circumstances and the same demonstrated compliance history might be subject to varying limitations subject to beliefs of the Registrar.

All of the above contributes to the undermining of the principle of equality before the law as set out in s8 of the *Human Rights Act 2004* and weakens the legitimacy of the regulatory framework.



Differential Treatment

The current regulatory framework recognises a range of genuine reasons for firearms ownership, including collecting, target shooting, hunting and occupational use. Each reflects a lawful and legitimate basis for participation, supported by consistent licensing requirements, background checks and ongoing compliance obligations. However, the proposed numeric ownership limits risks creating an artificial distinction between classes of licence holders, particularly between collectors who are restricted from using their firearms and those who rely on firearms for active purposes such as sport, subsistence or work-related activities.

For some licence holders, particularly those in rural or occupational contexts, access to firearms is directly connected to subsistence and work risks, including pest management, land management and professional duties. For others, such as collectors, the purpose is preservation, historical interest and heritage. While these uses differ in nature, all are recognised within the legislative framework as valid and legitimate. Any regulatory approach that implicitly prioritises one form of ownership over another undermines the existing balanced recognition.

All licence holders are subject to the same foundational safeguards, including the requirement to be a suitable person, to comply with strict storage obligations and to remain suitable on an ongoing basis. Each firearm purchase is also subject to the same assessment, regardless of genuine reason, licence type or category.

The proposed numeric ownership limits directly impact on those licence holders for whom firearms are a tool of the trade, essential of sustenance or are sporting equipment.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the firearms framework should maintain a consistent and proportionate approach, recognising all genuine reasons as equally legitimate with their respective contexts. Regulation should remain focused on individual assessment, behaviour and demonstrated risk, rather than creating hierarchies between classes of licence holders. This ensures that public safety objectives are met without unnecessarily limiting lawful activities, subsistence practices or work and sport-related rights.

Procedural Fairness and Access to Review

The proposed reforms also raise concerns regarding procedural fairness, particularly where expanded discretionary, exemption regimes or divestment requirements are introduced without clear criteria or safeguards.

Where individuals are required to seek exemptions, relinquish property or face potential licence consequences, basic principles of administrative justice require:

- Clear legislative standards,
- Transparent decision-making processes,
- Reasons for decisions, and
- Effective rights of review.

Without robust procedural protections, affected licence holders may be exposed to inconsistent, opaque or arbitrary decision-making, increasing the likelihood of disputes and undermining confidence in regulatory institutions.

Arbitrary Interference with Lawful Property

Firearms lawfully acquired and registered under existing regulatory frameworks constitute lawful personal property. The proposed ownership caps would require some licence holders (approximately 20%²⁹) to dispose of, surrender or otherwise relinquish property that has been acquired and maintained in full compliance with the law.

In the absence of compelling evidence demonstrating that such measures are necessary to address a demonstrable public safety risk in the ACT, the proposed caps risk constituting an arbitrary interference with property rights. Measures that compel divestment without clear justification undermine confidence in the stability and integrity of

²⁹ [Five-firearm limit for gun owners and tighter controls under proposed new ACT laws - ABC News](#)

regulatory systems and impose significant financial and personal burdens on compliant members of the ACT community.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that any interference with lawful property must be justified by strong, evidence-based reasoning and must be proportionate to the risk being addressed. To date, this standard has not been met.

Consideration must not simply be given to board statements of “getting guns of the streets” and must be linked to the specific individuals that are impacted.

Governance, Accountability and Institutional Risk

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed reforms risk placing substantial additional pressure on the ACT Firearms Registry without the introduction of corresponding statutory safeguards to ensure consistent, transparent, and accountable decision making.

Expanded discretionary powers, exemption regimes and enforcement responsibilities will significantly increase the volume, complexity and sensitivity of Registry decisions. In the absence of clearly defined legislative criteria, mandatory reasoning requirements and strengthened internal review mechanisms, there is a heightened risk of inconsistent outcomes, administrative error and perceived arbitrariness. This not only exposes licence holders to uncertainty and unfairness but also places the Registry itself at increased risk of legal challenge, reputational harm and operational strain.

Effective firearms regulation depends on well-resourced institutions operating within clear, legally robust frameworks, and SSAA ACT Inc. submits that any expansion of regulatory powers must be accompanied by commensurate safeguards to protect both decision makers and the firearms community.

Administrative Law Principles and Legal Reasonableness

Australian courts have long recognised that regulatory measures must not be legally unreasonable, arbitrary or disconnected from their stated objectives.

While Parliament has broad authority to regulate firearms, this authority is not unfettered. Measures introduced without rational justification, proper consideration of impacts, or proportional safeguards risk falling short of accepted standards of good governance and lawful decision making.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed ownership caps and recategorisations exhibit characteristics of regulatory overreach, including:

- Insufficient evidentiary foundation,
- Limited tailoring to actual risk,
- Significant interference with lawful recreational and business activities, and
- Inadequate procedural safeguards.

Protection of Reputation and Unjustified Stigma

The *Human Rights Act 2004* protects individuals from unlawful attacks on their reputation. This right recognises that a person’s standing in the community, both personally and professionally, is a fundamental aspect of their dignity and should not be undermined without proper justification.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed Bill risks engaging these rights by altering the way lawful firearms ownership is characterised and regulated. While the stated objective of improving public safety is acknowledged, the framing and practical effect of the proposed measures risk contributing to a perception that licensed firearms owners represent a heightened or inherent risk to the community.

This is of particular concern given that:

- Firearms licence holders in the ACT are already subject to extensive background checks, ongoing monitoring, and strict compliance obligations,
- The existing regulatory framework is designed to ensure that only suitable persons are granted and retain licences,
- The vast majority of licence holders are compliant, and law abiding and do not pose the risks communicated.

Measures that impose additional restrictions, limitations or classifications, particularly where they are not clearly linked to demonstrable risk, may have the unintended consequence of stigmatising an entire cohort of individuals who have met all legal requirements.

In practice, and as has already been demonstrated in the media, this can result in:

- Damage to personal and professional reputation,
- Social stigma and negative assumptions about character or behaviour,
- Mischaracterisation of lawful activities as inherently unsafe or suspicious, and
- Erosion of trust between licence holders and the broader community.

Unlike targeted enforcement measures aimed at individuals who pose a demonstrable risk, broad regulatory changes can create a generalised reputational impact, where individuals are judged not on their conduct, but on their lawful participation in a regulated activity.

In the absence of clear evidentiary basis linking broad restrictions to improved safety outcomes, there is a risk that the proposed measures may result in unjustified reputational harm to compliant members of the community, contrary to the intent of the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Strong consideration must also be given to how reforms are communicated and implemented. It has already been demonstrated that communications, including the Explanatory Statement, has effectively tied lawful firearms licence holders and owners to “inherent risk” to public safety merely because of their lawful activities. This continues to reinforce negative stereotypes and undermines the legitimacy of lawful firearms ownership.

Human Rights Not Sufficiently Considered

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that defined human rights have not been considered in this Bill, nor have the potential cumulative impact of communicated tranche amendments. In fact, the Explanatory Statement specifically states that: “This Bill is *not* a Significant Bill. Significant Bills are bills assessed as likely to have significant engagement of human rights and require more detailed reasoning in relation to compatibility with the *Human Rights Act 2004*.”

The recent ACT Government and ACT Police discussion paper titled “*Consultation on reforms to the Firearms Act 1996 (ACT) and related legislation*” posits that human rights require consideration, and specifically mentions:

- Right to Privacy
- Right to Work,
- Right to Fair Trial,
- Rights in Criminal Proceedings, and
- Right to equality and non-discrimination.

The Discussion Paper states, “*The ACT Government will continue to consider impacts on human rights during policy development, including to ensure that any limitations on human rights are reasonable and justified.*”³⁰

SSAA ACT Inc. notes that the only human rights considered expressly in the Bill’s Explanatory Statement are:

³⁰ ACT Government, *Discussion Paper, Consultation on reforms to the Firearms Act 1996 (ACT) and related legislation*, November 2025



- Right to Life,
- Right to Privacy,
- Right to Freedom of Expression, and
- Right to Presumption of Innocence in Criminal Proceedings.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the consideration of human rights has not been sufficiently considered as required by the *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that, while firearms regulation is an important public safety responsibility, it must be exercised in a manner consistent with human rights principles, administrative fairness and evidence-based governance.

SSAA ACT Inc. makes the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that all proposed reforms are demonstrably proportionate, evidence-based and rationally connected to identified public safety risks.
2. Ensure that regulatory changes do not create unjustified differential treatment between compliant licensed firearm owners, particularly where distinctions are not grounded in individual risk or conduct,
3. Require that the Explanatory Statement be amended to include a sufficient assessment of human rights, including:
 - a) A full proportionality assessment under section 28 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*,
 - b) Explicit consideration of equality before the law (section 8),
 - c) Cumulative impacts of staged or tranche reforms.
4. Preserve access to procedural fairness, merits review and transparent decision making wherever discretionary powers or divestment obligations are introduced.

Section 10

Proportionality and Enforcement



SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed Bill raises significant concerns regarding proportionality under s28 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*, and the practical enforcement of firearms regulations. Effective public safety legislation must balance legitimate risk mitigation with fairness, consistency and respect for lawful participation.

In its current form, the Bill risks imposing highly intrusive regulatory burdens and punitive consequences on compliant licence holder who have demonstrated long-standing adherence to the law, while offering limited evidence that such measures will meaningfully address criminal misuse.

Concerns

The introduction of new and substantial policy that diverts from the existing rationale of satisfying the genuine needs and genuine reasons tests, the Bill, by effect, is undermining proportionality in law. By prioritising broad restrictions and expanded discretionary powers over targeted, risk-based, intelligence-led interventions, the proposed framework risks creating a system in which lawful participants are disproportionately scrutinised, financially disadvantaged and effectively victimised through regulatory action.

This approach undermines confidence in the regulatory regime and detracts from the core principles of preventing serious harm through proportionate and evidence-based law enforcement.

R v Oakes found a party must show that:

“[f]irst, the measures adopted must be carefully designed to achieve the objective in question. They must not be arbitrary, unfair or based on irrational considerations. In short, they must be rationally connected to the objective. Second, the means, even if rationally connected to the objective in the first sense, should impair “as little as possible” the right or freedom in question. Third, there must be a proportionality between the effects of the measures which are responsible for limiting the Charter right or freedom, and the objective which has been identified as of “sufficient importance”³¹

In 2020, the ACT Government referenced this case in an Explanatory Statement relating to amendments of the *Firearms Act 1996* stating:

“The limitations on human rights in the Bill are proportionate and justified in the circumstances because they are the least restrictive means available to achieve the purposes of the Bill to protect public safety and support the participation of community members in sporting activities.”³²

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the Explanatory Statement for the current Bill has not accurately assessed proportionality when considering the introduction of numerical caps or the recategorisation of certain action types. The Explanatory Statement states: *“The limitations on human rights in the Bill are proportionate and justified in the circumstances because they are the least restrictive means available to achieve the purpose of promoting the safety of the community while balancing the interests and genuine needs of licenced firearms users.”* The preceding statement, however, is both inconsistent with the position taken by the ACT government in 2020, lacks a substantive evidence-basis, and is not supported by objective reasoning or a coherently structured argument.

SSAA ACT Inc. further submits that this categorisation of *“least restrictive means...while balancing the interests and genuine needs of licenced firearms users”* is objectively false based on the assessment and impact of genuine firearms owners. It further categorises firearms owners as being a *“foreseeable threat”* to public safety by *“reduc[ing] the proliferation of firearms in the community”* and limiting *“the risk of mass casualties in situations of attack or crisis”*.³³

³¹ *R v Oakes* [1986] 1 S.C.R 103

³² Explanatory Statement and Human Rights Act Compatibility Statement, Firearms Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, page 2

³³ Explanatory Statement and Human Rights Act Compatibility Statement, Firearms Legislation Amendment Bill 2020, page 3

Lack of Evidentiary Foundation and Impact Assessment

SSAA ACT Inc. notes that no comprehensive, publicly available analysis has been provided demonstrating that:

- firearm ownership levels among licensed ACT residents pose a material public safety risk and are threats to public safety,
- the proposed limits will have a material impact to reducing public safety risk,
- the proposed recategorised firearms are of any material public safety risk in the possession of a licenced and compliant firearms owner, and
- alternative, less restrictive measures were fully considered.

In the absence of such analysis, the proposed measures risk being characterised as precautionary or symbolic rather than evidence based.

Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. makes the following recommendations:

1. Prioritise investment in enhancing the capacity and capability of the ACT Firearms Registry, including staffing, training, digital systems and intelligence integration.
2. Require that section 28 *Human Rights Act 2004* assessment be conducted and published before further consideration, not deferred to enactment or implementation of the Bills provisions.
3. Ensure enforcement resources are directed toward illicit firearms, diversion, trafficking and suitability failures, rather than targeting low risk, compliant licence holders.

Section 11

Deviation from National Firearms Agreement and National Cabinet Decisions

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed reforms represent a significant departure from the established national approach to firearms regulation developed over the past three decades. Since 1996, Australia's firearms framework has been subject to repeated review, refinement and reaffirmation through intergovernmental processes, including successive revisions of the National Firearms Agreement and deliberations of National Cabinet and the Police Ministers' Council.

Over this period, government have had numerous opportunities to consider and adopt measures such as numerical caps, recategorisations and other changes that have gained recent media attention. These opportunities have arisen in the aftermath of major national reviews³⁴, security incidents, law reform processes and coordinated policy negotiations. Despite this, such measures have not been incorporated into the core national framework or embedded as standard regulatory requirements.

Instead, successive governments have consistently reaffirmed a regulatory model based on:

- Individual suitability and background checks,
- Genuine reason requirements for licences,
- Genuine need assessments for each firearm,
- Secure storage obligations,
- Registration and traceability systems, and
- Risk-based licensing and monitoring.

This enduring policy reflects a considered national judgment that public safety is best advanced through behavioural assessment, intelligence integration and administrative oversight, rather than through arbitrary numerical limits or expansive and blanket prohibitions.

The absence of ownership caps and comparable restrictions from national agreements and ministerial decisions over nearly 30 years is not accidental. It reflects sustained policy deliberation across multiple political cycles, jurisdictions and security environments. During this period, governments have confronted organised crime, terrorism, cross-border crime and evolving technologies, yet have continued to prioritise targeted regulatory controls over broad quantitative restrictions.

Even in periods of heightened public concern following serious incidents, intergovernmental responses have focused on strengthening registry systems, improving information sharing, enhancing enforcement capability and modernising licencing process, rather than imposing uniform caps on compliant licence holders. Where reforms have been pursued, they have generally been incremental, evidence-informed and consistent with the established national framework.

In the absence of compelling new evidence demonstrating that ownership caps or additional prohibitions would materially improve public safety in the ACT context, this departure raises serious questions about policy coherence, proportionality and evidence-informed policy.

³⁴ FOI24-25/091

Section 12

Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement



SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the development of the proposed ownership caps has been characterised by significant shortcomings in consultation, transparency and procedural fairness. These deficiencies mirror concerning trends observed in other jurisdictions and raise serious questions about whether affected stakeholders have been afforded appropriate opportunities to contribute to policy development.

Lack of Prior Consultation in New South Wales

Recent firearms reforms in New South Wales, including the introduction of the ownership caps, were implemented with no meaningful consultation with licence holders, sporting organisations, professional users and industry stakeholders. Despite the significant impact of these measures on lawful participants, there was no evidence of comprehensive pre-legislative engagement led by the NSW Government with those most directly affected.

In particular:

- Ownership caps were not the subject of broad, structured public consultation prior to announcement and Parliamentary scrutiny,
- Stakeholder groups were not provided with sufficient opportunity to review or comment on detailed proposals,
- No comprehensive public regulatory impact analysis accompanied the reforms.

As a result, measures with far reaching social and economic consequences were introduced without adequate testing of their necessity, proportionality or practical implications. This approach has contributed to ongoing uncertainty, potential legal challenges and dissatisfaction among compliant licence holders. The NSW Government is now scrambling to come to terms with unintended consequences that would have been self-evident had the legislative changes in NSW been evidence-based and informed by evidence and stakeholder consultation instead of political expediency and ideology.

SSAA ACT Inc. is concerned that similar policy approaches are now being proposed in the ACT, with these proposals emerging as predetermined rather than as the product of genuine, collaborative policy development.

Due Process Concerns in West Australia

Developments in West Australia further demonstrate the risks associated with inadequate legislative process in firearms reform. Recent reforms in that jurisdiction have been widely criticised for limited consultation, compressed legislative timeframes and reduced opportunities for parliamentary and community scrutiny.

In particular, the reform process overseen by the Government of Western Australia involved:

- Accelerated legislative timetables,
- Restricted committee review and public submissions,
- Limited disclosure of supporting evidence and policy rationale, and
- Reduced avenues for affected individuals to seek review or clarification.

These procedural deficiencies have undermined stakeholder confidence and contributed to perceptions that significant regulatory changes were imposed without sufficient regard to fairness, transparency, or administrative justice.

The Western Australian experience illustrates that reforms introduced without proper process are more likely to generate legal uncertainty, compliance challenges and long-term regulatory instability, as has been recently demonstrated by SAT overturning a Commissioner decision.³⁵

³⁵ [Police overruled in attempt to remove gun from bokie's relative under WA new firearms laws](#)



Issues with Replicating State Laws

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the ACT must avoid replicating these flawed approaches. The imposition of arbitrary ownership caps and recategorisations represents a substantial change to the regulatory landscape and directly affects the rights, obligations and livelihoods of lawful firearms owners.

Such reforms warrant:

- Early and open consultation with affected stakeholders,
- Publication of evidence and policy analysis supporting proposed measures,
- Adequate timeframes for review and response,
- Meaningful consideration of alternative regulatory options.

To date, SSAA ACT Inc. is concerned that the process surrounding the proposed caps and recategorisations has not met these standards. Stakeholders have not been provided with sufficient opportunity to engage with policy rationale, access impacts or contribute constructively to the development of proportionate solutions.

While the SSAA ACT Inc. acknowledges that consultation for this Bill has occurred on an *ad hoc* basis, we believe that the reliance on previous consultation that is not aligned with this Bill or any future tranche of legislation is not an acceptable stance for the Government. We also believe that comments that rely on the consultation of the West Australian legislation are disingenuous and fail to recognise the ACT's unique legislative framework and geographic and social circumstances.

Effective regulation depends not only on the content of legislation, but also on the legitimacy of the process by which it is developed. When major reforms are perceived as imposed without proper consultation or justification, this can erode trust between regulators and the community. This is not just an issue for the licenced firearms owners impacted by this regulatory reform, but also for the broader ACT community.

Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. submits the following recommendations:

1. Require that any significant reform to firearms legislation be developed through a structured, transparent and inclusive consultation process, conducted prior to the introduction of legislation and not retrospectively through inquiry alone.
2. Ensure that consultation is meaningful rather than perfunctory, including:
 - a) early engagement before policy positions are settled,
 - b) access to draft proposals and supporting evidence,
 - c) reasonable timeframes for submissions, and
 - d) genuine consideration of stakeholder feedback in final policy outcomes.
3. Engage directly with affected stakeholders, including licensed firearm owners, sporting organisations, professional and occupational users, rural and agricultural representatives, clubs, dealers and industry participants, recognising their operational knowledge, their subject-matter expertise and their legitimate role and interest in compliance and public safety.
4. Avoid reliance on consultation processes undertaken in other jurisdictions as a substitute for ACT-specific engagement, acknowledging that differences in geography, population size and demographics, regulatory frameworks and compliance cultures require tailored policy development.
5. Publish the evidence base, policy rationale and regulatory impact analysis underpinning proposed reforms prior to legislative drafting, including:
 - a) identified risks being addressed,
 - b) alternative regulatory options considered,



- c) expected public safety benefits, and
 - d) anticipated economic, social and administrative impacts.
6. Ensure that consultation processes comply with ACT best practice regulation principles, including those articulated in the Australian Government Guide to Regulatory Impact Analysis, and the ACT Government's own commitments to transparency, proportionality and evidence-based lawmaking.

Section 13

Economic, Social and Community Impact



SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the Bill will generate significant and far reaching economic and social consequences extending well beyond individual licence holders. For compliant firearm owners, the reforms threaten substantial financial loss through forced divestment, reduced asset value, increased compliance costs and potential disruption to sporting, professional and recreational activities.

In surrounding regional and agricultural communities, where firearms play a critical role in livestock management, pest control and land stewardship, the proposed measures risk undermining productivity, increasing operational costs and placing additional strain on already marginal enterprises.

At a broader community level, any compulsory buyback or compensation scheme will require substantial public funding, diverting already scarce taxpayer resources from essential services such as health, education and frontline policing. Taken together, these impacts indicate that the proposed reforms impose widespread economic and social costs that are disproportionate to their demonstrated public safety benefit and are insufficiently justified by transparent cost-benefit analysis.

Impact on Sporting, Youth and Community Activities

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed numeric ownership caps will have significant and unintended consequences for the social, sporting and economic fabric of the lawful shooting community in the ACT and surrounds. These impacts extend well beyond individual licence holders and will affect clubs, volunteers, small business and professional users who rely on lawful firearm ownership for their participation and livelihoods.

The shooting community in the ACT, including members of the SSAA ACT Inc., is built around long-term participation, skill development, mentorship and volunteer engagement. Many participants devote substantial time and resources to specialised disciplines. These disciplines often require multiple firearms, each configured for specific calibres, competitions, distances or environmental conditions. It is not as simple as a single pistol being compatible with all pistol shooting disciplines, similarly, with rifles and shotguns.

To provide more information to the Committee about the shooting disciplines, SSAA ACT Inc. has provided, at Section 19C *Our Disciplines, Their Firearms and Competitions*.

Shooting sports in the ACT are underpinned by a strong sense of community, built through clubs, volunteerism and shared responsibility for safety and participation. Local clubs operate as inclusive environments where members of all ages and backgrounds come together to train, compete and support one another. More experienced members mentor and support new and younger shooters.

Beyond the sport itself, clubs foster social connection, wellbeing and a sense of belonging, particularly for individuals and families seeking structured, disciplined recreational activities. Changes that force participants to reduce participation and create uncertainty for clubs and members risk weakening these community networks.

The proposed changes will likely have a disproportionate impact on minors participating in the shooting sports, who engage under structured, supervised and highly regulated club environments. Youth participation is built on strong foundations of safety training, discipline and responsible behaviours, and is supported by families and volunteer coaches. Imposing numeric ownership caps on the principal licence holders, the adults, will likely reduce participation by juniors when their parents or guardians are forced to reduce their firearms holdings to remain compliant.

Imposing numerical ownership caps fails to recognise the legitimate and established structure of competitive shooting, or highly engaged participants. The proposed limits would require individuals to relinquish firearms essential to their chosen disciplines, effectively forcing them to withdraw from competitions, restrict their participation, or abandon certain sporting pathways altogether. This undermines decades of community investment in skill development, coaching and club governance.



Impact to Sporting Participation and Community Life

Shooting clubs in the ACT operate largely through volunteer effort and depend on sustained participation by experienced members. These members frequently serve as:

- range and safety officers
- AFP-certified Instructors
- coaches and mentors
- committee members and administrators
- competition organisers.

Ownership caps will disproportionately affect these highly involved individuals. As senior and experienced shooters are forced to reduce their involvement, clubs will face declining capacity to run competitions, train new members and maintain safe operating standards. Over time, this will weaken club viability and diminish opportunities for community participation in structured and highly regulated sport.

The social value of shooting clubs extends beyond competition. They provide important networks for regional, rural and urban participants, foster intergenerational skills transfer and promote strong safety cultures. Restrictive caps risk fragmenting these networks and reducing long term community cohesion.

Impact to Professional and Occupational Users

The proposed caps and no legitimate pathways to access recategorised firearms creates serious challenges to professional users, particularly licensed pest control operators, volunteer wildlife managers and rural contractors. These individuals commonly require multiple firearms suited to different species, terrain and operational conditions. For example, different calibres and platforms are necessary for humane pest management across varying environments and distances.

Restricting access to appropriate tools compromises operational efficiency, animal welfare outcomes and workplace safety. It may also increase costs for professional operators, reduce service availability in regional and peri-urban areas and discourage skilled practitioners from continuing in the sector.

This is of particular impact to those professionals who are also sport or target shooters. For these individuals, they will be forced to choose between firearms for their professional activities and their sporting pursuits. The SSAA ACT Inc. has already heard from a large number of professionals where this is the reality of the implications of this Bill. Of significant concern to the SSAA ACT Inc. is that a significant portion of these members are also volunteers within the Association. If these members are forced to choose between profession and recreation, the Association volunteer talent pool will be significantly impacted.

Impact to Regional and Agricultural Areas

In regional and agricultural areas surrounding the ACT, firearms are essential operational tools rather than discretionary assets. Primary producers, land managers, professional pest controllers, volunteer pest control groups and recreational hunters all play a critical role in managing feral animals, protecting livestock and supporting broader biosecurity and environmental objectives.

Many landholders rely heavily on trusted volunteer shooters and local hunting networks to provide timely, low-cost and effective pest management services, particularly in remote or resource constrained areas. The imposition of ownership caps, recategorisation measures and expanded regulatory burdens risks limiting access to fit-for-purpose equipment, reducing the availability of skilled volunteers and increasing response times to pest outbreaks.

In 2017, the ACT Government recognised that ACT residents have a need to have access to firearms in NSW and made amendments to the *Firearms Act 1996* for this purpose, recognising that there are some cases where storage in NSW is crucial to employment and that there is cross-border recognition of ACT firearms licences.



Ownership caps and recategorisation measures may force producers to rely on commercial contractors at substantially higher cost, or leave infestations unmanaged for longer periods, resulting in increased stock losses, land degradation and animal welfare concerns. These impacts are likely to be felt most acutely by small and family run enterprises with limited capacity to absorb additional compliance expenses or equipment losses.

Over time, reduced operational efficiency and increased costs will flow through to diminished farm productivity, higher food and fibre prices and weakened economic resilience in regional communities already facing climatic, market and infrastructure pressures.

Impact to Hunting, Feral Animal Management and Community Contribution

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that lawful recreational hunting plays an important role in supporting environmental management, agricultural sustainability and food security in the ACT and surrounding regions.

Licensed hunters contribute directly to the control of feral and invasive species that cause significant damage to crops, native ecosystems, fencing, water sources and livestock. Species such as feral pigs, deer, goats, foxes, rabbits, wild dogs, feral cats and hares impose substantial economic and environmental costs on landholders and governments. Through coordinated and responsible hunting activities, licence holders assist land managers to reduce these impacts in a cost-effective and environmentally sensitive manner.

In many rural and peri-urban areas, volunteer hunters provide essential pest control services that would otherwise require significant public or private expenditure. Their work complements formal biosecurity and land management programs and helps protect biodiversity, agricultural productivity and animal welfare by reducing overpopulation and disease transmission.

Hunting also contributes to household and community food security. Many hunters harvest animals for personal consumption and regularly share meat with extended family members, neighbours and friends. This practice supports self-reliance, reduces reliance on commercial supply chains and reflects long-standing traditions of responsible, sustainable use of natural resources. For many families this is a continuation of a familial culture dating back to the great wars where food scarcity was a reality for many.

Importantly, hunters operate within strict regulatory frameworks governing licensing, landholder permission, humane dispatch, transport and storage. These standards promote ethical conduct, safety and environmental responsibility.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that ownership caps and related restrictions risk undermining this valuable community contribution by limiting the capacity of hunters to maintain appropriate equipment for different species, environments and safety requirements. Reducing lawful participation in pest management and harvesting activities may increase pressure on public resources, worsen environmental degradation and weaken regional resilience.

Accordingly, firearms policy should recognise and support the constructive role that lawful hunters play in rural and regional communities, environmental stewardship and family sustenance, rather than imposing restriction that diminish these established public benefits.

Impact to Local Business and Economic Activity

The ACT firearms sector supports a network of small and medium-sized businesses, including:

- firearms dealers and armourers,
- gunsmiths and repairers
- sporting and outdoor goods retailers, and
- training and accreditation providers.



Ownership caps and recategorisations reduce legitimate demand for equipment, servicing, accessories and training. This directly affects revenue streams and employment within these businesses. Over time, reduced commercial viability may lead to business closures, loss of specialist services and increased reliance on interstate suppliers.

This contraction disproportionately affects locally owned enterprises and reduces the economic contribution of the lawful shooting sector to the ACT economy.

The SSAA ACT Inc. and other major shooting clubs in the ACT host large shooting competitions that attract interstate and international participation. If the ability to host competitions reduces, this inevitably means a reduction in tourism spending in other areas of the ACT economy.

Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. makes the following recommendations:

1. Commission an independent assessment of the full economic, social and community impacts of the proposed reforms, including impacts on:
 - f) Sporting participation and youth pathways,
 - g) Regional and agricultural communities,
 - h) Professional and occupational users,
 - i) Volunteer capacity and community organisations,
 - j) Local businesses and tourism.
2. Ensure that environmental management, pest control and animal welfare outcomes are explicitly considered in any regulatory impact statement.
3. Avoid reforms that unintentionally undermine volunteer engagement, community safety culture and cooperative compliance.

Section 14

Australian Jurisdiction Comparison

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that while there was a broad commitment through National Cabinet to investigate potential firearm reform, there was no national agreement to implement the type of restrictions seen in NSW and proposed in the ACT.

The Prime Ministers Statement of 15 December 2025 states: “First Ministers agreed to strengthen gun laws across the nation and have commissioned their Police Ministers and Attorneys-General to develop options.”³⁶

The Communiqué from the Joint Meeting of Police Ministers Council and Standing Council of Attorneys-General, dated 9 January 2026³⁷ provides:

NATIONAL FIREARMS AGREEMENT – REFORM OPTIONS

Participants:

- a) **discussed** proposals to strengthen the National Firearms Agreement.
- b) **agreed** to progress options for consideration at National Cabinet, noting Police Ministers have not endorsed the proposals as final as there remains consultation and cabinet approvals required, and subject to further consideration by the Senior Officials Group, noting that the Northern Territory did not agree to progress all proposals.
- c) **agreed** options to accelerate the National Firearms Register for consideration at National Cabinet.

NATIONAL GUN BUYBACK SCHEME

Participants:

- a) **discussed** options to implement a National Gun Buyback Scheme.

SSAA ACT Inc. notes that this statement does not commit States or Territories to implementing specific reform. In fact, since this meeting more states have decided against the first publicised firearm limits than have acted to implement or consider them.

Queensland Approach

SSAA ACT Inc. acknowledges that the Queensland Parliament’s *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Bill 2026* was introduced in response to specific, identifiable public safety concerns and that many of its provisions directly link to the issues it seeks to mitigate. Understanding these links illustrates the distinction between targeted, evidence-driven reform and the broader firearms restrictions being proposed elsewhere.

The Queensland Bill was clearly framed around two principal objectives:

- 1) Addressing extremist ideologies and hate-motivated violence (including antisemitism), and
- 2) Combatting possession and misuse of firearms by people who pose genuine risk to public safety, particularly in the context of terrorism related and other serious violent offending.

The Explanatory Notes and parliamentary materials made this explicit link.

The Queensland Premier, when discussing the Bill, is quoted as saying “These laws are squarely aimed at terrorists, criminals, not law-abiding Queenslanders, as we continue to make Queensland safer”³⁸.

³⁶ Prime Ministers Statement 15 December 2026, Meeting of National Cabinet

³⁷ [joint-police-ministers-council-and-scag-communication-january-2026.pdf](#)

³⁸ [Nation-leading penalties targeting criminals and terrorists with guns, 9 February 2026](#)



Victorian Approach

Victoria has approached firearm reform with a different perspective. They have called for an inquiry and are seeking input prior to any decisions from the firearms community with a focus on ensuring that the interest of legitimate firearm users is preserved.

The review is being led by former Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Mr Ken Lay and is due to report in March 2026.

Northern Territory Approach

The Northern Territory is also another jurisdiction that has voiced concerns about the compensation scheme (buyback) and the punishment of licence holders. From an article in ABC News, dated 12 January 2026:

NT Attorney-General Marie-Clare Boothby said the NT supported targeted, criminal intelligence-led measures "that strengthen public safety without undermining lawful firearm ownership".

"The most important work is improving how criminal intelligence is used to inform firearms licensing decisions," she said.

"These are genuine, relevant reforms that help identify risk early and prevent firearms from falling into the wrong hands.

Tasmanian Approach

Tasmania has also taken a more methodical and steady approach to any potential reform. They have created a new Firearms Consultative Committee, which is chaired by the Minister for Police.

The media release³⁹ announcing the Committees establishment says:

Minister Ellis said the committee would bring together experienced and representative Tasmanians to get the balance right between community safety and supporting responsible firearms owners.

"The Bondi terrorist attack was an absolute tragedy and we owe it to the victims to ensure this never happens again.

"We support stronger laws to stop terrorists and criminals getting access to firearms and reforms must result from a consultative, evidence-based process.

"Tasmania will take a calm and considered approach with the highest priority being accelerating the National Firearms Register for better intelligence sharing.

In an article in ABC news, the Minister for Police is quoted as saying:

"This is for a lot of people a key part of their livelihood, or their lifestyle, and we need to make sure that we're supporting that and respecting that.

"This is an expensive process, the federal government even on their estimations have said it'll be more than \$1 billion, and some estimates are significantly higher than that."

Recently, the Minister for Police undertook a public access survey⁴⁰. This survey was advertised publicly on the Ministers Facebook page and was able to be completed by any person who wanted to submit responses. At the time of posting the below infographic the survey responses totalled 5,239. While percentages are not completely clear from the bar graph, it appears that the majority of respondents do not support limitations on the number of firearms a person can own. It also appears that the majority of respondents support citizenship requirements, better information sharing by ASIO and security agencies, and stronger penalties for theft and illegal possession and prevention measures targeted at criminal access to firearms. There also appears to be broad support for more regular inspections of safe storage and the accelerated implementation of the National Firearms Register.

³⁹ [Firearms Consultative Committee appointed | Premier of Tasmania](#)

⁴⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1FMtrNKanj/>



1. Question

[More details](#)

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neutral ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose ● Unsure

Do you support caps on the number of firearms that can be owned by farmers, sporting shooters and recreational hunters?

Do you support the Federal Government's firearms buyback?

Do you support citizenship requirements for firearms owners?

Do you support accelerating the creation of the National Firearms Register?

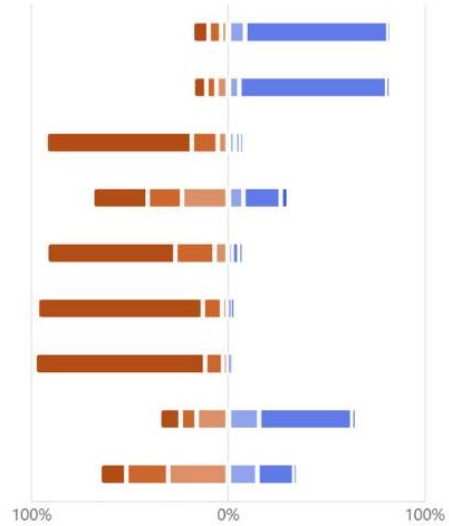
Do you support more information sharing by ASIO and other security agencies with firearms licencing authorities?

Do you support focusing on preventing criminals getting firearms as the priority for reform?

Do you support stronger penalties for firearms theft and illegal possession?

Do you support shorter periods for firearms licence renewals?

Do you support more regular inspections for firearms owners?



Section 15

**Unintended
Consequence -
Reduced Engagement
with ACT Policing**



SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the introduction of arbitrary numeric ownership caps is likely to produce unintended consequences that undermine, rather than enhance, the effectiveness of firearms regulation in the ACT. One significant risk is a measurable reduction in constructive engagement between licence holders and the ACT Firearms Registry (ACT Policing).

Under the current framework, licence holders regularly interact with the Registry through permit to acquire applications, firearm transfers, upgrades, replacements, temporary registered user applications, club participation records and compliance inquiries. These routine interactions provide regulators with timely, accurate and up-to-date information about ownership patterns, storage arrangements, participation in shooting activities and changes in personal circumstances. This ongoing administrative contact supports risk monitoring and early identification of potential emerging concerns.

The imposition of ownership caps is likely to reduce these transactions and routine administrative engagement. Once licence holders reach the prescribed limits, they will likely cease applying for permits, upgrading equipment, participating in certain competitions or engaging in transfer activities. As a result, opportunities for regular regulatory oversight and data refresh will be reduced.

This reduction in interaction carries several risks:

- **Decreased data quality:** fewer application and transactions mean fewer points at which records are reviewed, updated and verified.
- **Weaker early warning mechanisms:** regular contact enables the Registry to identify changes in behaviours, compliance patterns or personal circumstances that may warrant further assessment.
- **Reduced voluntary disclosure:** cooperative licence holders are more likely to report changes and seek guidance when they maintain active engagement with regulators.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that an effective regulatory system depends not only on formal enforcement powers, but also on frequent, transparent and cooperative interaction between regulators and regulated participants. Policies that unintentionally suppress this engagement risk degrading the quality of regulatory intelligence and weakening the very oversight mechanisms that support public safety.

Accordingly, before implementing ownership caps, the Government should carefully assess their potential impact on registry engagement, data integrity and compliance culture, and consider whether alternative, risk-based mechanisms would better preserve regulatory visibility and accountability.

Section 16

Addressing Concerns of Gun Control Advocates

SSAA ACT Inc. acknowledges the role of advocacy organisations in contributing to public debate on firearms regulation and supports this continuing to help ensure that all sides of the debate are heard and considered.

However, SSAA ACT Inc. submits that many of the arguments advanced in support of proposed changes rely on oversimplified assumptions, selective use of evidence and policy approaches that do not adequately reflect the realities of firearms ownership, regulation and risk management in Australia.

Overreliance on Aggregate Statistics

Organisations frequently rely on broad national and international statistics linking firearm availability to rates of violence, without sufficiently distinguishing between:

- Lawful and unlawful possession,
- Registered licence holders and criminal offenders,
- Urban criminal activity and rural or sporting use,
- Historical and contemporary regulatory environments.

Even so, such aggregate data does not demonstrate that compliant licence holders in the ACT present a material public safety risk and therefore provides an insufficient evidentiary basis for imposing restrictive measures on low-risk, highly regulated members of the ACT community.

Failure to Distinguish Between Legal and Criminal Firearms Use

A central weakness in the argument advanced by these organisations is the failure to meaningfully differentiate between firearms used in criminal activity and those held by licence holders.

Available evidence indicates that serious firearm-related crime is overwhelmingly associated with:

- Illicitly obtained weapons,
- Organised criminal networks,
- Unlicensed possession,
- Possession by already prohibited persons, or
- Cross-border trafficking.

Measures that target lawful owners through numerical caps, recategorisation and asset, occupation or sporting equipment confiscation do not address these primary drivers of firearm related harm.

There also appears to either be a misunderstanding or intentional dismissal of the firearm licensing framework, including the level of background checks and engagement with police by licence holders. To provide information about the process in the context of the ACT laws, SSAA ACT Inc. submits Section 19D, titled “The Myth of Firearms Licensing and Ownership” for the Committee’s information.

Unsupported Assumptions About Numerical Limits

Organisations frequently assert that limiting the number of firearms owned by an individual will reduce the number of firearms in circulation and the likelihood of misuse. However, no credible empirical evidence has been presented demonstrating that numerical ownership limits produce measurable public safety benefits in jurisdictions with mature and robust licensing systems.

Risk is determined by individual behaviour, intent and circumstances, not by arbitrary numerical thresholds. A licence holder who is safe and responsible and who understands and complies with obligations with 5 or 10 firearms does not suddenly become inherently dangerous by owning 6 or 11, or more.

Neglect of Regulatory System Failures

Public commentary by organisations has focused heavily on expanding prohibitions and restrictions, while giving limited attention to documented weaknesses in:

- Intelligence sharing,
- Suitability assessments,
- Monitoring and review processes,
- Registry resourcing, or
- Inter-agency coordination.

By overlooking these systematic issues, their policy prescriptions risk addressing symptoms rather than underlying causes.

Interagency information sharing has been on various governments radars for decades; however, persistently governments have been deficient in allocating appropriate funding for these programs. Even with this being the case, the rate of criminal incident occurrence as a result is still a minute portion of licenced, or formerly licenced individuals. This indicates that licencing systems, while constrained and resource short, are still functioning with due regard to public safety outcomes.

Underestimation of Economic and Community Impacts

Advocacy materials produced by organisations generally minimise or disregard the economic and social consequences of regulatory change, including:

- Loss of livelihoods in firearms related industries,
- Reduced viability of clubs and ranges,
- Increased costs for primary production,
- Decline in volunteer pest control networks, and
- Public funding burdens associated with buyback schemes.

Effective public policy must weigh safety objectives against these broader impacts and other legal obligations. Failure to do so undermines the legitimacy and sustainability of reform.

Inadequate Consideration of Proportionality and Rights

Organisations tend to frame firearms regulation primarily through a prohibitionist lens, with limited regard for principles of proportionality, procedural fairness and property rights.

The presumption that further restriction is inherently beneficial risks normalising regulatory overreach and weakening confidence in governance institutions. A regulatory system that treats compliant licence holders as presumptive risks is neither fair nor effective.

Public Safety Outcomes and Policy Effectiveness

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that genuine improvements in public safety are more likely to be achieved through:

- Enhanced intelligence integration,
- Targeted enforcement against illicit markets,
- Improved registry resourcing,
- Early intervention mechanisms, and
- Evidence-based suitability assessments.

These measures receive comparatively little attention in proposals by gun control organisations, despite their already demonstrated effectiveness. Reforms that focus primarily on restricting compliant licence holders, rather than addressing genuine risk factors, are unlikely to deliver meaningful or sustainable public safety outcomes.

Domestic Violence, Protection Orders and Misconceptions

SSAA ACT Inc. notes that organisations frequently cite domestic and family violence as justification for broad firearm reform. SSAA ACT Inc. agrees that the protection of victims must remain a priority of regulators and ensuring there are safeguards in place is paramount.

Under existing ACT law and practice, individuals who are subject to domestic violence or protection orders are already prohibited from obtaining a firearms licence or being in possession of a firearm. They are also subject to immediate and significant firearm restrictions if they are a licence holder. This includes suspension or cancellation of licences, seizures of firearms and ammunition and disqualification from future ownership. These measures are enforced by ACT Policing in coordination with the ACT courts and other relevant agencies.

Importantly, these controls are risk-based and targeted. They respond directly to demonstrated behaviour and identified threats, rather than applying indiscriminate restrictions to compliant licence holders. The regulatory system is specifically designed to ensure that firearms are removed from individuals where domestic or personal violence risks are present.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that genuine protection of vulnerable individuals is best achieved through strengthening these targeted mechanisms, rather than by reinforcing misconceptions that lawful firearm ownership in itself contributes to domestic violence risk.

Penalising Victims of Crime

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that organisations advocating for a reduction of total firearms are missing the mark in the current regulatory landscape when discussing a reduction of diversion through theft. Pursuing reductions in the number of firearms held legally by licence holders, is not targeting the real risk to public safety. It also contributes to the narrative of “if you own firearms, you are a latent threat to community safety”.

Simply put, this is inconsistent with the legal presumption that licensed persons are suitable unless the evidence shows otherwise and is inconsistent with administrative law based in fairness and due process. It contradicts best-practice regulation and undermines the integrity of suitability-based licensing systems.

The argument advanced by some organisations effectively reframes victims of theft as contributors to crime. Australian law does not generally impose punitive restrictions on people because they may become victims of crime. For example:

- Homeowners are not penalised because they might be burgled,
- Vehicle owners are not restricted because cars might be stolen,
- Shop owners are not regulated out of existence because they might be robbed.

It reverses the normal legal relationship between victim and offender.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that to justify ownership limits, governments would need to show that:

- Theft from compliant owners is widespread,
- Stolen firearms are commonly used in serious crime,
- Reducing lawfully owned firearms will reduce theft, and
- No less restrictive measures are available.

Arguments that lawfully owned firearms should be removed because they *might* be stolen rely on speculative risk and reverse the normal legal relationship between victim and offender. They treat compliant licence holders as



public safety threats without evidence, impose collectively liability for hypothetical criminal conduct and lack a rational connection to demonstrable harm. Such an approach is inconsistent with principles of proportionality, administrative reasonableness, and human rights, and undermines the integrity of risk-based regulation.

Section 17

Alternative Policy Approach



Cost Benefit and Resource Allocation

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed ownership caps and recategorisations are unlikely to represent an efficient or effective use of public resources when assessed against their espoused public safety outcomes. In the absence of a comprehensive regulatory impact statement or publicly available cost benefit analysis, it is difficult to conclude that the proposed measures constitute value for money or represent the most appropriate allocation of limited enforcement and administrative resources.

Administrative and Compliance Costs

The introduction of ownership caps and recategorisations will impose substantial new administrative and compliance burdens on regulatory authorities and licence holders alike. These costs are likely to include:

- Development and maintenance of new monitoring and enforcement systems,
- Increased staffing and training requirements for licensing authorities,
- Additional new licence applications and applications for additional categories of licences,
- Processing of exemption applications and appeals,
- Additional compliance audits and investigations,
- Increased caseloads for review and tribunal bodies.

These ongoing operational costs will be borne primarily by government agencies and taxpayers, while delivering limited demonstrable benefit in a jurisdiction characterised by high compliance and low rates of firearms-related crime among licensed owners.

Public reporting by the ACT judiciary, senior prosecutors and the legal profession has consistently identified, and again in March 2026, that ACT courts are operating under sustained resource pressure.⁴¹ In 2025, the Chief Justice of the ACT Supreme Court has described the system as being under “extreme pressure”⁴², while the Director of Public Prosecutions and legal stakeholders have publicly stated that recent budget allocations are insufficient to meet existing demand. In this context, the introduction of additional regulatory complexity and enforcement pathways risks exacerbating existing pressures on the courts.

Funding proposed for the implementation of new firearms restrictions would deliver greater public safety value if redirected to supporting an already under-resourced court system.

Unquantified Financial Risks of a Firearms Buy Back

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the proposed reforms raise serious concerns regarding the potential cost of any associated firearms buyback or compensation scheme, particularly in circumstances where no clear financial modelling, funding allocation or implementation framework has been publicly disclosed by the ACT Government.

Absence of Costing and Budget Transparency

To date, no detailed public estimate has been provided regarding:

- The number of firearms that may be affected by ownership caps or recategorisations,
- The likely uptake of any buyback or mandatory or voluntary surrender scheme,
- Compensation rates per firearms or category,
- Administrative and logistical costs of collection, storage, verification and destruction,
- Ongoing compliance and audit costs.

⁴¹ [Opinion | ACT justice system on the brink from chronic underfunding | The Canberra Times | Canberra, ACT](#)

⁴² [ACT Budget: Director of Public Prosecutions says \\$15 million for legal services not enough | Region Canberra](#)



In the absence of this information, it is not possible for stakeholders or the boarder community to meaningfully assess whether a buyback scheme represents value for money or an appropriate use of public resources.

This lack of transparency undermines informed policy debate and exposes the Territory to the risk of significant unplanned expenditure.

Risk of Disproportionate Fiscal Impact on the ACT

As a small jurisdiction with a limited revenue base, the ACT is particularly vulnerable to the financial impacts of potentially large-scale regulatory programs.

Beyond direct compensation payments to licenced owners, a buyback scheme also needs ensure that administrative costs are appropriately factored in, as well as any compensation to affected businesses.

Historical experience demonstrates that buyback schemes can involve substantial public expenditure. Industry estimates that nationally the buyback scheme could run into the billions of dollars. While the ACT's population is smaller, the per-capita cost of administering the scheme may be comparatively higher due to fixed operational and staffing requirements.

Economic and Social Costs

In addition to direct regulatory costs, ownership caps and recategorisations generate indirect economic and social impacts, including:

- Reduced participation in organised sporting activities,
- Loss of revenue for firearms and outdoor related businesses,
- Reduced employment opportunities within the sector,
- Financial losses to individuals required to divest lawfully acquired property,
- Diminished community engagement and volunteer capacity.

These impacts represent very real and measurable costs that have not been adequately considered or acknowledged.

Limited Marginal Public Safety Benefit

SSAA ACT Inc. notes that the proposed caps and recategorisations are directed solely at licenced firearms owners. There is limited evidence that restricting the number of firearms held by such individuals will materially reduce risk associated with criminal misuse, illicit trafficking or organised crime.

Without clear data demonstrating a causal relationship between ownership numbers or the type of firearm owned and public harm in the ACT context, the marginal safety benefit of the proposed measures remains speculative.

In this respect, the proposed caps and recategorisations risk diverting resources away from higher-impact interventions, including compliance activities, that directly address known sources of firearms related harm.

More Effective Investment in Public Safety

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that public safety outcomes would be better advanced through targeted investment in the following areas:

Targeting Illicit Firearms and Organised Crime

Greater returns on public safety investment are likely to be achieved through:

- Enhanced intelligence sharing between jurisdictions,
- Dedicated taskforces targeting illegal firearms trafficking,
- Improved forensic and tracing capabilities, and
- Strengthened border and import controls.



These measures directly address the primary source of firearms-related criminal risk and align more closely with the objectives of the *Firearms Act 1996*.

Strengthening Licensing and Suitability Assessments

Rather than imposing blunt numerical caps or recategorising firearms, resources would be better directed towards:

- Improved background checking processes,
- Timely information sharing between police and courts,
- Regular training for Registry staff, and
- Risk-based compliance monitoring.

These measures enhance regulatory effectiveness without imposing unnecessary restrictions on compliant licence holders or limiting potential new licence holders.

Supporting Safe Storage and Education Programs

Investment in education and prevention initiatives offers significant long-term benefits, including

- Subsidised safe storage upgrades,
- Supporting expanded safety training programs,
- Factual community awareness and education campaigns,
- Positive media attention to shooting sports and achievements.

Such programs reinforce the existing safety culture and support a reduction to stigma of licenced firearms owners as being criminals or those capable of carrying out attacks similar to those seen at Bondi.

Enhancing Early Intervention Services

Instances of firearm related harm, while comparatively low compared to other means of suicide or self-harm, are associated with untreated mental health issues, social isolation, or crisis situations. Targeted investment in:

- Early intervention services,
- Registry support for crisis response and programs,
- Club support for intervention pathways,
- Providing a pathway for good faith reports to Registry and ACT Police,
- Community mental health support,

are likely to deliver broader and more sustainable public safety benefits than ownership restrictions.

Supporting Regulatory Transparency and Digital Systems

Modernising regulatory systems can improve efficiency and compliance, including:

- Integrating licensing and registration platforms,
- Near real-time data verification tools for dealers and clubs,
- Improved communication systems for licence holders.

These investments reduce administrative costs over time and improve regulatory oversight.

The SSAA ACT Inc. acknowledges that the New Digital Registry Reform Program is currently underway, and this is likely to deliver on at least some of the above.

Opportunity Cost of Ownership Caps and Gun Buybacks

Every dollar allocated to implementing and enforcing ownership caps, gun buybacks and recategorisations is a dollar not invested in higher-impact safety measures. While it may provide for good headlines and photo opportunities, in a



fiscally constrained environment, policy choices must be assessed against their opportunity cost of misapplied public resources.

SSAA ACT Inc. submits that current proposals prioritise highly visible regulatory interventions over less visible but more effective preventative strategies and measures. This approach risks undermining overall public safety outcomes and reduces public confidence.

Recommendations

SSAA ACT Inc. recommends that the ACT Government:

1. Ensure that policy objectives support targeted investment in identified risk areas, such as illicit firearm manufacture, trafficking and inter-agency information and intelligence sharing networks.
2. Prioritise investment in the ACT law courts and tribunals by reallocating funding currently proposed for ownership caps, gun buybacks and recategorisation measures, to address existing under-resourcing and ensure the courts and tribunals are equipped to manage current caseloads.
3. Expand firearms education, secure storage and safety programs, delivered in partnership with shooting clubs, industry participants and community organisations, directed at improving public awareness and knowledge about the licencing systems and obligations of firearms licence holders.
4. Enhance early intervention mechanisms relevant to firearms risk management, including pathways for timely identification, referral and support where risk indicators emerge.
5. Prioritise regulatory modernisation initiatives to improve administrative efficiency, transparency, accountability and long-term compliance outcomes.

Supporting these priority areas would better serve the whole of the ACT community by making a real impact to criminal behaviours and judicial improvements, rather than targeting one portion of the community who are already highly compliant with ACT law.

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Conclusion



In closing, SSAA ACT Inc. submits that the ACT already operates one of the most stringent and effective firearms regulatory frameworks in Australia, characterised by individual suitability assessment, genuine reason requirements, registration, secure storage and ongoing monitoring.

The evidence before the Committee does not demonstrate that lawful firearms ownership levels among compliant ACT licence holders constitute a material public safety risk, nor that the proposed numeric caps or recategorisation measures would meaningfully reduce criminal misuse or violent offending.

By contrast, the Bill risks diverting resources away from higher-impact interventions, weakening cooperative compliance, reducing engagement with the Firearms Registry and imposing substantial economic, social and human rights costs without clear justification.

SSAA ACT Inc. respectfully urges the Committee to recommend a more measured, evidence-based approach, one that strengthens intelligence-led policing, registry capability and suitability assessment, while preserving proportionality, procedural fairness and the legitimate activities of law-abiding members of the ACT community.

We thank the Committee for its consideration and stand ready to assist further.

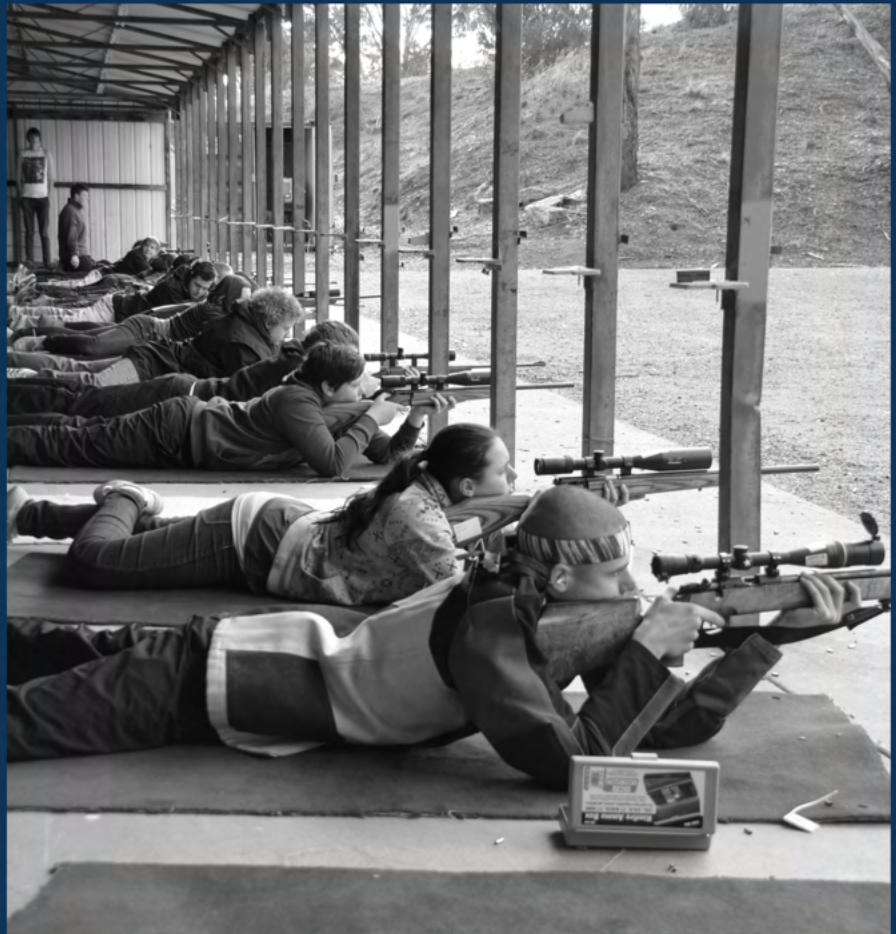
Section 19

Appendices

Under Separate Covers



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Appendix Section 19A

Membership Demographics





Overview

This document provides a demographic overview of the membership of SSAA ACT Inc., based on key characteristics including sex, age, residential location and genuine reason for firearms licensing and ownership. It is intended to present a clear and factual snapshot of the composition of the Associations membership within the ACT and surrounding region.

By outlining these core data points, the document supports a better understanding of who licensed firearms owners are in practice. It highlights the diversity of the membership base across different age groups and locations, as well as the range of legitimate reasons for participation in shooting sports and related activities.

Gender

The following provides information about the gender of our members.

Gender	Percentage
Female	12%
Male	88%

Age

The following provides information about the age range of our members.

Age Group	Percentage
Under 18	4%
18 to 20	2%
21 to 30	11%
31 to 40	19%
41 to 50	22%
51 to 60	21%
61 to 70	13%
71 to 80	7%
Over 81	2%

Note: percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Location

As an Association that welcomes members from all over Australia, the following information has been provided about the location of our members.

State/Territory	Percentage
ACT	75%
NSW	25%
NT	0.02%
Qld	0.22%
SA	0.02%
Vic	0.11%

Members from further interstate than NSW can be members of the ACT because they travel to the ACT for work or recreation. They can also be members of the ACT because they have a prior connection to the Association.



Importantly, membership of the SSAA ACT Inc. does not support a person's genuine reason if they reside in a state other than the ACT or NSW.

For our ACT resident members, the following electorate breakdown is provided.

Electorate	Percentage
Brindabella	23%
Ginninderra	20%
Kurrajong	29%
Murrumbidgee	14%
Yerrabi	15%

For our NSW members, the following information is provided. This provides information about the members distance from the Canberra CBD. It shows that most of our NSW resident members are located in the "Canberra bubble".

Distance	Percentage
20–50 km	73.61%
50–75 km	11.49%
75–100 km	5.41%
100–150 km	1.26%
150–200 km	2.89%
Greater than 200km	5.34%

Genuine Reason

When a member joins or renews their membership they can nominate their genuine reason for their firearms licence. These genuine reasons are: target shooting, hunting (supported by club membership), hunting (supported by R—licence or landowner permission) or collecting.

The following information is what members have provided as their genuine reasons:

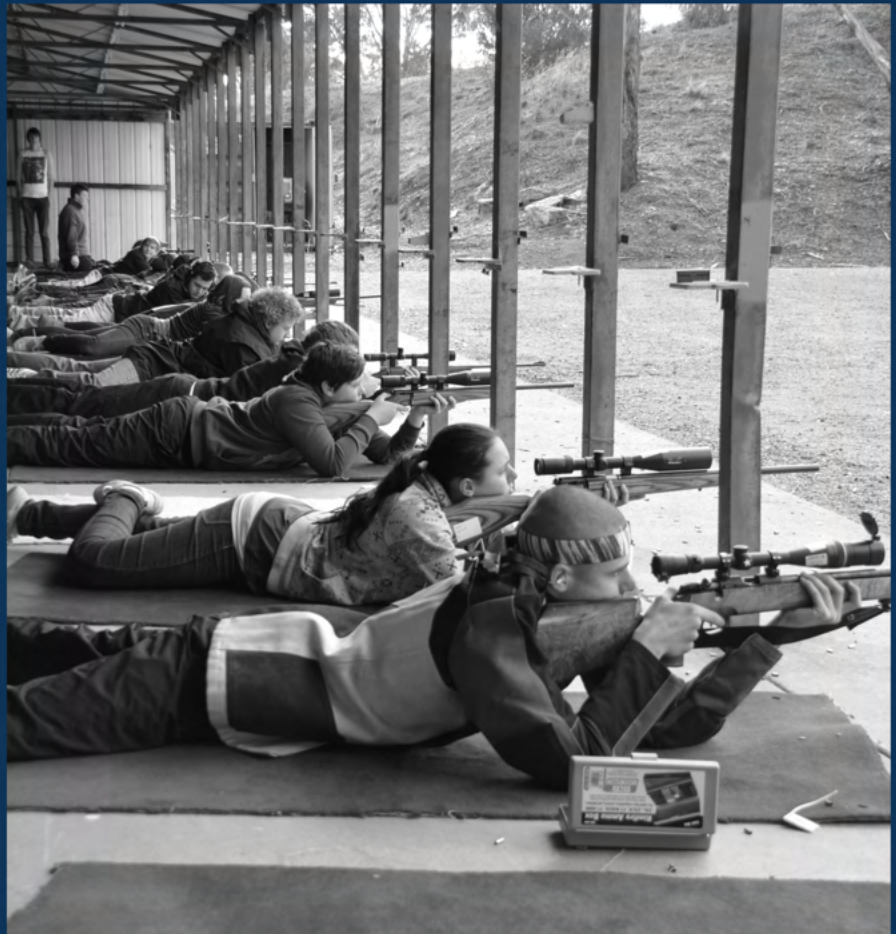
Target Shooting	Hunting – Club	Hunting – Other	Collecting	Not Provided
66%	43%	27%	6%	23%

As multiple genuine reasons are supported, the following provides information about the number of members who have listed on their membership multiple genuine reasons:

Number of Genuine Reasons	Percentage
1	28%
2	35%
3	12%
4	2%



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Appendix Section 19B

Survey Responses





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1. Licence Holder Survey

Introduction

SSAA ACT Inc. is committed to representing the interests of our members and licence holders in the ACT and promoting safe, responsible and lawful participation in the shooting sports.

SSAA ACT Inc. conducted this licence holder survey to better understand the views, experiences and priorities of licence holders, owners and shooting sports participants in the ACT and surrounding regions.

The purpose of the survey was to gather evidence-based feedback to inform SSAA ACT Inc. advocacy and engagement with government, regulators and community stakeholders. It sought to capture licence holders perspectives on proposed regulatory frameworks, participation in shooting sports and the impacts of proposed regulatory changes on licence holders.

This document presents a consolidated analysis of the survey responses. All data has been reviewed and reported in an aggregated and de-identified manner to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Individual responses have not been attributed.

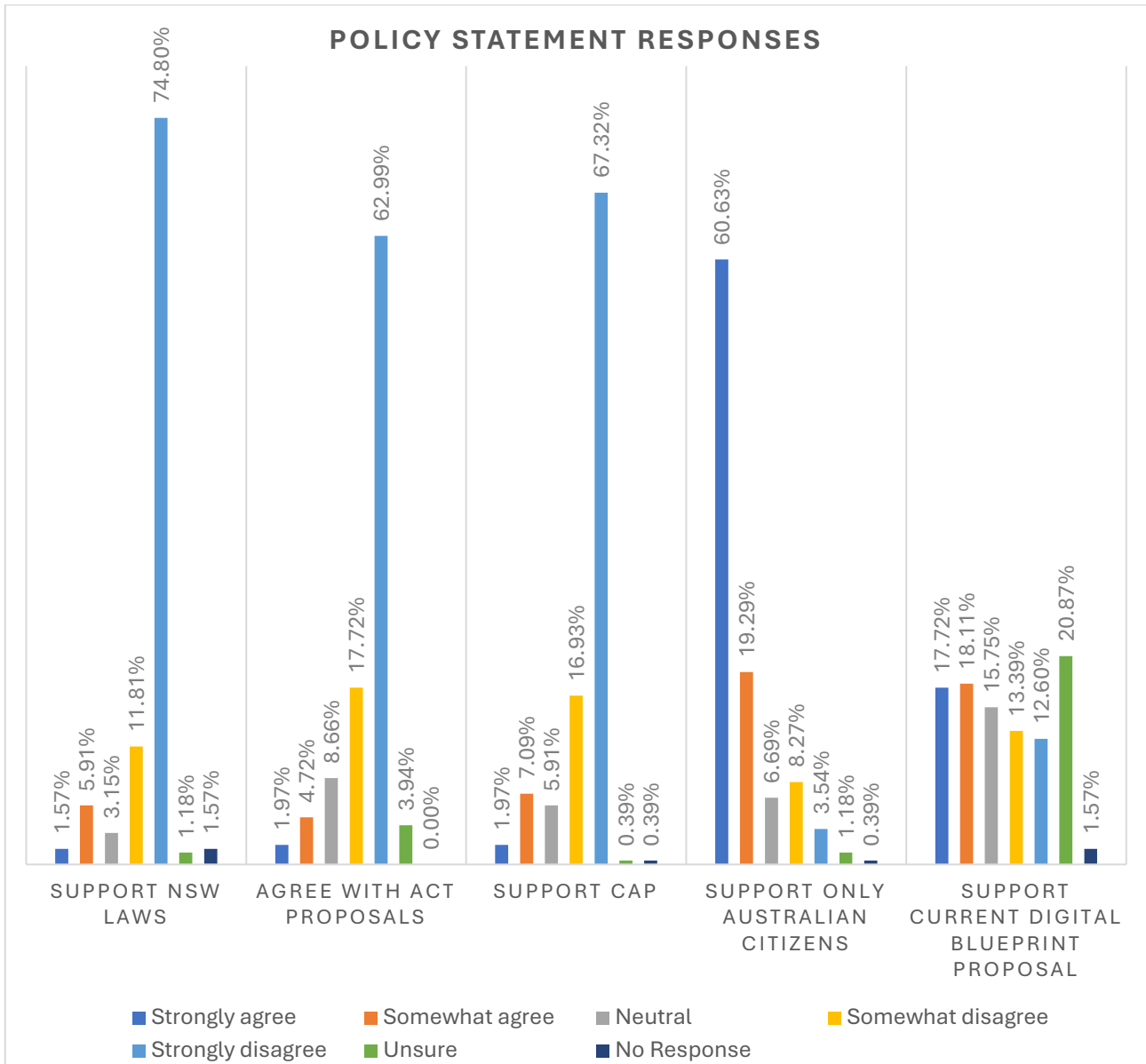
The findings outlined in this report reflect the collective voice of licence holders and provide important insights into the practical impacts of proposed policies. They will be used to support constructive engagement, promote responsible firearms ownership and attempt to ensure that future reforms are informed by the lived experience of compliant and law-abiding participants.

SSAA ACT Inc. thanks all members who contributed their time and views to this process. Their participation strengthens our capacity to represent the shooting community and advocate for fair, balance and evidence-based policy outcomes.

Current Proposals

People were asked what their level of support was for the current proposals by the ACT Government, and the NSW laws passed by the houses in the lead up to Christmas.

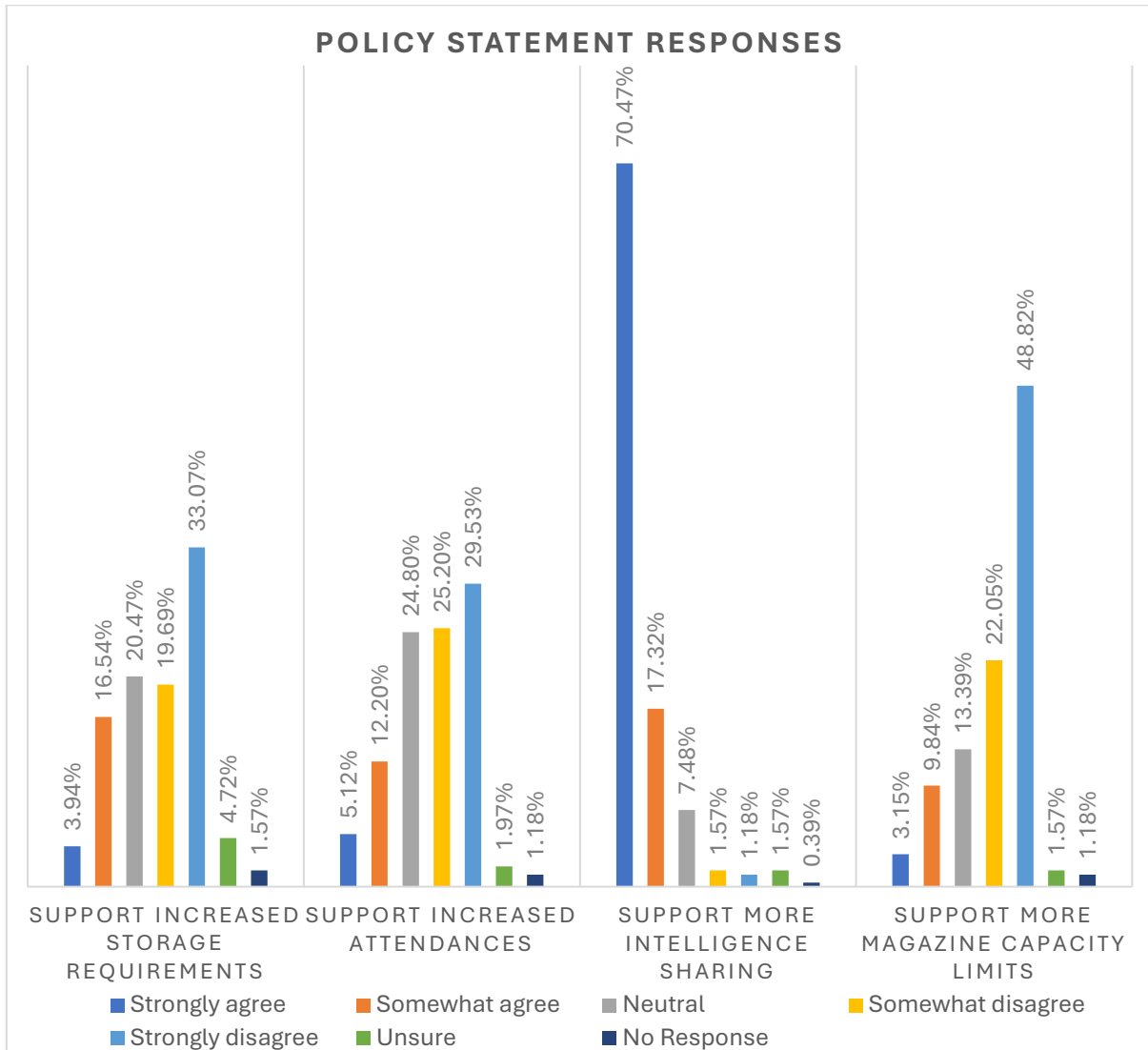
The following graph shows the responses:



People were also asked if they support the following statements:

- Do you support increased storage requirements?
- Do you support increased club/range attendances?
- Do you support better/more frequent intelligence sharing between Police and the Commonwealth?
- Do you support more limits on magazine capacity?

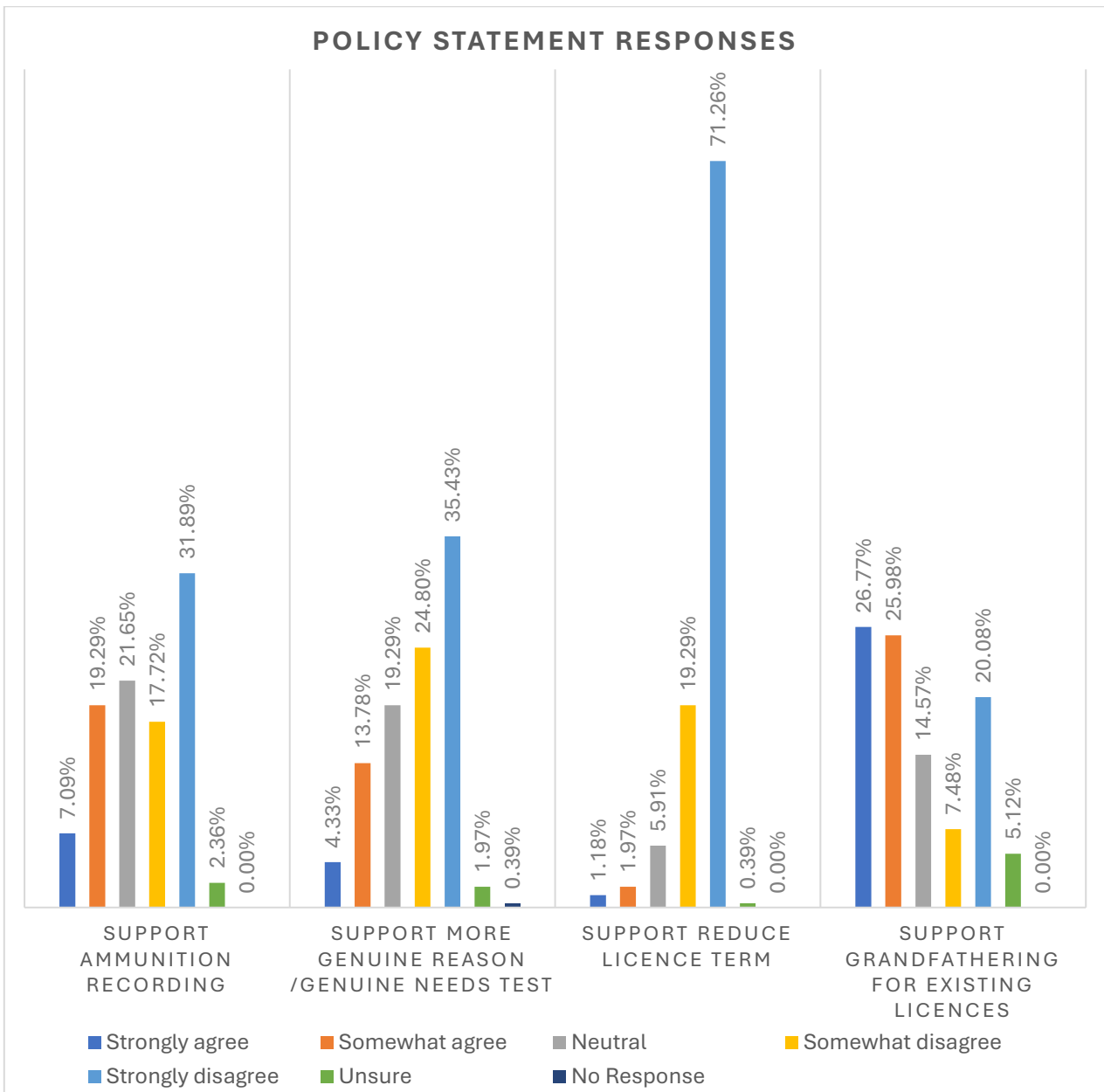
The responses are below:



People were also asked their level of support for the following:

- Do you support ammunition purchase recording?
- Do you support more robust “genuine reason” and “genuine needs” tests?
- Do you support reduced licence durations?
- Do you support grandfathering of new provisions (i.e.: new laws impact only new licence holders)?

The responses are below:



2. Demographics

The survey asked a range of questions to obtain demographic information. This is below:

Gender

The following table shows the responses of those people who told us their gender.

Gender	Percentage
Male	94.84%
Female	4.37%
Non-binary	0.4%

Age

To ensure peoples identity cannot be determined, age has not been provided by gender.

Age Group	Percentage (%)
12 to 17	0.79%
18 to 24	0.79%
25 to 34	5.95%
35 to 44	13.10%
45 to 54	19.84%
55 to 64	28.57%
65 to 74	20.24%
Over 75	10.71%

Licence Duration

People were asked to provide detail about how long they have been licenced.

Time Licensed	Percentage (%)
More than 20 years	50.79%
10 to 20	16.54%
5 to 10	14.96%
4 to 5	7.09%
2 to 3	6.30%
Did not answer	4.33%

Licence Category

Of the people who provided what category of firearms they were licenced for, the following is the breakdown:

Number of Categories	Percentage (%)
1	1.37%
2	55.67%
3	40.21%
4	2.75%



The following percentages do not add up to 100% because it is provided based on the number of people who reported they were licenced for each category.

Licence Category	Percentage (%)
A	97.22%
B	97.22%
C	3.57%
H	32.94%

Licence Genuine Reasons

People were asked what their genuine reasons are on their licences. The following table provides information about the genuine reasons against licence duration.

The following table shows a breakdown of the number of genuine reasons supporting a person’s firearms licence.

The genuine reason options were:

- Sport/Target
- Recreational hunting – own property
- Recreational hunting – R-Licence
- Recreational hunting – club membership
- Recreational hunting – landowner permission
- Vertebrate pest animal control – registered business
- Animal Welfare
- Primary Production
- Business and Employment

Genuine Reasons	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	Total
No firearms owned	2.76%	0.39%	0.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.54%
Less than 5 firearms	14.17%	10.63%	7.48%	2.36%	0.39%	0.39%	0.00%	35.83%
6 to 10 firearms	6.69%	11.81%	7.09%	3.94%	1.18%	0.00%	0.00%	30.71%
11 to 20 firearms	4.33%	7.09%	5.51%	3.54%	0.00%	0.39%	0.00%	20.87%
21 to 40 firearms	0.79%	0.39%	2.76%	1.18%	0.79%	1.18%	0.00%	7.09%
More than 41 firearms	0.79%	0%	0.39%	0.39%	0%	0%	0.39%	1.97%
Total	29.53%	30%	23.62%	11.41%	2%	2%	0.39%	

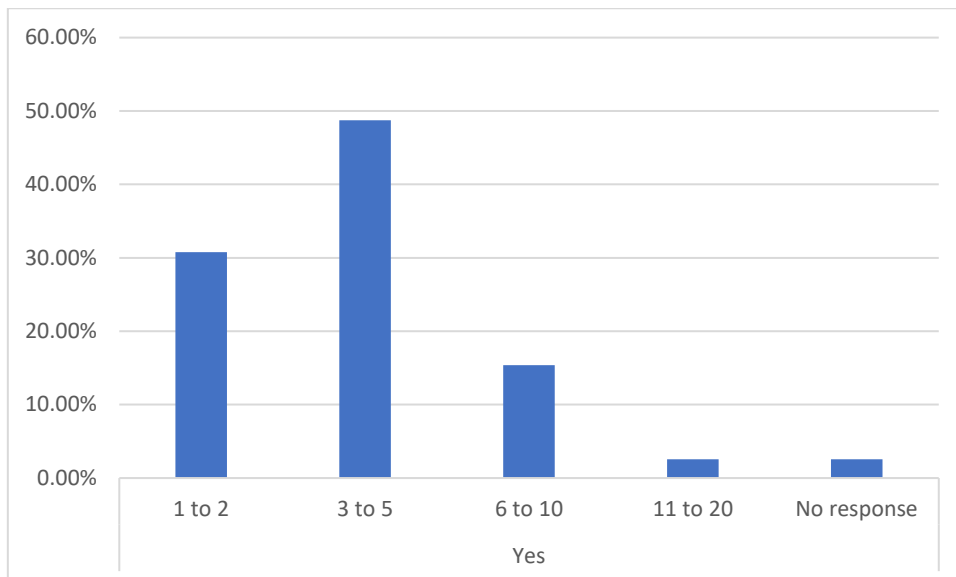
The following table provides information about licence duration and the genuine reasons supporting a person’s licence.

	> 20	11 to 20	6 to 10	4 to 5	2 to 3	Not provided	Total
Sport/Target	40.55%	14.17%	11.02%	6.69%	3.94%	3.54%	79.92%
Landowner Permission	31.10%	9.45%	8.27%	1.18%	2.36%	0.79%	53.15%
R-Licence	21.26%	6.69%	7.87%	2.76%	3.54%	1.57%	43.70%
Hunting - Club Membership	18.11%	5.12%	5.91%	3.15%	1.57%	1.57%	35.43%
Hunting - Own Property	4.72%	2.76%	1.18%	0.39%	0.39%	0.00%	9.45%
Vertebrate Pest Animal Business	0.39%	1.18%	0.00%	0.79%	0.00%	0.00%	2.36%
Animal Welfare	1.57%	0.79%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.36%
Primary Production	1.97%	0.39%	0.79%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.15%
Business and Employment	1.18%	1.97%	0.00%	0.79%	0.39%	0.00%	4.33%

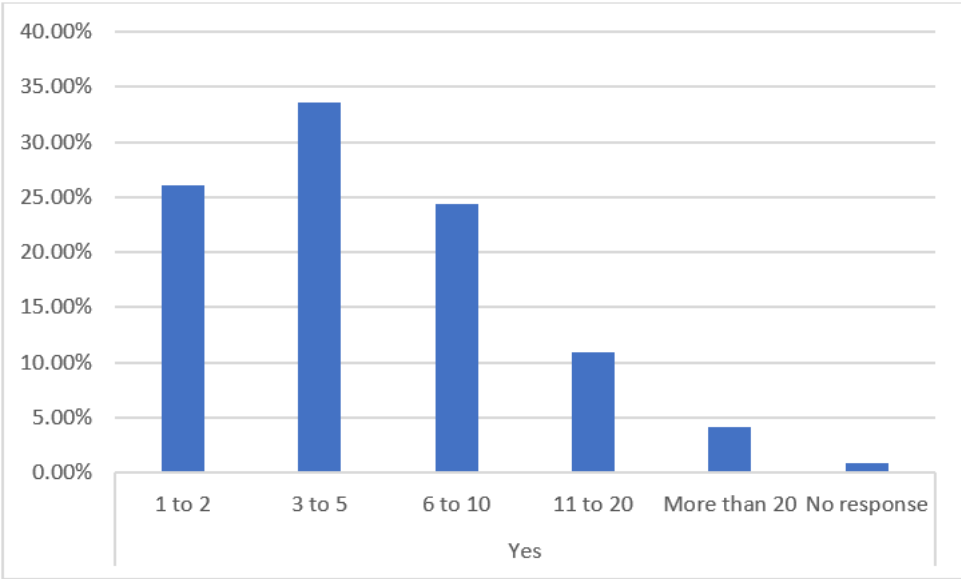
Registered Users

People were asked if they are registered users of someone else’s firearms and if their firearms have someone else as registered users. 15% of people said that some of their firearms have someone else as a registered user, and 46% reported that they are a registered user of other people’s firearms.

The below chart shows the number of firearms people reported that have registered owners other than themselves as the registered owner.



The below chart shows the number of firearms reported by people as having them as a registered user.

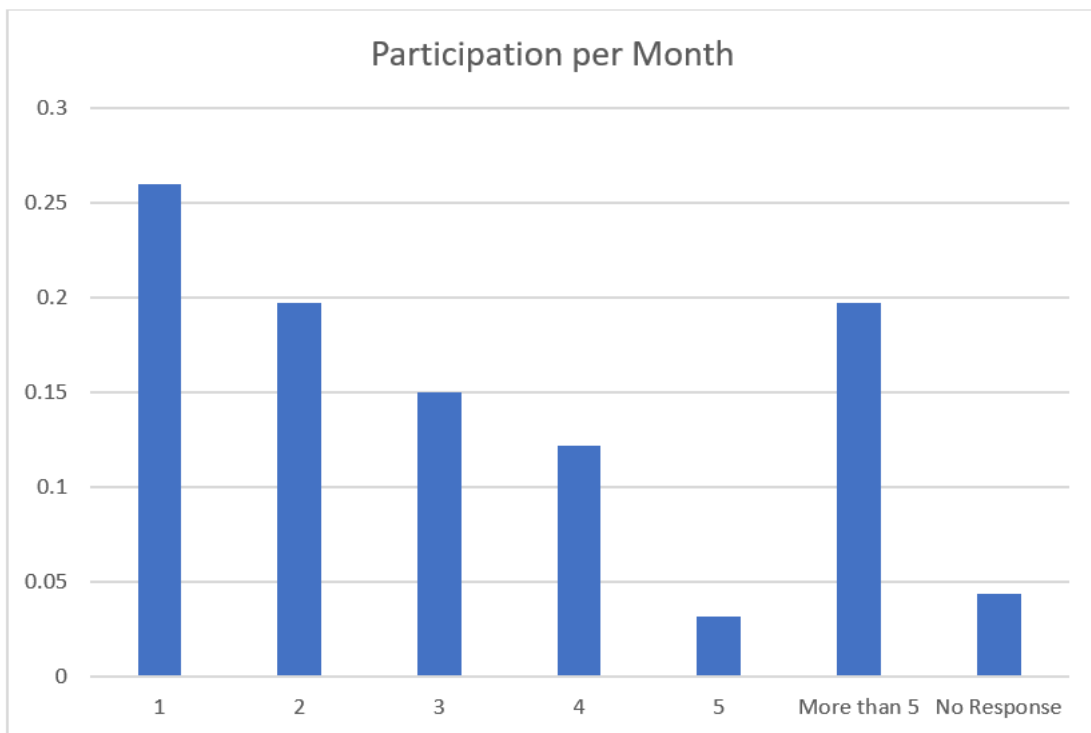


3. Participation

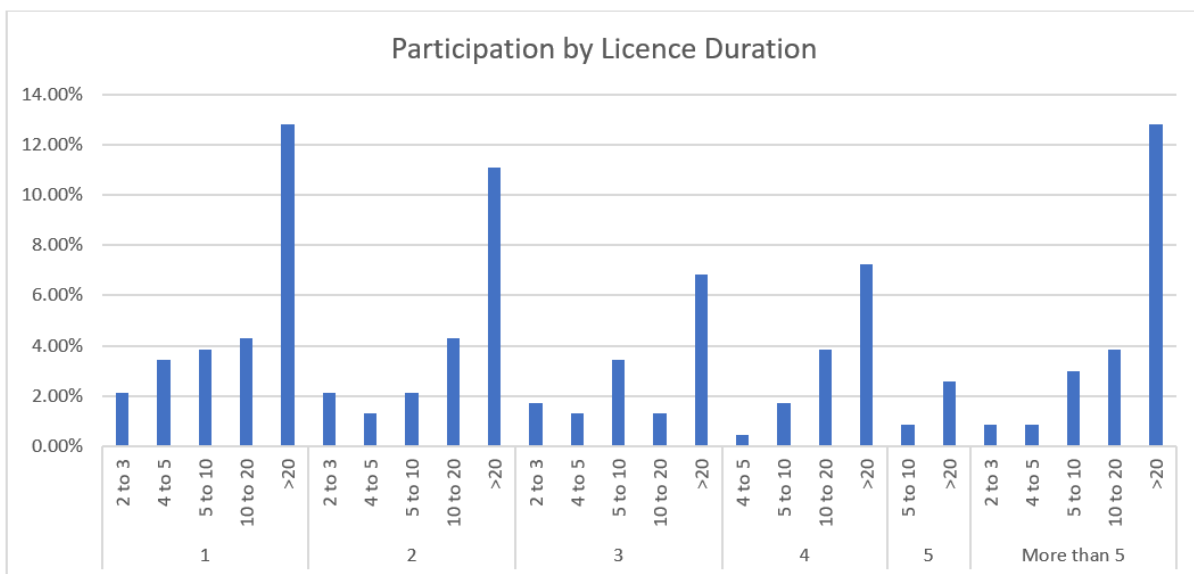
The survey asked questions about licence holder participation, including details about volunteering with firearm sporting organisations.

Activities

People were asked about their activities and how often they participate per month. The following shows that nearly 70% of respondents say that they participate 2 or more times per month.

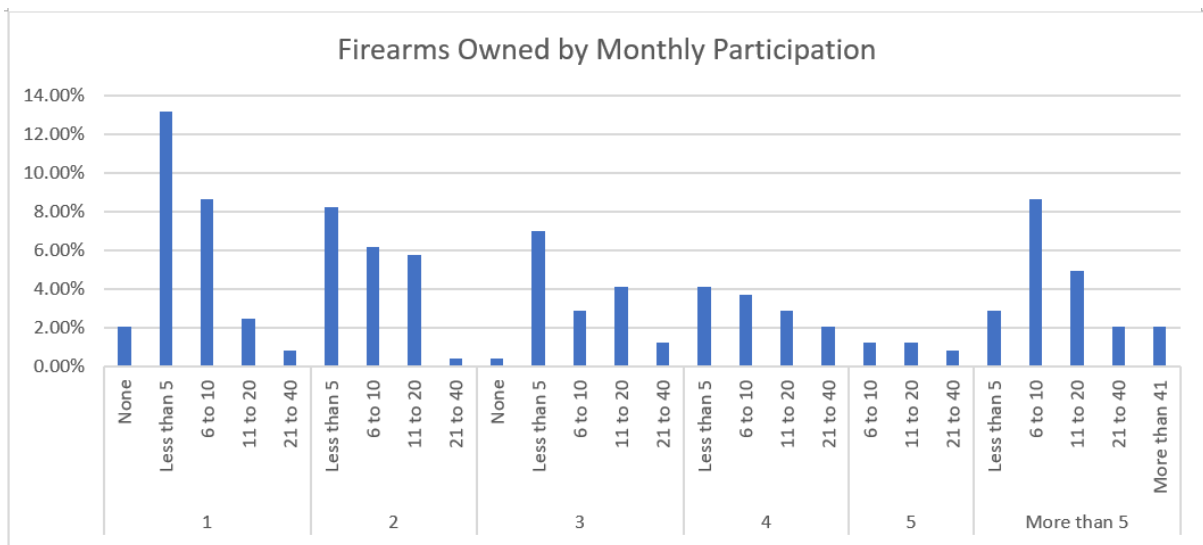


Participation has been calculated against the length of the provided licence term, and this is shown in the below table:



The above table shows that of 52% of licence holders participate more than 3 times per month.

The below table provides the number of firearms owned by respondents against the participation per month. The data shows that just over 40% of those that participate 3 or more times a month own over the proposed numerical cap of 10 firearms, and just over 71% own over the numerical cap of 5 firearms.



Travel

The survey also asked respondents about their travel habits for shooting activities.

Just under 24% of people said that they no interest in traveling, just over 57% said that they have travelled interstate, and 5% said that they had travelled internationally. The remaining said that they had not yet travelled but wanted to.

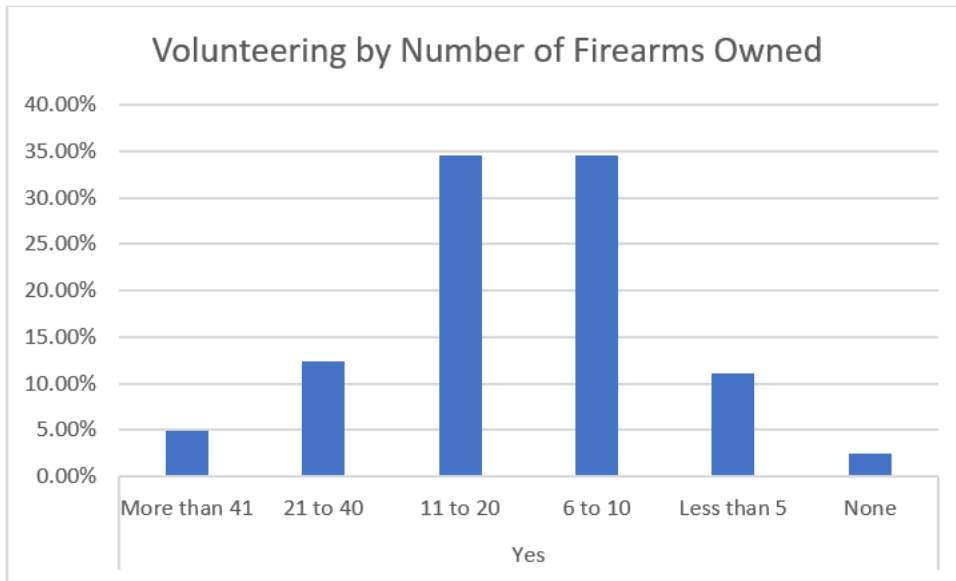
Of the people who said they had travelled interstate or internationally, nearly 20% said that they own more that the proposed 10 firearm cap, and nearly 40% report that they own more than the proposed 5 firearm cap.

People were also asked about their expenditure when traveling. 37% of travellers reported that they spent more than \$1,000 when away.

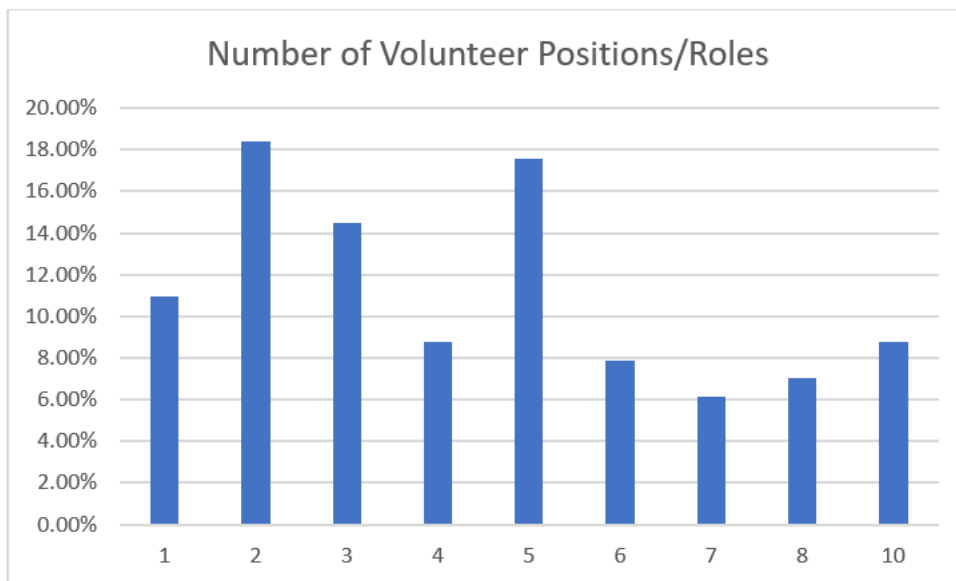
They were also asked about the duration that they are away. Just over 48% reported that they were away for longer than a weekend.

Volunteering

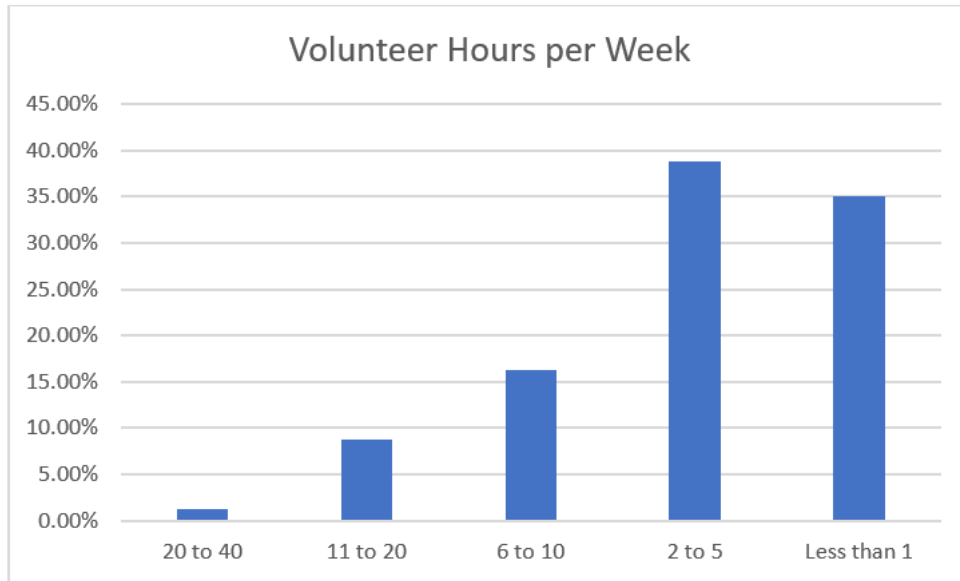
Of the people who responded that they volunteer, the below table shows that over 51% of volunteers own more firearms than the proposed numerical limits.



People were asked what volunteering they do for their sport. The below data shows that over 70% of volunteers hold or contribute to more than 3 roles.



Volunteers were asked for their average contribution per week. The below table provides these details:



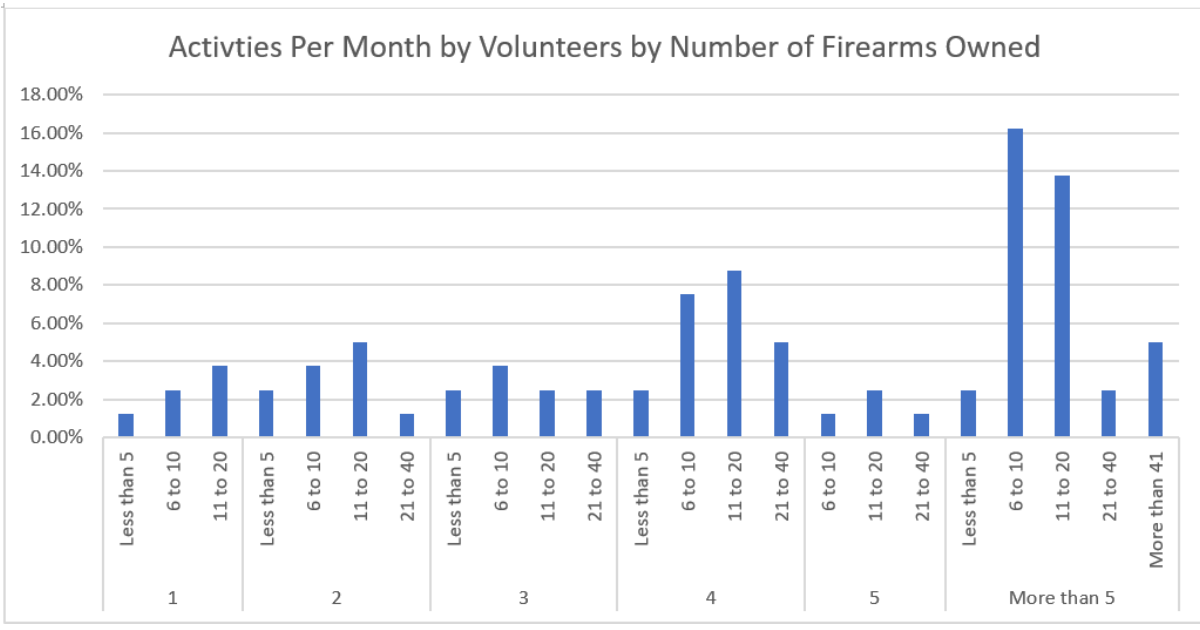
Of the people who told us they are Authorised Instructors, nearly 70% of people have more than the proposed numerical limits. These people have been approved by the ACT Firearms Register to provide instruction to unlicensed people. Authorised instructors are the only people in the ACT who are legally allowed to undertake this activity.

Of the people who told us they are Range Officers, just over 70% reported that they have more than the proposed numerical limits.

Of the people who told us they are Safety Officers, 64% reported that they have more firearms than the proposed numerical limits.

These volunteers are in positions of authority and ensure the safe operation of ranges, competitions and training sessions. They have committed and dedicated themselves and their time to ensuring that the sport of shooting is as safe and enjoyable as it is for all involved.

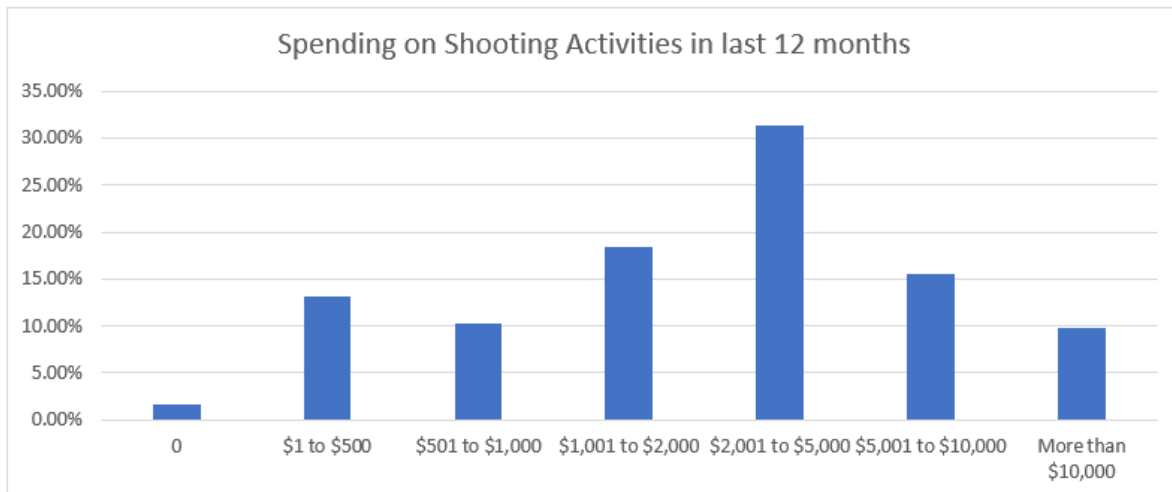
People were asked for the level of engagement in the shooting sports, and of those people who identified as volunteers, 80% participate more than 3 times per month, and just over half of those own more than the proposed numerical cap.



4. Economic Contribution

The survey asked questions about the spending habits of licence holders. Of the people who said they had spent money on firearms and related purchases in the last 12 months, just over 75% said they spent more than \$1,000 with the median spend being reported as between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per year.

38% of responses said they had purchased a firearm in the last 12 months.



The above table shows what people have reported as being their spending over the last 12 months.

People were also asked to provide what they had spent in certain categories.

217 people reported that they had purchased ammunition in the last 12 months, with the average amount being \$1,300.

The average spent on firearms in the 12 months was \$4,000 and people reported an average of \$1,800 spent on accessories.

People reported that the average spend on range fees and members is \$360 in the 12-month period and the average on licensing and compliance was also \$360.

People were asked for their spending on training and coaching and reported that the average was just under \$1,400.

Of the people who reported that they travel for shooting related activities, the average spend was \$1,800.

They were also asked for other expenditure that didn't fall within the above categories. The average spend was \$1,100.

250 people provided information about where their purchases were made. Nearly 93% reported that they purchase from local Canberra businesses. 65% reported that they had purchased from interstate in the last 12 months and 28% reported that they made purchases from online retailers.

Private sales and club purchases each accounted for around 18% of purchases.

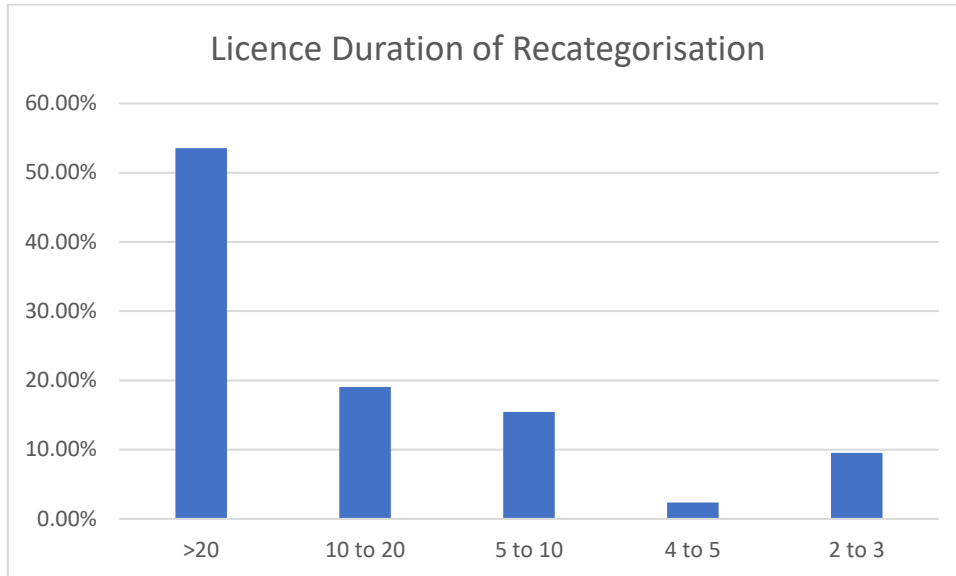
It is important to note that online purchases, private sales and club purchases are still required to go through the legally required transfers of a local dealer for firearms and regulated parts. Firearms cannot be purchased online and posted directly to a person.

5. Recategorisation

People were specifically asked if they had firearms that would be recategorised under the proposal.

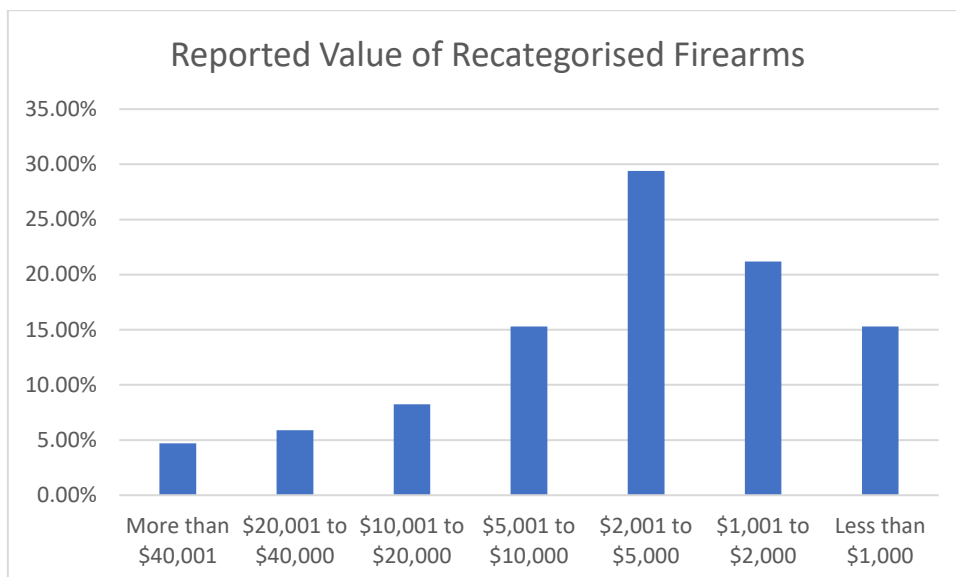
33% responded that they have potentially recategorized firearms, with nearly 39% saying that they use them for competitive target shooting. A further 35% said that they use their potentially recategorized firearms for non-competitive target shooting.

The following table shows the licence duration of the people who reported that they have recategorized firearms.



Of the people who reported that they have potentially recategorized firearms, 35% reported as being volunteers.

People were also asked the value of their potentially recategorized firearms. The below graph shows the responses.





6. Firearms Business Impact

The survey also sought information from firearms businesses, including dealers.

As a result, 62% of respondents are unsure if their business will remain viable with the introduction of new laws and 25% have said that their business will no longer be viable.

All businesses have identified that they have had a downturn in business since the introduction of NSW laws, with 67% of responses saying that business has been impacted by 10 to 50%.

From the challenges listed, the biggest impacts to business reported are in order reported: 1. Restrictions to advertising because of being a firearms business, 2. Rising stock costs, 3. Regulatory compliance costs (time and money), 4. Insurance/banking institution restrictions, 5. Registry system limitations, 6. Limited local demand, 7. Permit delays, 8. Access to skilled staff.

67% of businesses have reported that they have between 10 and 50% of stock levels that would be recategorised by the proposed laws.



7. Pest Control Business Impact

The survey also asked for responses from registered and Registry approved pest control businesses.

Respondents were asked what they believe the impact to their pest control business would be with: recategorisations, magazine limitations and firearm number limits.

All businesses responded that there would be an impact because of the proposed legislation. They were also asked if they were also sport shooters, they all answered yes. They were also asked if they were having to chose between sport and business. They all answered yes.

Just over 83% told us that they would be choosing business over sporting. This means that for these licence holders, the proposed laws are forcing people to chose between their business or sport.

When asked about the impact firearm limits would have operations, 67% reported catastrophic impacts, and around 17% reported major or moderate impacts.

When asked what the impact to business would be on further magazine limitations would have, 50% reported catastrophic and major impacts.

When asked how recategorisation would impact business, only 33% reported that there would be no impact to their business operations.

Businesses were asked what they believe the value of recategorisations would be. 50% reported that the value of their recategorised firearms is over \$10,000.



8. Primary Production Impact

The survey also asked for responses from registered Primary Producers.

Of those that told us they are Primary Producers, 75% are reportedly over the proposed 10 firearms limit. All of the respondents reported that firearms are either essential or important to operations. Of those that reported impacts because of firearm limits, 80% reported that there would be major impacts.

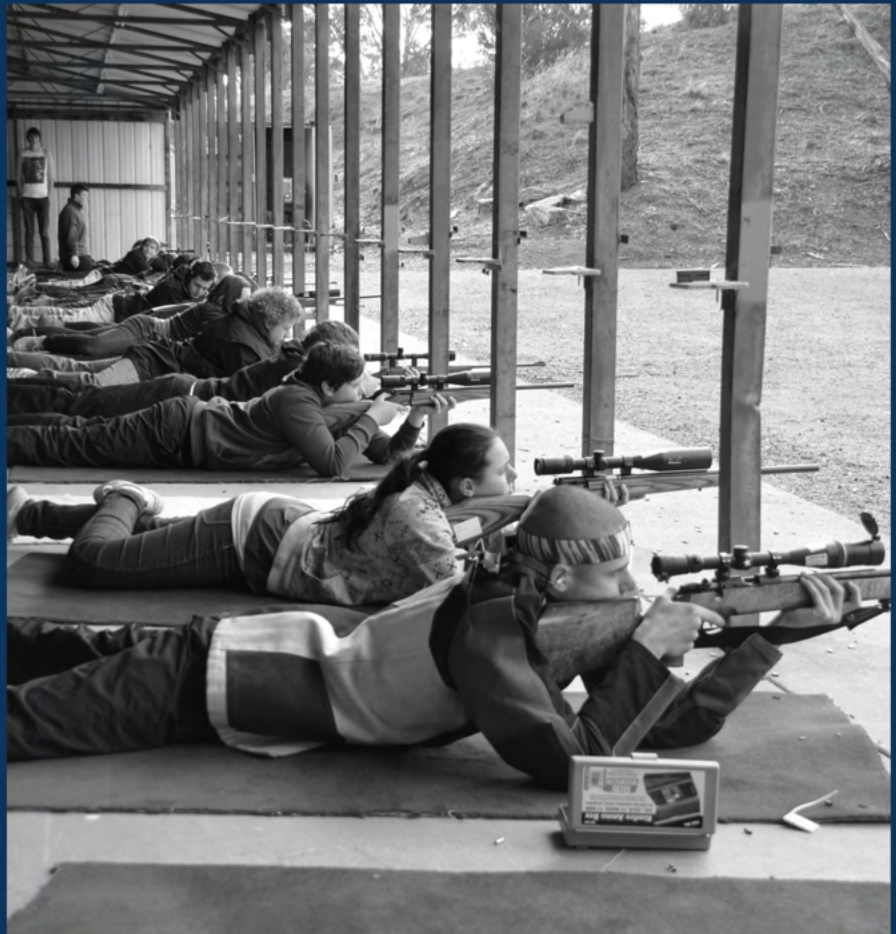
20% reported that the impact of further magazine limitations would impose major barriers to their businesses, with 60% reporting a moderate impact.

They were also asked what they felt the impact would be to business with the proposed recategorisations; 3 in 5 reported that there would be some impact to operational efficiency.

3 in 5 reported that they utilise volunteers to support operational needs at times of increased pest/vermin species. While they reported that the financial impacts to business would be less than \$10,000 per annum, this could still be a significant business impact.



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Appendix Section 19C

Our Disciplines, Their Firearms and Competitions





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Executive Summary

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia ACT Inc. is the largest Association and Club responsible for supporting licenced sport shooting, collectors and recreational hunters in the ACT.

SSAA ACT Inc. owns and manages the SSAA ACT Inc. Range Complex in Majura. The Complex spans over 90 hectares in Canberra's north and is home for a number of SSAA ACT Inc. Disciplines, Clubs and Sections.

This document provides information about the disciplines, including the numbers and types of firearms used, the competitions held and information about what the disciplines are.

Each of these disciplines form integral parts of the SSAA ACT Inc. community and shooting structure in the ACT. They provide core training and contribute to the safety culture of the shooting sports. They also provide key pathways for local, national and international competition.

In addition, they provide support to members in the same way that any other community sport does.

High level overview

SSAA ACT Inc. supports a diverse range of shooting disciplines that collectively form the foundation of organised sporting shooting within the ACT. These disciplines cater to a wide cross-section of members, encompassing rifle, handgun, shotgun, air rifle and black powder shooting, and are conducted in accordance with SSAA and other relevant international rules and relevant legislative requirements.

Together, they provide structured opportunities for skill development, safe firearm handling, and participation in regular competition at local, state, national and international levels.

Each discipline contributes to the broader SSAA ACT Inc. community by promoting safety, consistency, and progressive shooter development. Through regular training, competition, and club activity, the disciplines support member engagement, foster pathways for competitive advancement, and help maintain a strong and responsible shooting culture within the ACT.

Disciplines, Their Firearms and Competitions

SSAA ACT Inc. supports a broad and diverse range of shooting disciplines that collectively represent the full spectrum of organised sporting shooting in the ACT. These disciplines span handgun, rifle, shotgun, air rifle and black powder firearms, and vary significantly in their match formats, equipment requirements, and competitive pathways. Each discipline operates under nationally approved SSAA rules and is conducted within a structured framework that emphasises safety, skill development, fairness, and regulatory compliance.

Across all disciplines, competitors participate in regularly scheduled local competitions that provide accessible entry points for members, while also supporting progression to state, national, and international events. Firearm usage within each discipline is tightly defined by rulebooks that specify allowable firearm types, calibres, sights, and configurations. This ensures consistency across competitions while accommodating a wide range of historical, sporting, and modern firearms.

Together, these disciplines form the operational core of SSAA ACT Inc.'s shooting activities. They support member participation at all experience levels, contribute to a strong safety culture through structured competition and supervision, and provide recognised pathways for competitive advancement within Australia and overseas.



1. Action Match

Discipline Overview

Action Match is a dynamic handgun shooting discipline catering to revolver and self-loading pistol shooters. While international rules dictate that the firearm's calibre must be at least 9mm, due to Australia's handgun regulations, Action Match competitors can use either a .38 Super or 9mm Parabellum self-loading pistol or a .38 Special/.357 Magnum revolver. The discipline includes four firearm classes and four main courses of fire, with each course having its own time, distance and scoring conditions. Action Match also has a subdiscipline called Steel Challenge, which caters to both rimfire and centrefire handgun events.


History

Action Match is one of the most demanding handgun competitions available. Developed in 1979 by John Bianchi, a former LAPD police officer and then CEO of holster manufacturing company Bianchi International, the match included variations from existing handgun competitions such as IPSC and PPC. The Bianchi Cup Invitational Pistol Tournament became famous as the world's richest handgun event and attracts the world's best handgun competitors. In 1985, the NRA took control of the Bianchi Cup and now hosts the event annually in Missouri. The SSAA regularly sends a team to this prestigious event to compete against shooters from around the world.

The SSAA continues to promote Action Match to ensure all sporting shooters who legally own and use sporting handguns can access national and international competitions to further develop their competitive skills and justify ownership of their firearm. The SSAA Action Match National Championships culminates in the Smith & Wesson Cup.

Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Steel-Challenge-Rule-Book-Jan-2025.pdf>

Action Match



SSAA Action Match is a dynamic handgun discipline catering to revolver and self-loading pistol shooters. It was developed in 1979 by John Bianchi, a former LAPD officer who became CEO of holster manufacturers Bianchi International.

Firearms and classes

Open class includes modified firearms with optical sights and major changes to the handgun permitted, including 'wings' for stabilising in conjunction with the barricade.

Metallic Sight class includes handguns modified to ensure maximum accuracy with reliability. The barrel length of self-loading pistols is limited to 6.25" and revolvers to 8.625".

Production class allows a 'readily available' handgun equipped with metallic sights. IPSC production handguns suit this class; as well as 9mm Parabellum, .38 Special, .38 Super, .357 Sig or .38-45.

Courses of fire

There are four main courses of fire with time, distance and scoring conditions. The Practical event has four stages from 10 to 50 yards. Facing two targets downrange, the competitor engages with various time limitations.

The Barricade event is similar, but you may use both sides of a barricade for support.

The Moving Target (Modified) event means facing a target, which comes from behind cover and travels 60ft in six seconds before again being covered.

The Falling Plate event engages metal 'plate' targets in various time-frames from distances of 10 to 25 yards.

Steel Challenge

Within the SSAA, Steel Challenge is managed as a subdiscipline of Action Match. It is exciting because there is instant feedback regarding a hit or miss. Rimfire firearms are chambered in .22 Long Rifle calibre only, while centrefire handguns must be a minimum calibre of .38 Special (9mm). Steel Challenge comprises eight stages, shot from a stationary position at static steel plates. There are four primary plates followed by the fifth 'stop plate', which must be hit last to halt the time.



2. Air Rifle Field Target

Discipline Overview

Air Rifle Field Target is a simulated field-shooting discipline that caters to springer and precharged pneumatic (PCP) air rifle shooters. The discipline includes five firearm classes: Open Air Rifle, Open PCP, Open Springer, International PCP and International Springer, with shooters aiming to hit reactive 'fall-when-hit' targets of various sizes at often unknown ranges from 8 to 50m. As the name suggests, Air Rifle Field Target lends itself to being contested in a bush-type environment, although it may also be held on a more traditional range line.

History

Air Rifle Field Target was introduced as a new SSAA discipline in late 2012. The discipline aims to promote all Air Rifle Field Target shooting, using air rifles capable of sufficient accuracy and that can hit the reactive 'fall-when-hit' targets of various sizes at ranges from 8 to 50m. The challenge of the discipline comes from shooting a relatively low powered air rifle at targets at distances that are unknown to the competitor. The success of the competitor therefore depends on their marksmanship skills and ability to accurately estimate range.

The first official Air Rifle Field Target shooting event was held in 1980 in Magham Down in Sussex, England, with more than 100 people attending the inaugural event. It was originally started as an informal sport for anyone with an air rifle, but the targets used were not the knockdown type as used today. Rather, the original targets were simple silhouettes of common game species to which orange stickers were attached as 'hit zones'.

The sport quickly gained popularity across the United Kingdom, and by the mid-1980s, the presently used fall-when-hit targets were introduced. Around this time, Air Rifle Field Target was taken up in the United States by several small shooting clubs, which led to the formation of the American Field Target Association in 1987. By then, the sport had reached significant numbers in the UK.

The first international Air Rifle Field Target events took place in the mid-1980s, when UK shooters were invited to attend competitions in the US. The first formal World Championships were held in the early 1990s, with the venue alternating between the UK and US and only these two major countries competing. In the 1990s, other countries began to appear on the scene, with Norway being one of the first and Germany following later. By the end of the 2012, the World Field Target Federation comprised more than 30 member countries, with SSAA National recognised as the regional governing body for Australia.

Firearms Used


Category	Firearm Type	Optics
International	Any Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 12FPE (16.27J)	Scoped
International Springer	Manual Spring Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 12FPE (16.27J)	Scoped
Field Target Open	Any Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped
Field Target Open Springer	Manual Spring Air rifle, muzzle energy not to exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped
Field Target Open HP	Any Air rifle, muzzle energy can exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped
Field Target Springer HP	Manual Spring Air rifle, muzzle energy can exceed 28FPE (37.9J)	Scoped

Rulebook: <https://www.saa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Air-Rifle-Field-Target-guide-revision-2023.pdf>

Competitions

On the SSAA ACT Inc. Range Complex, our Air Rifle Field Target discipline runs local level competitions every month and holds a Territory competition every year. This year, the National level competition is being held in the ACT.

Air Rifle Field Target



The challenge of the SSAA Air Rifle Field Target discipline comes from shooting a relatively low powered air rifle at targets over distances that are unknown to the competitor. Success depends on marksmanship skills and the ability to accurately estimate range. The first international events took place in the mid-1980s, involving UK and US shooters followed by Norway and Germany.



Matches

Air Rifle Field Target is a simulated field-shooting event that lends itself to a bush-type environment, though it may be contested on a more traditional range line. The range has at least 10 'lanes' up to a maximum of 25, with a minimum of two and a maximum of five targets per lane.

Targets must be the 'fall-when-hit' type of various sizes and may be made of wood and/or steel and be of any configuration. The 'hit zone' must be circular and of a contrasting colour to the faceplate. Targets must be resettable from the firing line, and placed at ranges from 9 to 50m.

Scoring is one point for each hit and a zero for a miss. A hit is awarded when a target falls. Any movement of the plate which does not result in the target or hit zone falling is a miss. All targets are shot in numerical order and any shot out of sequence is scored as a miss.



Firearms

Air Rifle Field Target caters for both springer and precharged pneumatic (PCP) air rifles. The five firearm classes include Open Air Rifle, Open PCP Air Rifle, Open Springer, International PCP and International Springer. Springer air rifles generate their power via a large spring/gas ram and piston. Alternatively, PCP air rifles generate their power by means of an onboard chamber of compressed air or gas.

3. Benchrest

Discipline Overview

Benchrest is a precision rifle shooting discipline where shooters aim to put five or 10 shots into the smallest possible group on paper targets placed at 50m, 100, 200 and 300 yards. Groups are measured from the centre to the centre of the two widest shots in a group. Rifles are fired from rests, comprising a front rest to support the fore-end and a rear sandbag to support the rifle's butt. Benchrest includes 10 main classes within this discipline, with the differences largely determined by rifle weight and calibre.

History

Benchrest rifle shooting is all about placing five or 10 shots into the smallest possible group size at various ranges. This sport originated in the United States around 1947 and came to Australia in the 1950s, with the first bench line thought to be at the old Baulkham Hills Range near Sydney. The sport has grown significantly over the years, with competitions in every state and National Championships held every year for the various Benchrest classes. SSAA Australian Team shooters have competed in the Oceania, Pacific Regional and World Championships.

There are 10 main classes within Benchrest, four of which are centrefire rifle group shooting classes, two are rimfire group shooting classes and four are Hunter Class 'application' or score shooting classes. In Hunter Class, there are competitions for both rimfire and centrefire rifles and it is a requirement that these rifles have a safe trigger mechanism and trigger guard.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Experimental/Unlimited Benchrest	Centrefire Rifle-No weight restrictions barrel must be at least 18 inches long	Scoped
Light Benchrest Centrefire	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 4.763kg	Scoped
Sporter Benchrest Centrefire	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 4.082kg	Scoped
Heavy Benchrest Centrefire	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 6.123kg	Scoped
Light Benchrest Rimfire	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle- Weight must not exceed 3.515kg	Scoped
Heavy Benchrest Rimfire	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle- Weight must not exceed 6.350kg	Scoped
Centrefire Light Hunter	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 4.763kg	Scoped
Centrefire Heavy Hunter	Centrefire Rifle-Weight must not exceed 6.123kg	Scoped
Light Rimfire Hunter	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle- Weight must not exceed 3.515kg	Scoped
Heavy Rimfire Hunter	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle- Weight must not exceed 6.350kg	Scoped
International Rimfire Benchrest (IRB)	Rifle chambered for the 22 long rifle- Weight must not exceed 6.350kg	Scoped
Air Rifle Benchrest	Any Air Rifle .177/.22 Cal	Scoped

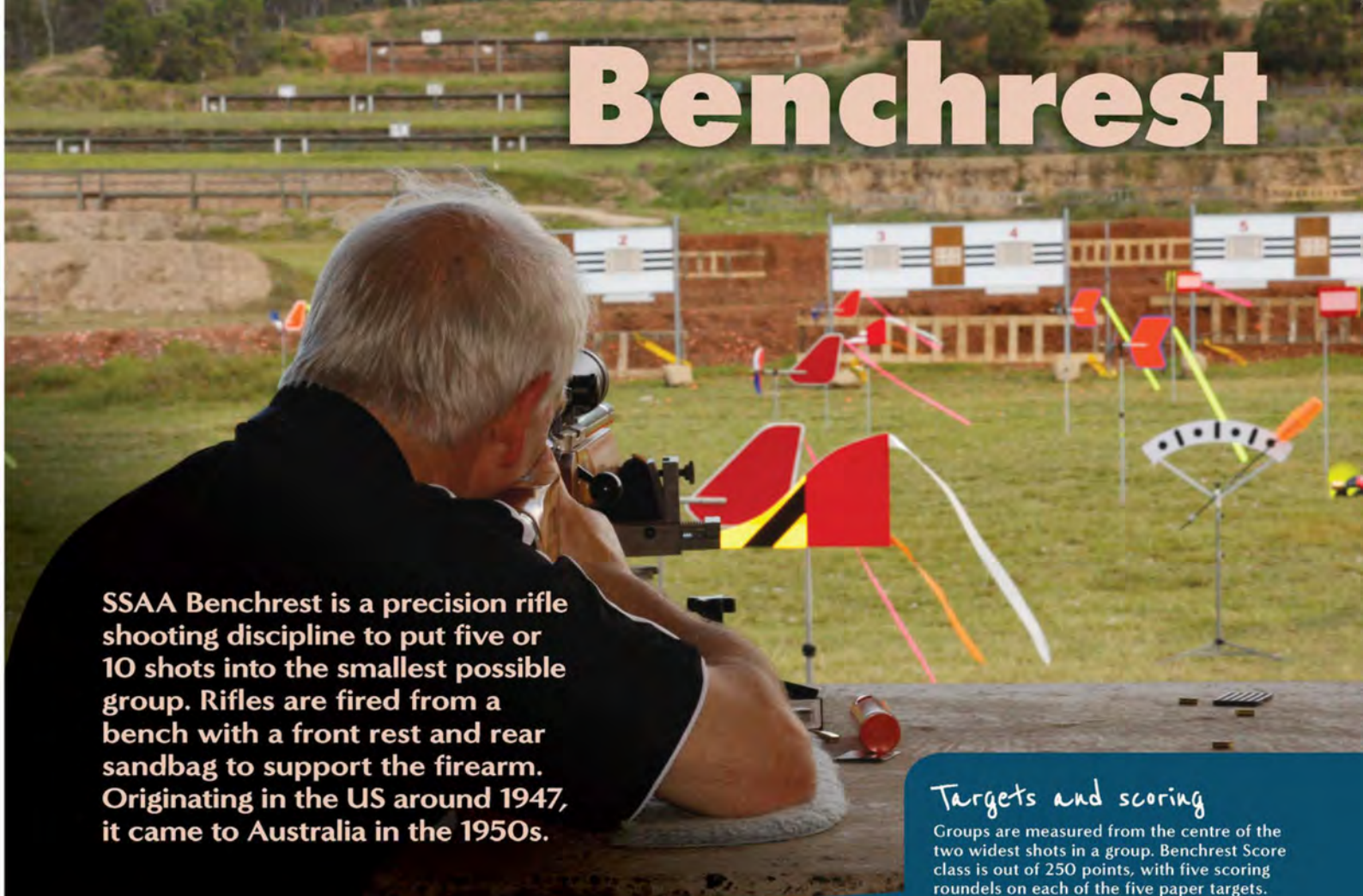
Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Benchrest-Rule-Book-No.-10.0-Rev-Nov-2022-.pdf>

Competitions

This year, SSAA ACT Inc. is hosting the International Rimfire Benchrest 2027 international team selection competition.

Class	Local	State	National
Rimfire	12	1	2
Hunter	12	1	1
Centrefire	12	1	1

Benchrest



SSAA Benchrest is a precision rifle shooting discipline to put five or 10 shots into the smallest possible group. Rifles are fired from a bench with a front rest and rear sandbag to support the firearm. Originating in the US around 1947, it came to Australia in the 1950s.

Targets and scoring

Groups are measured from the centre of the two widest shots in a group. Benchrest Score class is out of 250 points, with five scoring roundels on each of the five paper targets.

Courses of fire

Most Benchrest group matches cover five targets shot at each range. The majority of centrefire matches are shot at 100 and 200 yards. Rimfire group and Benchrest Score matches are shot at 50m and 100 yards. Time limits are generally between seven and 12 minutes.

Firearms and classes

There are 11 main classes within Benchrest, based on rifle weight and calibre.

Experimental/Unlimited Benchrest is a centrefire class with no weight restrictions, which requires 10-shot groups, while all other classes fire five-shot groups. Sporter, Light Benchrest and Heavy Benchrest are centrefire classes with total weight limits of 4.082kg, 4.763kg and 6.123kg respectively. Centrefire classes have no scope restrictions.

There are two .22 Rimfire Benchrest Rifle 'group' classes allowing the use of any rimfire rifle chambered for the .22 Long Rifle cartridge. Light and Heavy classes have total weight limits of 3.855kg and 6.350kg respectively, the Light scope power is restricted to 6.5x magnification.

There are four Benchrest for Score classes. Light and Heavy Centrefire have total weight limits of 4.763kg and 6.350kg respectively. Light Rimfire and Heavy Rimfire classes include .22 LR rifles with the same weight and scope limits as Rimfire group classes.

International Rimfire Benchrest

International Rimfire Benchrest (IRB) allows .22 LR rimfire rifles with unlimited scope power and a 6.350kg limit. The match is shot at 50m for score, with a 25-bullseye target over 20 minutes.



4. Big Game Rifle

Discipline Overview

Big Game Rifle is a rifle shooting discipline that aims to foster the collection, preservation and use of vintage and modern classic large-calibre big-game rifles, particularly those of British origin, including black powder and early Nitro cartridge firearms. The discipline includes eight categories of matches and the courses of fire within these are largely determined by rifle types and eras, shooting times and shooting positions. The matches aim to simulate field-shooting conditions to improve the shooter's firearm skills in the pursuit of large and dangerous game.

History

The Big Game Rifle discipline commenced in Melbourne in 1983 following several years of SSAA members discussing the founding of a club that would look after the interests of large-calibre sporting firearms. They wanted a club that would foster the collection and preservation of classic big-game rifles and the use of both classic and modern big-game rifles, as well as give these types of firearms a political voice in an ever-changing legislative scene.

The first SSAA Big Game Rifle National Championships were held in Victoria in 1989. Nowadays, Big Game Rifle is shot in all states and territories, and international interest and contacts have grown. This culminated in 2006 with the first international Big Game Rifle competition in Brisbane, followed by competitions in the United States in 2008, the United Kingdom in 2010 and South Africa in 2012.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Group One	Min Calibre .330, Min Energy 2,900 ft/lbs.	Any Sight
Group Two	Min Calibre .400, Min Energy 3,900 ft/lbs.	Any Sight
Group Three	Min Calibre .500, Min Energy 5,300 ft/lbs.	Any Sight
Black Powder Express	Min Calibre .400.	Factory Open
Stalking Double Rifle	Min Calibre .228	Any Sight
Stopping Double Rifle	Min Calibre .400. (Group Two)	Any Sight
Bore Guns and Rifles	Min 16 Bore.	Factory Open
African Plains	Min 6.5 mm to 8mm Magnums	Any Sight
Light Black Powder (1)	Min 360 calibre. (Categories Military and Sporting).	Any Sight
Light Black Powder (2)	Min 450 to 577 calibre. (Categories Military and Sporting).	Any Sight
Classic Cartridge Pre 1939	Cartridge introduced Pre 1939, min .228 calibre.	Any Sight
Classic Light Nitro	Cartridge and Rifle Pre 1939, min .228 calibre.	Any Sight
Light Nitro	Min .224 Centrefire.	Any Sight
Rook and Rabbit Rifle (1)	Cartridge Introduced pre-1905.	Any Sight
Rook and Rabbit Rifle (2)	Cartridge Introduced pre-1905, Rifle pre-1940.	Any Sight
Pot Rifle	.22 Rimfire and .22 Magnum.	Any Sight
Kangaroo Rifle	Min .40 calibre, max case 1.45 long	Any Sight
Slug Gun	Min 20 Gauge.	Any Sight
Lever action	Any Lever action without a removable magazine.	Any Sight
Mannlicher	Any Mannlicher made Rifle.	Any Sight
Single Shot	Any Single shot Rifle.	Any Sight

Rulebook: <https://www.saa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/BGR-National-Rules-No-5-rev-2024-for-publication.pdf>

Big Game Rifle



SSAA Big Game Rifle aims to foster the collection, preservation and use of vintage and modern large-calibre big-game rifles, particularly those of British origin, including black powder and early Nitro cartridge firearms. The discipline began in Melbourne in 1983.



Firearms

There are three general groups: One, Two and Three, with each defined by projectile diameter, projectile weight and muzzle energy. The number of shots fired in competition decreases from Group One to Group Three to take into account increasing recoil. Each group has a number of slowly aimed shots and rapid-fire shots to mitigate the differences between rifles.

At state and branch levels, events have been expanded to include a diverse range of rifle categories and other shooting events, including a showcase event with pre-1939 rifles and cartridges (Classic Cartridge), early smallbore black powder rifles for small game (Rook and Rabbit Rifle), and rifles such as the 7mm and .300 Magnums, which shoot out to 200 yards (African Plains Rifle).

Categories

Big Game Rifle comprises eight core categories and most are shot standing unsupported, while a select few include a sitting or kneeling stage. Matches aim to simulate field-shooting conditions to improve the shooter's firearm skills.

Group One starts at .330 with no upper limits, while Group Two starts at .400-calibres. Group Three encompasses the largest of the big-game-stopping rifles, beginning at the .500-calibres.

Black Powder Express cartridges range from .400- to .577-calibres. Loads may be full black powder, pyrodex or duplex.

Bore Guns and Rifles were the real big-game and dangerous-game-stopping rifles of their day, typically 12-, 10- or 8-bore firearms.

Stalking and Stopping Double Rifles encompass all centrefire double rifles, both the traditional side-by-side configuration and European over-and-under style.

Rapid-fire events include Charging Animal shot at 75, 50 and 25 yards and Special Snap fired at 25 yards.



5. Combined Services

Discipline Overview

Combined Services is a rifle and handgun shooting discipline that aims to encourage organised competitive shooting with a view towards a better knowledge of the safe handling and proper care of military or service firearms. The discipline encompasses more than a dozen Service Rifle and Service Pistol classes in which competitors use original or faithful reproduction rimfire, centrefire and black powder military and other service rifles, carbines, revolvers and self-loading pistols shoot for score at paper targets of different sizes and from various distances and positions.

History

The Combined Services discipline commenced in the 1980s in Victoria and Queensland but is now proudly shot in all states and territories. Although previously called Military or Service Rifle, in recent years, the discipline has adopted Pistol competition, with the discipline now being a combination of the services.

The aim of Combined Services is to encourage organised competitive shooting with a view towards a better knowledge of the safe handling and the proper care of service firearms. The objective is to allow anyone to get into the sport quite cheaply and compete on an equal footing.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Pistol		
Class 1	Defence issue	As Issued
Class 2	Law Enforcement issued	As Issued
Class 3	Modified/Open	Factory/Modified
Class 4	Rimfire (.22LR)	Factory
Class 5	Black Powder	Factory
Class 6	Tactical Pistol (Issued with optics)	Issued Optics
Pre 46	Older WW2 and earlier	As issued
Rifle		
Class A	Close Range / barrel less than 21 inches / carbines. (100m typical usage)	Open Sights
Class B	Medium Range (2-300m) usage rifles. May be bolt or lever action.	Open Sights
Class C	Long Range (500m) typical usage, long barreled, antique rifles.	Open Sights
Class D	Breech loading, single shot rifles.	Open Sights
Class E	Muzzle loading single shot rifles.	As Issued
Class F1	Vintage Sniper Rifles pre-1 Jan 1946.	As Issued
Class F2	Historical Sniper Rifles from 2 Jan 1946 to 1 Jan 1991.	As Issued
Class T	Precision Service Rifles with Optics from 2 Jan 1991 to Present Day.	Optics Permitted
Class H	Modified / accurized Rifles (Standard Service Rifles with heavy barrels and target sights).	Peep Sights
Class J	Modified/ accurized rifles fitted with telescopic sights.	Optics permitted
Class IO	International Optic Class rifles – service calibre firearms to facilitate international competition with New Zealand primarily.	up to 4 power optics
Class OS	Optical Standard Class – any A, B, C, D, E Class rifle	max 4.5 power telescopic



Class TR	Historical Training Rifles such as .22 trainers and .310 Cadet Rifles.	As Issued
Class TR2	Training Rifles approved after 1 Jan 1970.	Factory


Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Combined-Services-Rulebook-No-5-2022.pdf>

Competitions

Match Type	Matches Per Month	Matches Held Annually	Total Per Year
Service Pistol	3	0	36
Tactical Rifle	1	0	12
.22 Tactical	1	0	12
Trainer Rifle	1	0	12
Service Rifle	1	0	11
Carbine	0	1	1
Shotgun	0	1	1
State Competition	0	1	1
National Competition	Hosted by states on rotation		

SSAA ACT Inc. will host the national Combined Services competition in 2027.

Combined Services



SSAA Combined Services encourages a better knowledge of the safe handling and proper care of military or service firearms. Classes involve original or faithful reproduction firearms from various positions.

Rifle classes

Standard military rifles are the order of the day, with the 3-Positional Core being the principal event. Popular rifles include SMLEs, Swedish Mausers, P14s, M17s and K98s.

Class A allows 100m range short-barrel centrefire carbine-type rifles. Class B comprises 200-300m range bolt-action or lever-action centrefire manually operated or self-loading repeating rifles. Class C allows 500m-plus range long-barrel centrefire rifles, including antique military rifles. Class D involves breech-loading cartridge rifles such as black powder single-shot and falling-block-action centrefire rifles. Class E incorporates muzzleloading, single-shot and non-cartridge breech-loading rifles, including antique military rifles.

Other events include Class F, Class T, Class H and J (Modified/Accurised) and Class TR (Training Rifles) such as .22 Training Rifles and Cadet Rifles.

Pistol classes

Class 1 includes original or reproduction centrefire revolvers or self-loading pistols, which are or have been on general issue to an army, navy or air force. Class 2 covers pistols that are or have been on general issue to police or law enforcement organisations. Class 3 handguns comprise any Class 1 or 2 handgun that has been modified and may feature adjustable sights or custom grips. Class 4 includes any rimfire handgun that substantially replicates the functions of Class 1, 2 or 3. Class 5 embraces black powder military handguns, either a revolver or single-shot pistol, which has been on general issue to an army, navy or police force.

Targets and ammunition

Paper targets with a large black aiming point (Core Target) are used from various distances depending on range limits. The spirit of Combined Services is embodied in using standard military-specification loads, which engenders the full recoil effect.



6. Field Rifle

Discipline Overview

Field Rifle & 3-Positional is a rifle discipline that aims to improve hunting marksmanship under rifle range conditions, while teaching them the capabilities and limitations of their equipment. Field Rifle uses rimfire and centrefire rifles and is designed around the four most used field shooting positions of rapid fire, standing, standing post rest and sitting/kneeling post rest over various distances, while 3-Positional uses the same rifles as Field Rifle, but is a slow-fire event that uses the prone, standing and sitting/kneeling positions.

History

The Field Rifle, 3-Positional, Scoped Air Rifle and NRA Any Sight discipline offers a wide range of rifle shooting experiences and opportunities. The discipline has consisted of Field Rifle events since 1970 and SSAA 3-Positional for many years. In 2005, Scoped Air Rifle was added to the discipline, and in 2006, the Inaugural Pacific Regional Shooting Championships were held and included the first Smallbore NRA 3 Position Any Sight rimfire event in Australia to be sanctioned by the National Rifle Association of America.

In 2007, the SSAA National Discipline Subcommittee meeting discussed and agreed that all SSAA disciplines need to consider and develop their involvement and participation in international competitions. Strengthening our international relationships with other countries through participation in international competitions supports and assists in maintaining our genuine reasons and needs for firearms. For the Field Rifle and 3-Positional discipline, this involves our continued participation in Smallbore NRA matches in the United States and the Pacific Regional Shooting Championships.

The National Championships held at Easter now comprises graded matches, with the scores shot used to select the international teams to compete at the US Smallbore Championships and to compete in the Pacific Regional Shooting Championships.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Centrefire	Any rifle chambered in factory or wildcat calibre, max weight 5.5kg	Any sights
Rimfire	.22 long rifle, max weight 4.6kg	Any sights
Magnum Rimfire	Any rimfire chambered in .22 magnum, .17 HMR or .17 WSM	Any sights
Air rifle	Any air rifle	Any sights

Rulebook: [Field-Rifle-and-3-Position-Rulebook-No.9-revised-2024-for-publication.pdf](#)

Competitions

The Field Rifle discipline holds competitions every month. There is a state level competition held every year. Nationals are on a state rotation, and SSAA ACT Inc. will be hosting in 2029.

Field Rifle, 3-Positional, Scoped Air Rifle and NRA Any Sight



Participation in SSAA Field Rifle, 3-Positional, Scoped Air Rifle and NRA Any Sight events improve the hunter's marksmanship under rifle range conditions and shows them the capabilities and limitations of their equipment. Introduction can be through Air Rifle or Rimfire matches, moving on to the more demanding 3-Positional matches up to the higher powered Centrefire events.



Field Rifle

This is a Rimfire and Centrefire rifle shoot designed around the four most used field shooting positions shot over 25, 50, 100 and 200m distances. Centrefire field rifles may be of any calibre and weigh no more than 5.5kg including accessories. Rimfire field rifles must be .22LR and no more than 4.6kg. Rapid Fire is four bursts of three shots, each burst is 15 seconds. Standing Unsupported, Standing Post Rest and Sitting/Kneeling Post Rest are 10 rounds shot slow-fire.

3-Positional

Scoped 3-Positional is a precision match which is more target orientated and testing of the shooter's ability. The event is a slow-fire event, with Prone, Standing and Sitting/Kneeling positions required. The course of fire is 20 shots in 20 or 30 minutes, with Rimfire at 50m and Centrefire at 100m.

Scoped Air Rifle

Scoped Air Rifle provides training and development for national and international rifle competitions, with air rifles inherently accurate over 10m. Any air rifle in .177" (4.5mm) calibre can be used, including compressed air, carbon dioxide or spring. The 10m Scoped Air Rifle match is 40 shots fired from the Standing Unsupported position. The 3-Positional Scoped Air Rifle is shot at 10m, with 20 shots in 30 minutes from each position.



NRA 3 Position Any Sight

Any rifle in the .22 Long Rifle calibre and any sight, telescopic or aperture is allowed. The course of fire is two stages of 20 shots in each position (prone, standing and kneeling) at 50m/yards. SSAA sends a team to events in the US and New Zealand.

7. Fly Shoot

Discipline Overview

Fly Shoot is a shooting discipline that caters exclusively to rifles. The discipline includes Rimfire and Centrefire matches generally shot at 200 yards and 500m respectively. Each match comprises five targets, with the target having a 'fly' 30mm in size as the X-ring and scoring rings around it. Fly Shoot is a unique discipline as both the size of the groups and scores count towards a shooter's final result. It is best to try to keep the five-shot group as close to the fly as possible for a maximum score.

History

Fly Shoot has its origins in the Benchrest discipline with shooters who saw the need for a way to prove centrefire rifles under organised range conditions at 500m. After many months, the competition format was settled. Rifles would be shot off the benches, but unlike short-range Benchrest, the match would be for group size and score. This would encourage competitors to place their groups with a higher degree of accuracy than in short-range Benchrest matches.

In 1990, the first match was advertised as an open challenge to SSAA members, police and military personnel, and other interested groups. The response was overwhelming, attracting 40 competitors. The first Fly Shoot match was shot on the SSAA Canberra range that year and was a huge success, with competitors keen to have it as a regular annual event.

The 20th annual Fly Shoot was contested on the SSAA Canberra range in 2010 and the first official SSAA National Fly Shoot Championships was held in Canberra in 2012.

In June 2017, Fly Shoot was given the status of being its own separate SSAA discipline.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Heavy Centrefire	Unlimited Weight for 1 person	All optics
Light Centrefire	7.7Kg Weight limit	All Optics
Rimfire	.22LR and 7.7kg weight limit	All Optics

Rulebook: <https://www.saa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Fly-Shoot-Rule-Book-No.-2-Rev-2022-for-publication.pdf>

Competitions

This year, SSAA ACT Inc. hosted the Fly Shoot Nationals that saw competitors from all around the country come to Canberra.

Monthly competitions are hosted that also sees interstate participation.

Fly Shoot

SSAA Fly Shoot caters exclusively to rifles. It is a unique discipline as both the size of the groups and scores count towards a shooter's final result. Fly Shoot has its origins in the Benchrest discipline, with shooters who saw the need for a way to prove centrefire rifles under organised range conditions at 500m. Unlike short-range Benchrest, the match would be for group and score to encourage a higher degree of accuracy.



Firearms and classes

The Rimfire match allows for any .22LR rimfire rifle weighing no more than 7.711kg. The Centrefire match includes a Light and Heavy class, with both allowing any rifle up to and including .49-calibre (or the largest calibre allowed on the range). Light class has a 7.711kg weight limit including bipod. In the Heavy Centrefire class the rifle may have an unlimited weight, but it must be manually lifted onto the bench by a single person. Rifles are fired from a bench with a front rest and rear sandbag for support.

Courses of fire

Competitors are offered a warm-up target with unlimited rounds to confirm their zero and five targets for score. They may use only eight rounds per detail; three rounds for sighting on a sighting plate (paper, steel or other medium) and five rounds on the target to score.

Targets and scoring

The goal is to hit the 'fly', which is right in the centre of the target, as well as to shoot the five scoring shots into the smallest group possible for a maximum tally. The discipline includes Rimfire and Centrefire matches shot at 200 yards and 500m respectively. Both use an approved 10-ring target 220mm in overall diameter, with a 25.5mm 'fly' as the X.

The target comprises a possible 60.5 points, which entails 50.5 for score and 10 points for group.

8. Gallery Rifle

Discipline Overview

Gallery Rifle includes short- and medium-distance shooting events for rifles and pistols chambered in pistol-calibre cartridges. The international rule book comprises four main events: Gallery Rifle Centrefire, Gallery Rifle Smallbore, Long Barrelled Revolver and Long Barrelled Pistol, though the SSAA principally supports Gallery Rifle Centrefire at a national level. This event is based around scoped and iron-sighted tubular magazine lever-action rifles in .32-20, .38-.357, .44 and .45 pistol calibres. Gallery Rifle matches require the competitor to load and shoot very quickly either at stationary paper or reactive steel targets.

History

The Gallery Rifle discipline covers matches shot at short and medium distances with rifles and pistols chambered for pistol-calibre cartridges. Most of the matches are graded so competitors shoot against others of similar ability. The SSAA Gallery Rifle community is an open and friendly group that welcomes new shooters and competitors are able to compete in matches ranging from branch level to state, national and international championships. The World Championships is held every two years at one of the current five member countries, while the Phoenix Meeting in Bisley in the UK (the spiritual home of the discipline) is a huge multi-discipline event held in May each year. The SSAA holds the Australian affiliation for the International Gallery Rifle Federation.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Centrefire Standard	Internal magazine lever action, pistol-calibre	All optics
Centrefire Open	Other gallery style rifles, not in standard	All Optics
Centrefire Classis	Internal magazine with iron (open) sights only	Open

Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SSAA-Inc-National-Gallery-Rifle-Rules-Guide-2023.pdf>

Competitions

Gallery Rifle is the newest discipline to form part of the SSAA ACT Inc. community. With establishment being supported at the 2025 Annual General Meeting, the discipline held its first match in January 2026 moving straight to a state-level competition. This competition saw participants from 6 of the 8 Australian states and territories.

In 2027, SSAA ACT Inc. is hosting an invitational international competition, which will see participants from numerous countries travel to Canberra to compete.

Gallery Rifle



SSAA Gallery Rifle includes short- and medium-distance events for rifles chambered in pistol-calibre cartridges. Certain highly-entertaining stages require rapid reloading and weak-handed speed shooting. The international rule book comprises four main events, although the SSAA principally endorses Gallery Rifle Centrefire at a national level.

Firearms

The Gallery Rifle Centrefire event is based around scoped and iron-sighted tubular magazine lever-action rifles in .32-20, .38-.357, .44 and .45 pistol calibres. Matches require loading and shooting quickly either at stationary paper or reactive steel targets. Handloaded or factory-loaded ammunition may be used.

Courses of fire

National Championships comprise of four matches, with two separate grading structures based on the Precision and Action aggregates. Precision events reflect a traditional Target Pistol match. Action events are based on the 1500-match program.

America Match consists of 30 rounds plus sighters on the 50m Slow Fire target. This Precision event includes 10 shots at 50m in 10 minutes; two series of five at 25m in 30 seconds and two series of five shots at 25m in 20 seconds.

Imperial Silhouettes total 30 rounds plus sighters at 25m on the 50m Slow Fire target. Included are two series of five shots in 12 seconds; two series of five in 10 seconds and two series of five in eight seconds.

1020 Match consists of 102 rounds at 10, 15, 25m at the B1 full-size target. This Action event involves five stages, with a mixture of rapid fire, some including reloading in the time limit and multi-position changes, some in weak shoulder sections. Match four involves 24 shots at 25m with three reloads and four positions in 165 seconds.

1500 Match totals 150 rounds at 10, 15, 25 and 50m at the B1 full-size target. This is the 1020 match with extra stages at 50m.



9. International Handgun Metallic Silhouette

Discipline Overview

International Handgun Metallic Silhouette is a rimfire and centrefire revolver and pistol shooting discipline where competitors aim to knock down metal animal-shaped targets.

The targets are placed on steel stands in banks of five and set at a variety of known distances, with the competitors having a certain amount of time to knock as many down as they can. The firearms used must fall into one of four categories: Production, Revolver, Standing and Unlimited, and there are three official matches: Big Bore, Smallbore and Field Pistol, with each match having its own categories.

In 2016 the SSAA and the International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association (IHMSA) officially affiliated. The SSAA is now the only association conducting Handgun Metallic Silhouette matches in Australia using the IHMSA rules. In addition, some clubs conduct Handgun Metallic Silhouette events using NRA rules as the SSAA has a close affiliation with the NRA.

History

Silhouette shooting had its origins in Mexico in the early 1900s, when the Mexican Revolutionary general Pancho Villa's troops used live animals as targets in long-range rifle shooting contests. Live animals were replaced with metal silhouette targets in about 1950. This new rifle competition 'migrated' to the United States in the mid-1960s and developed quite a following there.

The first Handgun Metallic Silhouette match, using the same targets at shorter ranges, was conducted in 1975 in Arizona and was very well received by shooters. One year later, the International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association (IHMSA) was formed and the sport grew. The match soon came to Australia and by the early 1980s, matches were being conducted around the country.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Big Bore Production	Any Production handgun	Factory
Big Bore Revolver	Any Production Revolver	Factory
Big Bore Standing	Any Production Handgun	Peep Sights
Big Bore Unlimited	Any Handgun	Peep Sights
Big Bore Standing	Any Handgun	Peep Sights
Big Bore Unlimited Any Sights	Any Handgun	Any Sight
Smallbore Production	Any Smallbore Production handgun	Factory
Smallbore Revolver	Any Smallbore Production Revolver	Factory
Smallbore Standing	Any Smallbore Production Handgun	Peep Sights
Smallbore Unlimited	Any Smallbore Handgun	Peep Sights
Smallbore Unlimited Standing	Any Smallbore Handgun	Peep Sights
Smallbore Unlimited Any Sights	Any Smallbore Handgun	Any Sight
Field Pistol Production	Any Handgun	Factory
Field Pistol Any Sights	Any Handgun	Any Sight
Unlimited Half Scale	Any Handgun	Peep Sights
Unlimited Half Scale Any Sights	Any Handgun	Any Sight

Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/IHMSA-RULES-2022.docx>

Handgun Metallic Silhouette



SSAA Handgun Metallic Silhouette is a rimfire and centrefire pistol discipline where competitors aim to knock down metal animal-shaped targets. Its origins lie in Mexico in the early 1900s, with the International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association (IHMSA) being formed in 1976.

Targets and matches

Targets are fired from left to right in two-minute stages, with a group of five targets (called a 'bank') per stage.

Big Bore matches use centrefire handguns to knock down the almost life-sized targets, which are chickens at 50m, pigs at 100m, turkeys at 150m and rams at 200m. The matches are broken up into four main categories.

Smallbore matches use rimfire handguns to knock down chickens at 25m, pigs at 50m, turkeys at 75m and rams at 100m. The targets are scaled down to three-eighths of full size, making this match more difficult compared to Big Bore. Smallbore is conducted with .22 Long Rifle ammunition, in four main categories.

Field Pistol is a centrefire match available to clubs with a range limited to 100m. These targets are scaled down to half-size and include two categories fired from the standing position.



Firearms and categories

Production category handguns must be used complete in form, finish and mechanical function as manufactured. The Revolver category allows a revolver which also meets the Production category rules. The handgun must be loaded with five rounds and fired as a revolver. The Standing category must utilise one or both hands from a standing position with a Production-class handgun, which may be a single-shot, revolver or self-loader. In the Unlimited categories, the shooter's imagination can practically run wild with few restrictions including a barrel length and sight radius of 15', and 2.7kg maximum weight.

Getting started

Contact your SSAA state or territory office to find the nearest range that conducts the match. However, 200m handgun ranges are not common, so you might start with a club that shoots the 50m match.



10. Junior Sports

Discipline Overview

Sports shooting requires a great deal of dedication, concentration, consistency and above all else, practice. These attributes are just some of the life-skills junior may gain when they participate in sports shooting. The SSAA's focus on supervision and safety creates a nurturing environment for young people to develop while also helping to build their confidence. Most disciplines within the SSAA have a Junior component, with juniors often separated into two categories: those up to 15 years, and those from 15 to 18 years of age.

Matches

The variety of firearms and shooting disciplines within the SSAA will give juniors a taste of many different experiences, so they can decide what their 'thing' might be, whether that is rifle, shotgun or handgun shooting or even something a bit different such as shooting with a muzzleloading firearm. Parents and guardians should be prepared for the wide-eyed amazement of their youngsters, their thirst to try more and their desire to expend large quantities of ammunition!

There are a number of disciplines on offer across the board (which will be discussed further on in this guide) and visiting the relevant websites and then contacting your local SSAA club or state branch will be the best place to start. Most branches have qualified firearm instructors and range officers, as well as those who have been experienced shooters for many years and would be happy to assist any newcomers – whether they are juniors or older family members who want to have a look and try.

The SSAA, and sport shooting in general, is a family-oriented pastime and the whole family can enjoy a new-found group of friends, as well as many challenges, once the involvement begins. The experience can be as competitive or as passive as you wish, with opportunities offered to compete against just yourself or to venture into regional, state, national or even international championships.

State and national championships are usually run in conjunction with particular disciplines and all juniors are graded into two categories: those up to 15 years of age and those from 15 to under 18 years of age.

Junior Development

SSAA ACT Inc. has a dedicated Junior Development Section that is run by AFP-approved instructors who are committed to providing coaching and skill development in all SSAA disciplines in a safe and controlled environment.

Competition

Featuring regular competitions throughout the year, it culminates in the National Junior Challenge where juniors from all around the country come together to showcase their skills, commitment and camaraderie.

SSAA ACT Inc. is hosting the National Junior Challenge this year, and it is expected to be the largest one yet with interest being shown by juniors from each state and territory for a weekend long competition consisting of 6 different shooting disciplines.

Junior Sports



Sports shooting requires a great deal of dedication, concentration, consistency practice. These attributes are just some of the life-skills junior may gain when they participate in sports shooting.

Stages

Most disciplines within the SSAA have a Junior component, with juniors often separated into two categories: those up to 15 years, and those from 15 to 18 years of age.

Divisions

The variety of firearms and shooting disciplines within the SSAA will give juniors a taste of many different experiences, so they can decide what their 'thing' might be, whether that is rifle, shotgun or handgun shooting or even something a bit different such as shooting with a muzzleloading firearm. Parents and guardians should be prepared for the wide-eyed amazement of their youngsters, their thirst to try more and their desire to expend large quantities of ammunition

The SSAA, and sport shooting in general, is a family-oriented pastime and the whole family can enjoy a new-found group of friends, as well as many challenges, once the involvement begins. The experience can be as competitive or as passive as you wish, with opportunities offered to compete against just yourself or to venture into regional, state, national or even international championships.

Competition

State and national championships are usually run in conjunction with particular disciplines and all juniors are graded into two categories: those up to 15 years of age and those from 15 to under 18 years of age.



11. Law Enforcement Activities

Discipline Overview

SSAA Law Enforcement Activities is a handgun shooting discipline offering an opportunity to take part in a widely inclusive competition environment which values the principles of law enforcement shooting. Matches are based on competition as part of training for law enforcement and involve skills in safe and effective handling, with timed positional shooting from the holster. Matches use service-based equipment and are shot on paper targets at distances from 3m to 50m. Shoots are timed from the holster and include reloads and changing position within time limits. Skill in safe and effective handling is required for change hand drills and target-to-target drills. Positions include standing unsupported, left and right barricade, sit/kneel and prone.

History

In 2014, SSAA Law Enforcement Activities Discipline (LEAD) was established in Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory to facilitate this type of shooting. In the early 1960s the NRA in America developed a training/competition course (PPC) and in the mid '60s Australians further developed this course to include multiple targets and further handling skills (APS). NRA US further developed their PPC to three courses – Open 150, Distinguished 60 and Duty 48. The latest NRA course is TPC, a scenario-based exercise which is very limited in Australia.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Australian Police Services	Revolver or self-loading pistol, .352 and .455" calibre	Open sights
PPC150 Open	Revolver or self-loading pistol	
PPC60 – Distinguished	Revolver or self-loading pistol, 6 inch barrel, from factory	Factory sights
PPC48	4" revolver or 5" self-loading pistol production	Factory sights
TPC 3 gun	Factory pistol, rifle and shotgun	


Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/LEAD-Guidelines-Revised-Nov-2023.pdf>

Competitions

SSAA ACT Inc.'s Law Enforcement Activities discipline is mostly limited to members who are part of or work in Police, Customs or the Australian Protective Services. Current and former serving members use the discipline to support their work training.


Local matches are held almost every weekend, with pistol matches occurring every 1st, 2nd and 3rd weekend and a rifle match on the 4th weekend.

Law Enforcement Activities




In the early 1960s the NRA in America developed a training/competition course (PPC) and in the mid '60s Australians further developed this course to include multiple targets and further handling skills (APS). NRA US further developed their PPC to three courses – Open 150, Distinguished 60 and Duty 48.

Origins



The Discipline origins and directions began in the early 1960's when the National Rifle Association (NRA) in USA developed a training/competition course, named Police Pistol Combat (PPC). By the mid 1960's, Law Enforcement Instructors in Australia further developed this course to include multiple targets and further handling skills. They introduced the Australian Police and Services Match, (AP&SM).

Matches



Matches use service-based equipment and are shot on paper targets at distances from 3m to 50m. Shoots are timed from the holster and include reloads and changing position within time limits. Skill in safe and effective handling is required for change hand drills and target-to-target drills. Positions include standing unsupported, left and right barricade, sit/kneel and prone.

Australian Police Service: A 90-round match from 7m, 10m, 25m and 50m including handling and positional shooting skills. In SSAA APS, NRA Pistol Divisions of Open, Distinguished and Duty apply.

PPC Open: A 150-round match from 7, 15, 25 and 50m. Includes the above positional skills and less handling with more time. An NRA 'Open' pistol may be modified and have up to a six-inch heavy barrel and sight rib added.

PPC Distinguished: A 60-round course from 7, 25, and 50m. An NRA Distinguished pistol is a six-inch revolver or six-inch self-load, no alterations, as from the manufacturer.

PPC Duty: A 48-round course, single hand at 3m then 7, 15 and 25m. An NRA 'Duty' pistol is a four-inch revolver or five-inch self-load, no alterations, as from the manufacturer.

Guidelines

LEAD guidelines create local flexibility for when there is enough variety within a division to justify creation of temporary redirection or sub-division.

The Match Director may find it useful to invite prospective shooters to bring along their own gun/s and an appropriate division will be allocated.

12. Lever Action

Discipline Overview

Lever Action is a shooting discipline that caters exclusively for lever-action rifles. The discipline includes two categories: Classic Calibre for as-issued rifles in any centrefire cartridge produced up to 1938; and Open Calibre for rifles in any factory, handloaded or wildcat rimfire or centrefire cartridge. Lever Action aims to improve hunting marksmanship skills and includes contour animal profile targets and traditional paper ring targets. The matches require a variety of shooting positions and distances, and courses of fire can vary from 15 seconds to five minutes for five shots.

History

Lever Action is a rifle shooting discipline, which began in the late 1960s when SSAA members wishing to shoot black powder competition were having difficulty sourcing the appropriate firearms. They soon learned that there were a number of lever-action rifles with which black powder could be used. In 1976, the first Lever Action National Championships were held in Brisbane (using nitro powder by this time), with interest sparking in other states. These days, Lever Action is conducted in all states and territories.

As the name implies, lever-action rifles are used exclusively for this discipline. Apart from the historical and traditional intentions, lever-action rifles provide fast recycling for the timed events. The matches are designed to provide a variety of target types, shooting positions and distances, as well as varying time limits. This discipline is hunting-oriented, with familiar aspects taken from other SSAA disciplines such as Field Rifle and Metallic Silhouette.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Rimfire	Any Rimfire Lever Action Rifle	Peep Sights
Centrefire	Any Centrefire Lever Action Rifle	Peep Sights
Classic Calibre	Any Traditional Calibre Lever Action Rifle	Factory Sights

Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Lever-Action-Rule-Book-revised-nov-2022-no.-9-For-publication.pdf>

Competitions

Each month the lever action discipline hosts a local competition. The discipline also hosts a state-level competition that is regularly attended by competitors from interstate.

This year, the lever action nationals are being hosted by SSAA ACT Inc. in October.

Lever Action



SSAA Lever Action aims to improve hunting marksmanship skills and includes animal profile and traditional paper ring targets. Lever Action began in the late 1960s when SSAA members wishing to shoot black powder competition learned that there were a number of lever-action rifles that could be used.



Firearms and categories

The rifles used in Lever Action competitions fall into Classic Calibre or Open Calibre categories.

Classic Calibre essentially requires a centre-fire rifle as-issued having a two-piece wooden stock and traditional open-type iron sights and chambered for any factory-produced cartridge by 1938.

Open Calibre is divided into two separate events at the National level, Centrefire and Rimfire, where competitors need two lever-action rifles. The Open Centrefire event allows any calibre for which a centrefire rifle is available, while the Open Rimfire event permits .22LR, .22 Magnum and .17HMR calibres.

Targets

Targets used in the Classic Calibre match are all contour animal profiles, with score zones marked on vital areas from 10 to five. The competition is shot over 100, 50 and 25m distances using the stances of any field shooting positions, including standing unsupported, sitting unsupported, standing post rest and sitting post rest. The course of fire can vary from five minutes to 15 seconds for five shots, and typically consists of 35 rounds.

Open Calibre match targets are usually a combination of the 50m Precision Slow Fire Pistol target and a number of animal profile targets, consisting of 50 rounds. A typical course of fire for an Open Calibre event includes the 50m Precision Slow Fire Pistol target, with five shots in five minutes for each target. The same target is used for the rapid-fire events, five shots in 15 seconds at 50m for Centrefire and five shots in 10 seconds at 25m for Rimfire.

13. Muzzleloading

Discipline Overview

Muzzleloading is an interactive discipline that caters to the original and replica rifles, muskets, handguns and shotguns that were used during Australia's colonial days. The firearm categories are very detailed, with each having its own classes and subsections. The rifle events are shot from the offhand, cross-sticks/prone, bench rest and sometimes kneeling/sitting positions, while the shotgun events are shot around stations placed various distances from the thrower, shooting 25 clay targets overall. In addition to range shooting, Muzzleloading shooters are often enthusiastic followers of historical events and re-enactments.

History

Muzzleloading encompasses all different types of firearms in the one discipline, including rifles, muskets, shotguns, revolvers and pistols, but it goes further than that, as each type of firearm has sub-sections. Any shooter who wants to compete in all the available Muzzleloading events in all categories would have to be prepared to shoot more than 30 events and would need several different firearms to do so.

In addition to shooting on the range, Muzzleloading shooters are often enthusiastic followers of Rendezvous events and military re-enactments. The aim of these re-enactments is to replicate, as closely as possible, the dress and equipment of the period of interest. Thus, a person interested in Australian gold rush days will study images and information on the dress, firearms, tools and camp equipment of the period and try to replicate them.

Another popular re-enactment theme is that of military units. The choice is enormous and ranges from the Highland Scottish Regiments to Colonial Volunteers. The aim is the same as for the gold diggers: to dress, equip and camp as the soldiers might have done. An added effort is made to learn the rifle drill of the time and troops in question.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 1	Revolver Cap & Ball	As originally design for a military type of revolver
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 3	Open pistol	Any adjustable iron sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 2	Percussion or Firelock (Flintlock, matchlock, wheellock) pistol single shot, patch & Ball.	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Precision Pistol class 4	Firelock pistol single shot, patch & Ball. Rifled or smoothbore	Any adjustable iron sight
Black Powder MuzzleLoading Rifle Matchlock	Matchlock pistol single shot, patch & Ball, smooth bore	As original design for type of pistol
Black Powder Muzzle Loading rifle Tanagashima	Matchlock Musket Standing unsupported	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Rifle Hizadai	Matchlock Musket Kneeling	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Military Rifle	As issued Minie type Rifle, 54 – 58 cal. Class 1, bench rest, prone, Standing Unsupported	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Traditional Rifle	Civilian type rifle patch & Ball, any cal. Class 2	Any adjustable iron sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Flintlock	Traditional or Civilian type rifle patch &	As original design for type of



Rifle	Ball, any cal. class 4	firearm
Black Powder Muzzle loading Rifle Open	Any Muzzle Loading Rifle, any cal. Benchrest class 3	Any sight other than telescopic.
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Vetterli Rifle	Any Muzzle Loading Rifle, any cal. Standing Unsupported	Any sight not click adjustable.
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Whitworth Rifle	Any Muzzle Loading Rifle, any cal. Prone Unsupported	Any sight not click adjustable.
OH Musket	Any smooth bore longarm round ball only any calibre	No rear sights
Open Musket	Any smooth bore longarm round ball	Non adjustable rear sight
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Shotgun	Cartridge shotgun with exposed hammers, either single or double barrel 11 to 14g	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Shotgun	Muzzle Loading, percussion shotgun, either single or double barrel 11 to 14g	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Muzzle Loading Shotgun	Muzzle Loading, Flintlock shotgun, either single or double barrel 11 to 14g	As original design for type of firearm
Black Powder Cartridge	Any Single shot cartridge Rifle, any cal. Cartridge loaded with black powder	Any sight adjustable.
Cannon	Cannons with a bore up to 0.75 inch (19mm). Targets: as set by the rules to 50m or 100m. Minimum length 75cm.	Sights must be relevant to the historic period

Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SSAA-Muzzle-Loading-Rule-Book-No-9-Rev-Nov-2023.pdf>

Competitions

Black powder and muzzleloading shooting is hosted by SSAA ACT Inc. through a number of sections.

There are at least 12 local competitions held each month and there are 12 state-level competitions held.

Muzzleloading

SSAA Muzzleloading is an interactive discipline that caters to the original and replica rifles, muskets, shotguns, revolvers and pistols used during Australia's colonial days. Percussion, flintlock, matchlock and wheel-locks are the four types of ignition that can be used. Historically, this takes us from the earliest practical hand-held firearms up to when smokeless powders replaced black powder in 1886.

Firearms and classes

Muzzleloading events cover several classes and sub-sections. Each class of rifle is shot from the offhand, cross-sticks/prone and benchrest positions, but there are also events shot in the kneeling or sitting positions.

Class 1 (Military) comprises original and replica rifles and revolvers that were issued to troops somewhere in the world, such as the .577" Enfields and Colt cap and ball revolvers. Class 2 (Traditional) comprises traditional or civilian-style percussion rifles or pistols loaded with a patch and ball. Class 3 (Open) only requires that the rifle or pistol uses black powder and lead bullets. There are also several Firelock classes and two Shotgun classes.

Targets and scoring

All shooting is done at 50m Pistol targets, with the exception of the smoothbore flintlock musket and matchlock events, which are shot at French 200m targets placed at 50m. Offhand events are shot at 50m, while the prone and benchrest events are shot at 100m. To avoid having a sighting-in period, all Muzzleloading events (except Shotgun) comprise 13 shots fired within 30 minutes. The best 10 scoring shots count.

Getting started

The recommended way to choose which muzzleloader to purchase is to visit your nearest range that has black powder on the program and talk to the shooters and perhaps have a shot with the different firearms. Most Muzzleloading shooters start with a secondhand Class 2 percussion rifle of about .50-calibre that is loaded with patch and ball.



14. Practical Shooting

Discipline Overview

Practical Shooting is a quick and energetic discipline that caters to rimfire and centrefire pistols, revolvers and rifles, and shotguns, with each having their own classes. Most matches comprise a minimum of three stages and the courses of fire are designed to offer challenging and active scenarios that test the capacity of the shooter and their equipment. The targets are mainly paper, cardboard or steel, and the competitor is scored on their accuracy and time in comparison with all the scores and times shot on the day.

History

Practical Shooting is one of the fastest growing shooting sports in Australia. A high-speed, high-energy and quick-thinking discipline, it is intended to offer challenging and active shooting matches that test the capacity of the competitor and their equipment.

Practical Shooting began in Western Australia nearly 30 years ago as a state handgun sport, but it has since been expanded and is now recognised nationally. Each country that conducts International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) shooting usually runs a national equivalent, and Practical Shooting is the SSAA's equivalent. The discipline is suitable for a variety of firearms and is sure to offer a category, event and match for everyone.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Pistol – Open	Customised centrefire pistol	Red-dot optics
Pistol – Standard	Traditional pistol, with or without optics	Open or optics
Pistol - Production	Out of the box 9mm pistol	Factory sights
Pistol - Revolver	6 or 8 shot standard revolver	Factory sights
Shotgun – break-action	Must be break-action, 2-shot shotgun	Factory sights (standard) or Optics (Open)
Shotgun – lever-action	Traditional lever action shotgun	Factory sights (standard) or Optics (Open)
Shotgun – pump-action	Traditional pump-action shotgun	Factory sights (standard) or Optics (Open)

Rulebook: https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Practical_shooting_rule_book_-_No._6_Rev_July_2019_-_for_publication.pdf

Competitions

Clubs of SSAA ACT Inc. host regular Practical discipline local level competitions, with on average 6 being held per month.

Scores from these matches contribute to selection to other competitions that see some our participants being selected for international competitions.

Practical Shooting

Practical Shooting is one of the fastest growing shooting sports in Australia. A high-speed, high-energy and quick-thinking discipline, it is intended to offer challenging and active shooting matches that test the capacity of the competitor and their equipment.

Targets

The targets used in Practical Shooting are mainly paper or steel and may include the SSAA paper or cardboard targets; steel plates that fall, overturn or swing when hit; frangible targets such as clay targets and tiles; and miscellaneous targets such as bullseye and wooden post targets.

Matches

Most Practical Shooting matches comprise a minimum of three stages, with each stage differing from the last to push the competitor's abilities and firearms to their limits.

Courses are designed to test accuracy, speed and power, and are constantly changed to pose challenges and avoid any pattern becoming routine.

The courses may be published, where full details are made available prior to competition; semi-surprise, where competitors may view some details or a pictorial layout prior to commencement; or surprise, where competitors start the match with little to no information other than that required for safety.

Firearms

Practical Shooting caters to rimfire and centrefire pistols, revolvers and rifles, as well as shotguns.

The main types of handguns used include self-loading pistols and revolvers, with calibres ranging from .22 to .38. There are four divisions for Handgun shooting: Open, Standard, Production and Revolver.

Shotgun shooting includes four main categories: Break-action, Lever-action, Pump-action and Semi-automatic (where legal). Within this, there are two divisions: Standard and Open.

Rifle shooting includes four main categories: Bolt-action, Lever-action, Pump-action and Semi-automatic (where legal); and within this, two divisions: Standard and Open.



15. Precision Rifle

Discipline Overview

Precision Rifle is where the competitors are trying to unite the three principles of precision, positions and speed to score as many points as possible during the given amount of time.

The courses are called stages and are shot individually by the competitors who must move and shoot from several challenging positions, fire under or over obstacles and in other situations. These stages are designed so that the competitor must be inventive, and therefore the solutions to challenges frequently vary between competitors.

There are no standard exercises or set arrangement of the steel targets which can have both known and unknown distances from 10 to over 1000 metres. However, the primary focus is on long range, therefore participants need to have a good knowledge of firearm ballistics.

History

In 2017 Precision Rifle competitions commenced in Australia. Its popularity was instant especially among younger competitors and Clubs soon formed in all States. The style of shooting is very practical in nature and mostly emulates field type hunting situations. Personal agility and the ability to quickly assess and establish stable shooting positions are some keys to this exciting discipline. On many stages competitors are allowed to use various shooting bags to assist with stability.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Centrefire - Open	Centrefire of less than .30 calibre and less than 3200fps	Any sights
Sub – Magnum – Open	Centrefire rifle of more than .30 calibre	Any sights
Centrefire - Production	Centrefire of less than .30 calibre, out of the box and less than 3200fps	Any sights
Rimfire – Open	.22 long rifle	Any sights
Rimfire - Production	.22 long rifle from factory	Any sights
Military	Any production military issue rifle	Any sights
Pistol	Any production pistol	Any sights
Shotgun	Any production shotgun	Any sights
Black Powder	Any production black powder firearm	Any sights
Limited	Only .223 or .308 rifles, less than 1785 joules for .223 and less than 3840 joules for .308	Any sights
Field	Rifle of no more than 5.44kgs, minimum 2lb trigger weight, minimum 3100 joules	Any sights
Air Rifle	Any production air rifle	Any sights

Rulebook: <https://www.saa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SSAA-Precision-Rifle-Rule-Book-No.-1-Feb-2024.pdf>

Competitions

Through the course of the year, there are 35 competitions held which includes 3 national-level competitions that see competitors from all around the country come to Canberra to compete.

From these competitions, and others around the region, international team selection has resulted in some of our members being selected for the World Championships.

Precision Rifle

In 2017 Precision Rifle competitions commenced in Australia. Its popularity was instant especially among younger competitors and Clubs soon formed in all States. The style of shooting is very practical in nature and mostly emulates field type hunting situations.



Stages

The courses are called stages and are shot individually by the competitors who must move and shoot from several challenging positions, fire under or over obstacles and in other situations. These stages are designed so that the competitor must be inventive, and therefore the solutions to challenges frequently vary between competitors.

All stages must be safe.

Stages are highly practical in nature and include mid to long range targets, multiple distances, challenging shooting positions, unknown target distances, realistic field situations, and much more. It is highly encouraged that Match Directors proof their own stages, both in concept and on the range.

Divisions

Precision Rifle has two Divisions, Production and Open. In either Division, Officials may request at any point during a Match that a competitor fire their rifle through a chronograph. If the bullet exceeds the 3,200fps speed limit, the shooter will receive an automatic match DQ (1% variation allowed for environmental factors and equipment discrepancies).

Firearms

Bolt action 6.5mm (.26) or 6mm (.24) calibre rifles are widely used, with 6mm projectiles now the most popular. This is due to the low recoil and minimal muzzle flip which can enable shooters to observe their impact locations and make any vital adjustments if additional shots are required. Most competitors become skilful reloaders which assists to maximise their firearms ability. Rifles are normally equipped with variable-magnification, first focal plane, milliradian reticule scopes.

16. Rifle Metallic Silhouette

Discipline Overview

Rifle Metallic Silhouette is an air, rimfire, centrefire, service and black powder rifle shooting discipline where competitors aim to knock down metal animal-shaped targets. The targets are placed on steel stands in banks of five and set at a variety of known distances, with the competitors having a certain amount of time to knock as many down as they can. The various competitions are shot from a range of distance and positions, depending on the firearm calibre and category, but all competitions aim to improve hunting marksmanship skills under range conditions.

History

Rifle Metallic Silhouette is a sport in which rifles are used to knock down metal targets at a variety of distances. The sport originated in Mexico in the early 1950s, arrived in Australia in the late 1970s and is now a sanctioned and popular discipline of the SSAA. Each year, there are state and national championships, as well as postal competitions. International matches are a common event, with SSAA teams regularly competing in NRA Metallic Silhouette Championships.

Silhouette shooting continued to grow in popularity, and in 2006, the Rifle Metallic Silhouette discipline was approved to run NRA Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette as a national event, with the first National Championships held in 2008. This match is conducted on existing Handgun Metallic Silhouette ranges and opens up Rifle Metallic Silhouette shooting to a larger number of shooters who wouldn't usually have access to a 500m range. Also, because the cartridges used for Cowboy Lever Action hit the targets with less energy than the handguns used in Handgun Metallic Silhouette, target damage and fall-out zones are greatly reduced.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Air Rifle Silhouette	An Air Rifle, of any calibre less than 6.5 mm (.264), with a maximum weight of 7 kg (15 pound 6.9 ounces) including sights	Scoped
Rimfire Silhouette Rifle	22LR Rimfire, weight 4.6kg max	Scoped
Rimfire Hunting Rifle Silhouette	22LR Rimfire, weight 3.86kg max, Trigger pull is not to be less than 907 grams (2 pounds).	Scoped
Centrefire Silhouette Rifle	Centrefire rifles, weight 4.6kg Minimum 6mm calibre	Scoped
Centrefire Hunting Rifle	Centrefire rifles, weight 4.2kg max, minimum 6mm calibre, Trigger pull is not to be less than 907 grams (2 pounds).	Scoped
Lever Action Silhouette	Any Lever Action Centrefire Rifle .25 calibre or larger with a tubular magazine of original manufacture or replica thereof. A rimmed case loaded with a round or flat nosed bullet must be used. Exception: .30 Remington and 35 Remington are allowed.	Rear sights: These may be open sights, receiver or tang sights mounted as originally intended. No Olympic type sights or extended mounts are permitted. No lenses are permitted in rear sights Front sights: These must be a post or bead, maybe hooded or if interchangeable may use post or bead inserts only.



Pistol Cartridge Lever Action Silhouette	Any Lever Action rifle with a tubular magazine. A rimmed pistol cartridge with an overall cartridge length no greater than 42mm (1.65 Inches) loaded with a round or flat nosed bullet must be used, i.e. 25-20, 32-20, 38's, 357 Magnum, 38-40, 44's, 44-40, 45 Colt, 45 Long Colt, .22 Magnum, .22 long rifle.	Rear sights: These may be open sights, receiver or tang sights mounted as originally intended. No Olympic type sights or extended mounts are permitted. No lenses are permitted in rear sights Front sights: These must be a post or bead, maybe hooded or if interchangeable may use post or bead inserts only.
Smallbore Rifle Silhouette	Any Lever Action, Pump action Rimfire rifle with a tubular magazine - the rifle shall be chambered for only the .22 calibre short, long, or long rifle cartridge.	Rear sights: These may be open sights, receiver or tang sights mounted as originally intended. No Olympic type sights or extended mounts are permitted. No lenses are permitted in rear sights Front sights: These must be a post or bead, maybe hooded or if interchangeable may use post or bead inserts only.
Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette	Single Shot rifle, cartridge and rifle designed prior to 1896 and shot with black powder or replicas thereof.	Iron Sights, any original manufactured prior to and including 1896 (or repro thereof)
Scoped Black Powder Cartridge Rifle Silhouette	Single Shot rifle, cartridge and rifle designed prior to 1896 and shot with black powder or replicas thereof.	Period correct scopes, 19.05mm (3/4") maximum body diameter no internal adjustments
Smallbore Black Powder Cartridge Rifle	Single Shot Rifles, 22LR only	Iron Sights, any original manufactured prior to and including 1896 (or repro thereof)
Scoped Smallbore Black Powder Cartridge Rifle	Single Shot Rifles, 22LR only	Period correct scopes, 19.05mm (3/4") maximum body diameter no internal adjustments
Service Rifle Silhouette	Any Centrefire Service Rifle of greater than 6mm (.243) may be used if it is "as issued" for general service by the armed forces of any nation.	Must be of original design

Rulebook: <https://www.saa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Rifle-Metallic-Silhouette-Rule-Book-No.-9-Revised-Nov-2023.pdf>

Competitions

SSAA ACT Inc. hosts 12 local competitions for Rifle Metallic Silhouette each year, with at least one major state competition for each of the above.

This year, we are hosting the National competition that will see a large number of competitors traveling from interstate. Competitors will require 5 firearms to compete.

Rifle Metallic Silhouette



SSAA Rifle Metallic Silhouette is an air, rimfire, centrefire and black powder rifle shooting discipline where competitors aim to knock down as many animal-shaped metal targets as they can. The sport originated in Mexico in the 1940s and arrived in Australia in the late 1970s.



Targets and scoring

The targets are metallic cut-outs in the shape of chickens, pigs, turkeys and rams. Matches consist of 10 targets of each, set out in two banks of five, totalling 40 shots. The time limit for each bank is between two and five minutes.

In the Centrefire matches, chickens are placed at 200m, pigs at 300m, turkeys at 385m and rams at 500m. In Rimfire the targets and ranges are scaled down to one-fifth and Air Rifle matches one-tenth the size of Centrefire.

Firearms and classes

There are five main classes within Rifle Metallic Silhouette, plus Service Rifle and Black Powder Cartridge Rifle categories. Each class has specific weight and dimension rules.

Centrefire Silhouette Rifle allows shooters to use custom rifles based on a wide choice of calibres, barrels, triggers and stocks. Centrefire Hunting Rifle allows for more hunting style rifles.

Rimfire Silhouette Rifle and Rimfire Hunting Rifle are identical to their Centrefire equivalents, except being chambered in .22-calibre.

Air Rifle Silhouette is shot with break action and PCP air rifles.

Lever Action Silhouette Rifle

There are three classes of lever action match: Lever Action Silhouette, Pistol Cartridge Lever Action Silhouette and Smallbore Rifle Silhouette. Calibres range from .22LR up to larger centrefire calibres, including pistol cartridges. In Rifle matches the targets are shot at 50, 100, 150 and 200m, while the half-scale Pistol Cartridge and Smallbore targets are both shot at 40, 50, 75 and 100m.



17. Shotgun

Discipline Overview

Shotgun permits the use of any smoothbore shotgun up to 12-gauge to shoot clay targets. The discipline includes four main competitions. Sporting Clays is usually held in a bush setting, with competitors shooting from six or seven stands and traps throwing targets to simulate hunting. 5-Stand has five stands separated by a couple of metres each, with traps throwing single or double targets in different directions. Low-Field and High-Field competitions are shot from pads level with or close to the trap house and the traps being above or below ground level.

History

As the name suggests, the Shotgun discipline involves shooting a shotgun to break clay targets. This sport, as we know it today, has its origins back in the United States in 1880, when George Ligowsky of Cincinnati perfected a clay target and a machine from which it could be thrown. In the same year, an Englishman named McCaskey invented a target made of a blend of pitch and river silt that combined the qualities of durability and brittleness.

To fill the gap left by the absence of live bird shooting, some very ingenious targets were made around 1866 from glass in the shape of a ball, which were filled with feathers or black powder and gave off a flash when well hit. There was plenty of experimentation with wood, leather and other materials, but nothing was successful or particularly realistic until the earliest clay targets were invented.

Once clay targets were in common use, it was possible to conduct shoots that were fair to all, as consistently breakable targets could be thrown the same for each competitor. SSAA shooters are some of the beneficiaries of this research and today, we can get together with friends and have a great time breaking modern clays in various styles of competition or just socially for fun.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Trap	Trap Configured Shotgun	Open Sight
Down the Line	DTL Configured Shotgun	Open Sight
Skeet	Skeet Configured Shotgun	Open Sight
Sporting Clays	Sporting Clays Configured Shotgun	Open Sight
Universal Trench	Trench configured shotgun	Open Sight
5-stand	5-stand configured shotgun	Open Sight

Gauges of shotgun vary and there are also competitions that are specific to these. Shotguns come in 8, 10, 12, 16, 20, and 28 gauge and .410. The most common are 12, 20 and 28 and .410. Each of these gauge shotguns is a different firearm and all can be used in each of the above event types.

Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Shotgun-Rule-Book-No-5.0-Revised-Nov-2023.pdf>

Competitions

Shotgun shooting is one of our most popular disciplines. Over the course of the year, there are over 500 competitions hosted, with about a quarter of these being state and national level competitions.

Shotgun

As the name suggests, the SSAA Shotgun discipline involves shooting a shotgun to break clay targets. The sport has origins from 1866, when a glass ball filled with feathers was developed. Once clay targets were invented and a machine from which they could be thrown was perfected, consistently breakable targets could be pitched for each competitor.

Matches

There are four main competitions, which vary in the type of targets thrown, the angle, height and speed, and the field layouts. Low Field and High Field competitions are shot from pads level with or close to the trap house and the traps being above or below ground level.

Sporting Clays

This is usually set up in natural bushland, with the traps presenting clay targets that simulate hunting game such as ducks, rabbits and pheasants. Traps can be concealed, with targets only visible in cleared areas.

5-Stand

SSAA 5-Stand has five shooting stations in a straight line close to each other, surrounded by six to eight traps, with all targets converging in front of the stands. This tests a shooter's ability to read targets quickly and shoot them before they go beyond the effective range of a shotgun.

Targets and firearms

Targets are thrown at various speeds, in singles, doubles or in pairs, from in front, behind, low, high or above, straight away, crossing, quartering, incoming from either side, in the open or partly hidden by trees, bushes or other obstacles.

Shotguns suitable for Sporting Clays and 5-Stand generally have sporting-style stocks and variable chokes, most commonly 12-gauge. With the advent of shotguns designed for Sporting Clays, shooters can handle the infinite variety of rising, falling, incoming and outgoing targets.

Getting started

Experienced shooters or coaches are willing to give advice on gun-fit, style and techniques to help new shooters choose a suitable shotgun. Most SSAA branches have 'club shotguns' available.



18. Single Action

Discipline Overview

Single Action is a competitive shooting discipline built around structured, multi-stage matches using specific types of manually operated firearms. Competitors engage reactive targets across a series of stages, with each stage defined by a written course of fire that specifies target order and engagement sequence. Matches may range from small club events with only a few stages to larger competitions featuring 10–12 stages, with results determined by combining individual stage scores. Scoring is primarily based on elapsed time, with penalties applied for missed targets, and rankings are calculated either overall or within defined categories.

The discipline uses approved original or replica firearms that meet SSAA rules, including single-action revolvers, lever-action or slide-action rifles, and period-style shotguns without automatic ejectors. Competitors enter specific categories—such as age-based or equipment-based categories—and are ranked only against others in the same category, each of which has its own requirements and difficulty factors. Overall, Single Action combines speed, accuracy, consistency, and adherence to discipline rules across multiple stages of fire.

History

Single Action is a multifaceted discipline that uses original or replica firearms that were commonly used in the Old West period of 1800 to 1899. This includes single-action revolvers, lever-action and slide-action rifles and carbines, lever-action and pump-action shotguns, and side-by-side shotguns without automatic ejectors. The targets are generally reactive and vary in shape and dimension. In addition to competition, Single Action shooters also preserve, promote and respect the skills, traditions and pioneering spirit of the historic American Old West, often adopting a shooting alias appropriate to the era.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
Main Match - Pistols	2 x Single Action Pistols	Open Sights
Main Match -Lever Action Rifle	Pistol Cartridge Lever Action Rifle	Open Sight
Main Match – Shotgun	12 Gauge Side by Side shotgun	Open Sights
Wild Bunch – Lever Shotgun	12 Gauge Lever Action Shotgun	Open Sights
Wild Bunch – Pistol	1911 Style Pistol 45ACP	Open Sights
Patt Garrett- Lever Action Rifle	Large Calibre Lever Action Rifle (38-55 or 45/70)	Open Sights
DoeBoy Match – Rifle	Pre WW2 Rifle	As issued
DoeBoy Match – Pistol	Pre WW2 Pistol	As issued
Derringer Match	Derringer (.38 or .45)	Open Sights

Rulebook: <https://www.ssaa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SASS-Shooters-Handbook-Vers-26.2-January-1-2022.pdf>

Competitions

There are about 16 local level competitions for the single action discipline held by SSAA ACT Inc. throughout the year. SSAA ACT Inc. also hosts 3 state level competitions, that sees competitors from around the local region travel to Canberra to take part.

Single Action



SSAA Single Action is a multi-faceted discipline that employs original or replica firearms that were commonly used in the American Old West period of 1800 to 1899.

Shooters preserve and promote the skills, traditions and pioneering spirit. This includes adopting an alias and dressing in clothing representative of the era. Having evolved in the US in the early 1980s, Single Action has become one of the world's fastest growing shooting disciplines.

Firearms

The firearms include originals or replicas of lever-action or pump-action rifles manufactured from about 1860 to 1899 and incorporating a tubular magazine and exposed hammer. Rifles must be centrefire pistol calibres of at least .32 and no larger than .45.

Original or replica side-by-side or single-shot shotguns with or without external hammers, single- or double-triggered and without automatic ejectors are permitted. Lever-action, pump-actions and tubular-feed exposed hammer shotguns are also allowed. Shotguns must be centrefire of at least 20-gauge and no larger than 10-gauge, with the exception of pump-actions that must be between 16- and 12-gauge.

Original single-action revolvers made prior to 1899 or approved replicas are the only revolvers allowed. The Revolver calibres are consistent with those used in Rifle competition.

Categories

Each shooter only competes against others within their chosen category. The main groupings are Age Based, Duellist, Gunfighter, Black Powder, 'B' Western and Classic Cowboy/Cowgirl categories, all of which have specific clothing requirements, as well as firearm conditions.

Targets and scoring

Targets are generally specifically designed 'reactive' plates with multiple targets on each stage. They are varied, with most common being square, round or card-suit shapes often based on a 400x400mm size. Novelty targets, buffalo, ore cart and tombstone-shaped targets are also used. The targets must be engaged in the same sequence from static positions, regardless of which category a participant competes in.



19. Target Pistol

Discipline Overview

Target Pistol is an international rimfire and centrefire revolver and self-loading pistol shooting discipline. There are six main classes and several side matches, with each based around the class of the handgun and ammunition used and many having their roots in different eras and types of service pistol shooting. The discipline includes four main matches: National Match Course, 900 Match Course, International Mayleigh Match, and Short Course Match, and competitors have varying time restrictions to shoot single-handedly in the standing position at paper targets placed at 25 and 50m.

History

Target Pistol is the result of the SSAA adopting the American NRA Target Pistol match as its international target handgun discipline in 2005. The discipline itself is a single-handed handgun sport where shooters engage paper targets at 25 and 50m with a variety of handgun types and calibres.

Many of the matches have their roots in previous eras and types of service pistol shooting. Indeed, the discipline originated in the late 19th century as a means of training and competing with handguns. The Olympic Standard Pistol match traces its origins to an adaptation of the NRA Standard .22 section, with the slow-fire stage brought back from 50 to 25 yards.

Firearms Used

Category	Firearm Type	Optics
.22lr pistol or revolver	Any .22lr handgun, barrel no longer than 10" and trigger pull no less than 2lb.	Any sights but iron sights are to be no more than 10" apart
.22lr pistol or revolver	Any .22lr handgun with trigger pull no less than 2lb	Only iron or metallic sights
Distinguished revolver	As manufactured revolver of .38 special calibre with a barrel of no more than 6.5" with both single and double action capability, and trigger pull of no less than 2.5lbs in single action.	Only iron or metallic sights. Rear can be adjustable, but front must be fixed.
Centrefire Pistol	Any pistol over .32 calibre. Length of no more than 10" and trigger pull of no less than 2.5lb	Any sights, but iron sights are to be no more than 10" apart
M9 Distinguished	Only Beretta 92 9mm pistol or commercial pistol of same type and calibre, as manufactured. Barrel length between 4.9 and 5" and overall length of between 8.52 and 8.62". Trigger pull must be no less than 2.5lb	Sights must be no more than 7.25" part.
Open revolver	Revolver with a calibre of .32 and .38 with maximum barrel length of 10". Trigger weight must be no less than 2.5lb	Only iron sights

Rulebook: <https://www.saa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/SSAA-Target-Pistol-Guide-to-NRA-CMP-Pistol-Rules-2023.pdf>

Competitions

Each month there are 2 competitions held, with a state level competition held each year. Last year the National Championships were held by SSAA ACT Inc. and resulted in many competitors from around the country. Negotiations are still ongoing, but the 2026 National Championships might be held by SSAA ACT Inc. again this year.

Target Pistol



SSAA Target Pistol is an international rimfire and centrefire revolver and self-loading pistol shooting discipline. It includes four main matches, with competitors shooting single-handedly from the standing position at paper targets placed at 25 and 50m. Its history is in different eras of police and service shooting.

Firearms and classes

Any .22-calibre Pistol or Revolver permits any .22-calibre handgun using any .22 rimfire cartridge, with sights including telescopic or red dot. Standard Smallbore Pistol .22-calibre Rimfire permits any .22 rimfire pistol with metallic/iron sights.

Distinguished Revolver permits any factory-made revolver capable of chambering and firing a 158-grain round-nose or semi-wadcutter .38 Special cartridge. Any Centrefire Pistol or Revolver permits any .32-calibre or larger centrefire handgun.

Any .45 Pistol or Revolver permits any .45-calibre centrefire handgun, allowed by state or territory law. M9 Distinguished Service Pistol Match permits a Beretta 92 9mm pistol or commercial pistol of the same type and calibre. Open Revolver Match uses an Any Sight .32- to .38-calibre revolver with a maximum barrel length including cylinder of 10'.

Courses of fire

The National Match Course includes 10 shots slow-fire in 10 minutes and strings of five shots rapid-fire in 10 seconds, totalling 30 shots.

The 900 Match Course is the basis for National Championships and includes slow-fire and rapid-fire strings, totalling 90 shots.

The International Mayleigh Match is a side match. The class permits the same handguns used in the Any .22-calibre Pistol or Revolver event and comprises three strings of 10 shots slow-fire at 50m.

The Short Course Match comprises the slow-fire stage shot at 25m/yards on a reduced size B16 target.

Targets and scoring

The National Match Course and 900 Match Course are shot on NRA B6 50-yard and B8 25-yard targets. The International Mayleigh Match is shot on the International Slow-Fire Target. Targets are scored after each 10-shot stage.



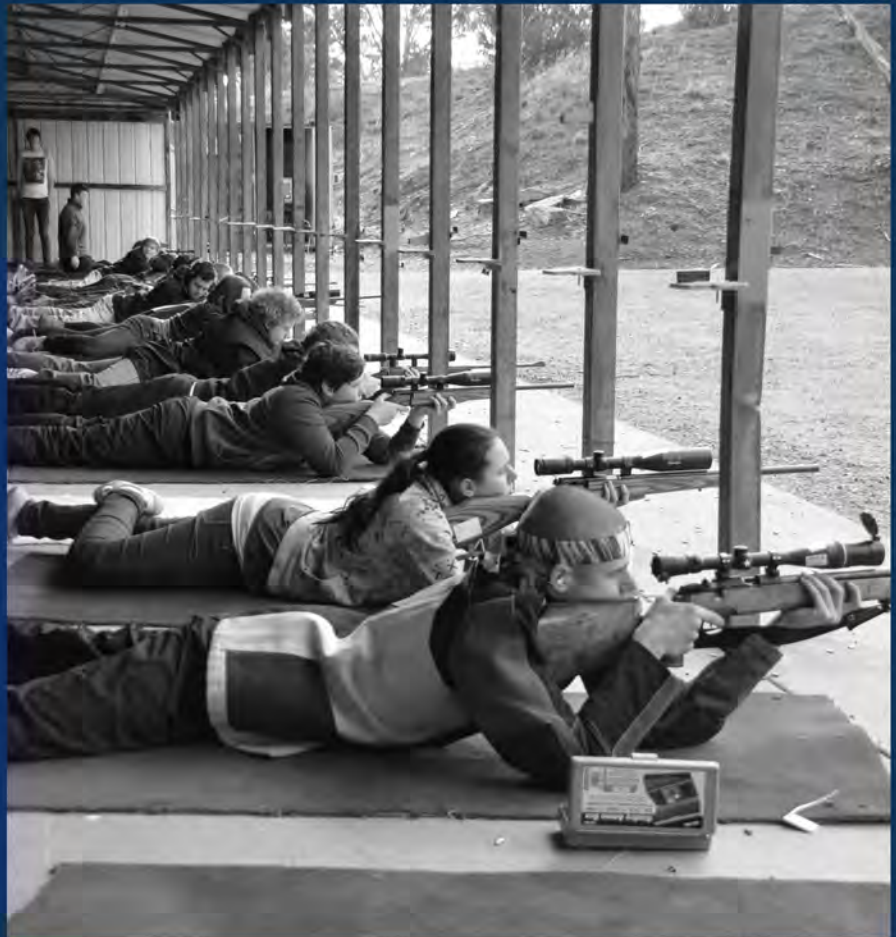


Majura Parkway

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|--|-----------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Toilets | | SSAA ACT Inc. Range Complex Boundary |
| | Camping | | SSAA Roads |
| | Parking | | External Roads |
| | Buildings | | |



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Appendix Section 19D

The Myth of Firearms Licensing and Ownership





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High Level Overview

The firearms regulatory framework in the ACT is built on a comprehensive and multi-layered system that tightly controls access to firearms through three core mechanisms: licencing, Permit to Acquire (PTA) approvals and the requirement to demonstrate a genuine reason.

At the outset, individuals must obtain a firearms licence under the *Firearms Act 1996*, which requires applicants to complete accredited safety training, undergo extensive background and suitability checks and establish that they are a suitable person. A genuine reason must be demonstrated at this stage, ensuring that firearms ownership is limited to legitimate purposes such as target shooting, hunting, primary production, collecting or occupational use. Self defence is not recognised as a valid reason.

Importantly, holding a licence does not provide automatic access to firearms. Each firearm acquisition is subject to a separate process, requiring applicants to re-establish their genuine reasons and justify the suitability of the specific firearm. PTA applications are individually assessed, subject to waiting periods and suitability assessments.

This framework ensures that firearms access in the ACT is not a one-time approval, but an ongoing and iterative process of scrutiny. The genuine reason requirement and suitability assessment operates as a continuous safeguard, applying both at the licencing stage and at each acquisition point. Combined with strict storage requirements, compliance obligations and the ability to refuse or cancel licences based on risk, the system provides multiple points of intervention to prevent misuse.

Applying for a Firearms Licence in the ACT

The process for obtaining a firearms licence in the ACT is deliberately rigorous and designed to ensure that only suitable, trained and responsible individuals are permitted to possess firearms. The framework established under the *Firearms Act 1996* requires applicants to satisfy multiple eligibility, training and suitability requirements before a licence may be granted.

Genuine Reason

At the outset, an applicant must demonstrate a genuine reason for possessing a firearm. Accepted reasons include participating in target shooting, hunting, primary production, collecting or occupational requirements. Importantly, personal protection or self-defence is not recognised as a valid reason under ACT laws, or in fact any firearm law in Australia. This requirement ensures that firearms ownership is limited to legitimate, regulated purposes.

Firearms Safety Training Course

Applicants are also required to complete an approved firearms safety training course, which provides instruction on safe handling, storage, transport and the legal responsibilities associated with firearms ownership. This training is delivered through providers or recognised shooting organisations accredited by ACT Policing and forms a foundational component of the licencing process.

Application

A formal application must then be submitted to ACT Policing, including:

- Proof of Identity and residency
- Evidence supporting the applicant's genuine reason
- Details of compliant firearms storage arrangements
- Payment of applicable fees

The application must be submitted to the ACT Firearms Registry in person, where Registry staff review the application form and commence the assessment process.



Assessment

As part of the assessment process, applicants must undergo comprehensive background and suitability checks. These include consideration of criminal history, and history of violence, alcohol and other drug use, mental health, and other factors relevant to determining whether the applicant is a suitable person to hold a firearms licence. The Registrar has broad discretion to refuse an application where concerns exist regarding an applicant's character, behaviour or compliance with the law generally.

Waiting Periods

Mandatory waiting periods and administrative checks are also built into the process, ensuring sufficient time for thorough assessment and verification of information. This further reinforces the precautionary approach taken with the ACT regulatory framework. Following submitting a complete application form, the applicant must wait at least 28 days for the licence to be approved.

Continuing Obligations

Importantly, the obligations on licence holders do not end once a licence is granted. Firearms licence holders are subject to ongoing suitability and compliance requirements, including strict storage standards, lawful use conditions and the potential for inspection or review by authorities. Licences may be suspended or cancelled if a person no longer meets the required standards.

More importantly, being issued a firearms licence does not automatically allow a person to purchase a firearm.

Purchasing a Firearm in the ACT

In the ACT, the purchase of a firearm is subject to a separate and rigorous approval process beyond the granting of a firearms licence. A person cannot simply purchase a firearm once licensed; instead, they must apply for and be granted a Permit to Acquire (PTA) for each individual firearm. This ensures that every acquisition is individually assessed and justified.

Application

To commence the process, a licence holder must submit a PTA application in person to ACT Policing specifying the firearm they intend to acquire, including its category, type and intended use. The applicant must again demonstrate a genuine reason relevant to that specific firearm, ensuring that the firearm being acquired aligns with their approved purpose (such as target shooting, hunting or collecting). The applicant must also demonstrate a “good reason” for the purchase of the firearm. This represents an additional layer of scrutiny beyond the initial licensing process.

Assessment

Each PTA application is assessed on its merits by the Registrar, who may consider:

- The applicant’s ongoing suitability and compliance history
- Whether the firearm is appropriate for the stated genuine reason
- Any changes in personal circumstances since the licence was granted
- Broader public safety considerations

Importantly, the requirement to obtain a PTA for every firearm demonstrates that firearm acquisition in the ACT is not automatic or ongoing. Instead, it is a deliberate, case-by case process, subject to repeated scrutiny and oversight.

Waiting Period

Mandatory waiting periods also apply to the purchase of a firearm, providing further time for background checks and administrative review. This reflects a precautionary approach to firearms acquisition. There is a further 28 day waiting period from application to the issuing of the permit.

Purchase

Once a PTA is approved, the firearm must be purchased or transferred through a licensed firearm dealer. The dealer is required to verify the validity of both the firearms licence and the permit before completing the transaction. They must also record the details of the firearm, confirming the details are the same as the PTA, and the purchaser, ensuring that all firearms are registered and traceable within the ACT Firearms Registry.

In the case of a private sale, a dealer must be involved in the process. The dealer must complete all of the above steps for both the seller and the purchaser and ensure that all the details are recorded.

Any purchases that do not involve a firearms dealer are illegal.

Storage

Prior to taking possession of the firearm, the licence holder must have compliant storage arrangements in place, consistent with ACT legal requirements. Failure to meet storage standards can result in refusal of the permit or enforcement action, including up to cancellation of the licence and imprisonment.

Refusing a Licence Application

The firearms regulatory framework in the ACT provides broad and proactive powers to refuse a licence application or to suspend or cancel an existing licence where a person is assessed as unsuitable. These powers form a critical safeguard within the system, ensuring that access to firearms is restricted where there are concerns relating to safety, compliance or character.

Under the *Firearms Act 1996*, the Registrar must be satisfied that an applicant is a suitable person and that they have a genuine reason for possessing a firearm. An application may be refused where these requirements are not met. In making this determination, the Registrar may consider a wide range of factors, including:

- Criminal history, including both serious and relevant minor offences
- Any history of violence, threats or concerning behaviour
- Compliance with previous licence conditions (if applicable)
- Information from law enforcement or other relevant agencies
- Any other matter considered relevant to public safety

Importantly, the threshold for refusal is not limited to proven criminal offending. The Registrar may refuse an application where there are reasonable concerns about a person's suitability, reflecting a precautionary and risk-based approach.

Similarly, a firearms licence may be suspended or cancelled if a licence holder no longer meets the required standards. This may occur where:

- New information comes to light regarding the person's conduct or circumstances
- The licence holder breaches storage, use or other legal requirements
- The person is charged with or convicted of relevant offences, including domestic or family violence offences or is issued with an interim or final DVO or PPO
- There are concerns about public safety or the person's ongoing suitability

These powers can be exercised quickly and, where necessary, on an interim basis to manage emerging risks. In such cases, firearms may be seized, and the individual is no longer permitted to possess or use firearms.

While decisions to refuse or cancel a licence are subject to review mechanisms, the framework is deliberately structured to err on the side of caution, prioritising public safety over continued access to firearms.

Disqualifying Criteria

The following information is taken directly from the ACT Policing website:

The registrar must refuse to issue a firearms licence to an applicant unless satisfied on reasonable grounds:

- The information in the application is true and accurate
- The applicant's identity
- The applicants suitability
- The applicant has a genuine reason for possessing or using a firearm
- The applicant will comply with part 12 (Safe storage of firearms) in relation to each registered firearm held under the licence
- The applicant is, or is about to become a resident of the ACT
- In accordance with section 61, it would be necessary for the applicant to possess or use the firearm in the lawful course of business or employment in the ACT
- That each registered firearm held under the licence will be stored in the ACT
- Section 17 (suitability)

- Section 18 Suitability (discretionary criteria)
- Section 19 Suitability (mandatory criteria).

Assessing Suitability – Section 17

The *Firearms Act 1996* provides that the Registrar must assess a person's suitability before approving a firearms licence. Section 17 states:

In making the decision, the registrar—

(a) must consider any discretionary criteria under section 18 that apply to the individual; and

(b) must—

- (i) consider whether any of the mandatory criteria under section 19 are satisfied in relation to the individual; and*
- (ii) if 1 or more criteria are satisfied—decide that the individual is not suitable.*

Mandatory Criteria

The following are the mandatory criteria that disqualify a person from being considered as suitable for a firearms licence:

“(a) for an application for a licence other than a composite entity firearms licence—the registrar believes on reasonable grounds that the individual may not personally exercise continuous and responsible control over a firearm because of the individual’s way of living or domestic circumstances;

(b) within the 10 years before the day the registrar decides the individual’s suitability, the individual has been—

(i) subject to a final protection order other than an order that—

- (A) has been revoked or successfully appealed against; or*
- (B) permits the individual to possess or retain a firearm; or*

Note The Magistrates Court may order that the firearms licence of a person subject to a final order not be cancelled under the Personal Violence Act 2016, s 37 (3).

(ii) subject to an order under this Act or a corresponding law that prohibits the person from possessing or using a firearm (other than an order that has been successfully appealed against); or

(iii) convicted or found guilty of a prescribed offence in the ACT or elsewhere;

(c) the individual is not suitable because of a reason prescribed by regulation.”

Discretionary criteria

Section 18 provides that the Registrar must consider the discretionary criteria in assessing suitability of a person's application.

“(a) whether the registrar believes on reasonable grounds that, because of the individual’s physical or mental health, the individual may not handle firearms responsibly;

(b) whether, during the 10 years before the day the registrar decides the individual’s suitability, the individual has—

- (i) been released (whether on parole or otherwise) after serving a term of imprisonment or detention; or*
- (ii) been subject to a final protection order that—*

(A) has been revoked; or

(B) permits the individual to possess or retain a firearm; or

Note The Magistrates Court may order that the firearms licence of a person subject to a final order not be cancelled under the Personal Violence Act 2016, s 37 (3).

(iii) been subject to an interim protection order; or

(iv) been convicted or found guilty of an offence (other than a prescribed offence)—

(A) against this Act or a corresponding law; or

(B) in the ACT or elsewhere involving violence, drugs, alcohol or weapons; or



Note 1 A conviction does not include a spent conviction or an extinguished conviction (see Spent Convictions Act 2000, s 16 (c) (i) and s 19H (1) (c) (i)).

Note 2 Found guilty, of an offence—see the Legislation Act, dictionary, pt 1.

*(v) given an undertaking to a court, in the ACT or elsewhere, to keep the peace or be of good behaviour; or
(vi) had their licence or permit suspended or cancelled;*

(c) whether the registrar believes on reasonable grounds that information held by a law enforcement agency in relation to the individual indicates that it would be contrary to the public interest for the individual to have access to a firearm;

Note The Minister may make guidelines about the making of decisions about the public interest under this paragraph (see s 37).

(d) any other criteria prescribed by regulation.”

For the purpose of this section, a law enforcement agency includes the following:

- (a) the Australian Federal Police;
- (b) the police service or force of a State, another Territory or a foreign country;
- (c) the Department of Home Affairs (Cwlth);
- (d) the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission;
- (e) the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption or a similar entity established under the law of another State or Territory;
- (f) the New South Wales Crime Commission or a similar entity established under the law of another State or Territory;
- (g) an entity prescribed by regulation.

Licence Types and Criteria

The firearms licensing framework in the ACT is structured around clearly defined licence categories, each with specific eligibility requirements and use conditions. This categorisation ensures that access to firearms is limited, purpose-driven and proportionate to the applicant's demonstrated need.

Licence Type	Firearm Type
Category A	The following firearms, other than prohibited firearms, or firearms mentioned in another category: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> airguns rim-fire rifles (other than self loading) shotguns shotgun and rimfire rifle combinations
Category B	The following firearms, other than prohibited firearms, or firearms mentioned in another category: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> muzzle-loading firearms (other than pistols); centre-fire rifles (other than self loading); shotgun and centre-fire rifle combinations; lever action shotgun with magazine capacity of not more than 5 rounds
Category C	The following firearms, other than firearms mentioned in another category or in schedule 1 of the Act: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> self-loading rim-fire rifles with magazine capacity of not more than 10 rounds; self-loading shotguns with magazine capacity of not more than 5 rounds; pump action shotguns with magazine capacity of not more than 5 rounds
Category D	The following firearms, other than schedule : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> self-loading centre-fire rifles; self-loading rim fire rifles with magazine capacity of more than 10 rounds; self-loading shotguns with magazine capacity of more than 5 rounds; pump action shotguns with magazine capacity of more than 5 rounds; lever action shotgun with magazine capacity of more than 5 rounds; any other firearms to which category C licence applies as prescribed by regulation
Category H – ordinary	Pistols (including blank fire pistols and air pistols) other than prohibited pistols
Category H – prohibited	Prohibited pistols

Genuine Reason

Under the *Firearms Act 1996*, applicants must apply for a licence that corresponds to the category of firearm they intend to use. Common licence categories and their genuine reasons are:

Licence Type	Genuine Reason
Category A	Possess and use for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sport and target shooting Recreational hunting or vermin control on rural land Primary production Vertebrate pest animal control Business or employment Occupational requirements relating to rural purposes Animal welfare Possess only: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> collector
Category B	Possess and use for:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sport and target shooting b) Recreational hunting or vermin control on rural land c) Primary production d) Vertebrate pest animal control e) Business or employment f) Occupational requirements relating to rural purposes g) Animal welfare Possess only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) collector
Category C	Possess and use only for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Primary production, or b) Sports shooting – only with evidence of special need, subject to regulations and approval by the Registrar, and c) That can not be met by Category A or B Possess only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) collector
Category D	Possess and use only for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) for vertebrate pest animal control Possess only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) collector
Category H – ordinary	Possess and use only for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Target shooting b) Business and Employment Possess only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) collector
Category H – prohibited	Possess and use only for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Target shooting Possess only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) collector

Requirements

To establish a genuine reason for a licence application, an applicant must provide the requisite evidence to support the requirements below for each genuine reason:

Genuine Reason	Requirements
Sport and target shooting	Active member of an approved shooting club that conducts competitions or activities requiring the use of the firearm for which the licence is sought
Recreational hunting or vermin control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has permission of a rural landowner or occupier to shoot on the land, or 2. Club membership <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. is an active member of an approved hunting club, and ii. uses the firearm solely for club activities, and iii. objects of the of the club are recreational hunting activities, and iv. proves the club has permission of owner or occupier of land for activities. 3. Vermin control in reserve <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Holds nature conservation licence, or ii. Public unleased land permit.
Primary production	A person whose occupation is the business of primary producer, or who is the owner, lessee or manager of land used for primary production and intends to use the firearm solely in relation to farming or grazing
Vertebrate pest animal control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A professional contract shooter in controlling vertebrate pests on rural land, 2. Employed by or in, or authorised by, a government agency to control or suppress vertebrate pest animals,

	3. A person whose occupation is the business of primary production (or owner, lessee or manager or rural land) and who is taking part in an authorised campaign by a government agency to eradicate large feral species.
Business or employment	Needs to possess or use a firearm in the conduct of the persons business or employment.
Occupational for rural	Employed in rural occupation that requires possess or use of firearms
Animal welfare	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An officer of the RSPCA, or 2. A vet practitioner, or 3. Employed by or within or authorised by an administrative unit with responsibility for animal welfare, or 4. An owner, transporter, drover or other handler of animals who may need the use of a firearm.
Collecting	<p>For post-1946 pistols:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the applicant has been a member of the club for at least 1 year; and b) the collection has a thematic structure; and c) the applicant researches or studies firearms; and d) the members of the club collect firearms of the kind for which the licence is sought; and e) the licence application is supported by the club. <p>For any other type of firearm:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the applicant is a member of an approved collectors club; and b) the collection has a genuine historical or thematic structure or a genuine commemorative or investment value; and c) the members of the club collect firearms of the kind for which the licence is sought; and d) the licence application is supported by the club.

If there are changes to a person's genuine reason that means they no longer satisfy the requirements, the licence can be suspended or cancelled. However, a person is able to apply to the Registrar to change the genuine reason provided they meet the requirements and suitability assessment.

Storage Requirements

Firearms storage requirements in the ACT are a central component of the regulatory framework and are designed to prevent unauthorised access, theft and misuse. These requirements are strict, prescriptive and enforceable, applying to all firearms licence holders as an ongoing condition of their licence.

Under the *Firearms Act 1996* and associated regulations, licence holders must store firearms in a manner that ensures they are secure at all times. This generally includes:

- Storing firearms in a locked receptacle, safe, or strongroom that is not easily penetrable
- Ensuring that the storage unit is securely fixed to the premises where required
- Keeping firearms unloaded while in storage
- Storing ammunition separately, in a locked container or compartment.

For higher categories of firearms, including pistols and restricted firearms, additional requirements apply, such as enhanced safe construction standards, separate internal locking mechanisms and stricter controls on access.

The Requirements

For general adult firearms licences of the below categories, the following provides the minimum requirements for the safe storage of firearms.

Firearm Category	Requirements
Category A and B – less than 10 firearms	<p>The firearms must be stored in a metal lockable container and the firing mechanisms must be stored in a separate lockable metal drawer or container that may be external or internal to the metal lockable container; or</p> <p>The firearms must be stored in a security container that is constructed of a recognised hardwood and lined with steel sheeting, the door of which is fitted with metal hinges and either an appropriate deadlock; or 2 sliding bolts fitted with padlocks of an appropriate strength.</p> <p>The container must be bolted to the floor/wall or both with a minimum of two suitable anchor bolts in order to prevent its easy removal (unless the mass of the container when empty is 150 kilograms or more when empty).</p> <p>The firing mechanisms of Category A and B firearms must be removed, if possible, and stored separately from the firearm.</p>
Category A and B – more than 10 firearms; Category C, D and H	<p>Firearms must be stored in a metal or concrete or brick safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a metal safe: Must be constructed of structural grade mild steel that conforms with AS/NZS 3678:1996 grade 250 and is not less than 3mm thick and be constructed with continuous welding of all edges. • For a safe other than a metal safe be constructed of reinforced concrete, double brick or reinforced besser blocks that are not less than 140mm thick. <p>All safes must be fitted with a door:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructed of structural grade mild steel (that conforms with Australian Standard 3678:1996 grade 250 and is not less than 3mm thick) and that is swung on either concealed pivots or externally mounted sealed-end hinges welded to the door and body of the container, and that is flush fitting with a clearance around it of no more than 1mm; and • If the door is hinged - have a fixed locking bar or dogging bolts welded to the inside face of the door near the hinge edge that engages or engage in a rebate in the container body when the door is closed; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be fitted with a 5-lever key deadlock or a locking mechanism that provides at least equivalent security; and • Be constructed with a full length steel rebate welded to the side of the container body, the locking edge of which will receive the deadlock of the locking mechanism. • A locking mechanism must be securely fixed to the rear face of the door of the container by retaining screws and a metal strap overlapping, or enclosing, the locking case with each end welded to the rear door face. <p>The container must be bolted to the floor/wall or both to prevent its removal, regardless of weight.</p> <p>The firing mechanisms of Category A and B firearms must be removed, if possible, and stored separately from the firearm.</p>
Category D	<p>In addition to the above, the holder of a category D licence must store the firearm to which the licence relates in a place in which an intruder alarm is installed. The intruder alarm must be connected to the mains power with a battery backup in case of power failure and include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A space movement detector that uses a microwave, passive infra-red, ultrasonic or similar system of detection; and b) An external noisemaker that sounds when the alarm is activated.
Ammunition	<p>Ammunition must be stored in a locked container of a type that is approved by the registrar and that is kept separately from the firearms.</p>

This information has been provided from the ACT Firearms Registry website and was extracted on 1 April 2026:

<https://police.act.gov.au/community-safety/firearms/storage>

Licensing holders must also ensure that keys, combinations or access codes are kept secure and are not accessible to unauthorised persons. The responsibility for safe storage rest entirely with the licence holder and any failure to comply may result in enforcement action.

Compliance and Enforcement

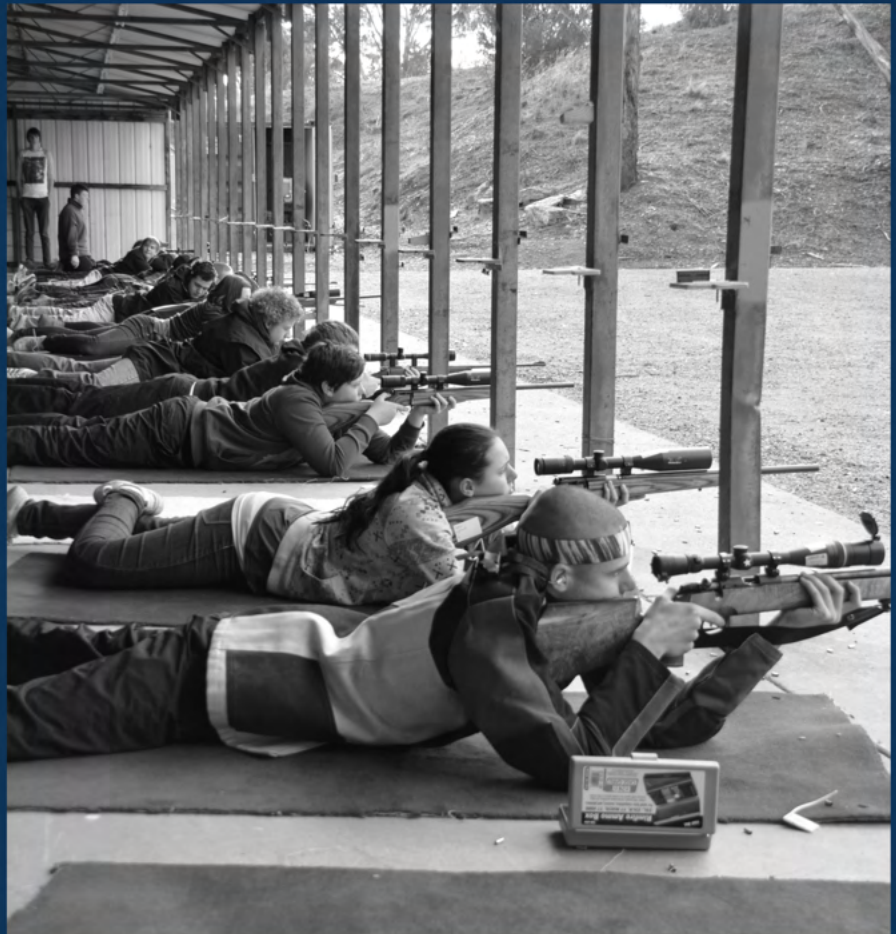
ACT Policing has the authority to inspect storage arrangement to ensure compliance with legal requirements. These inspections may occur as part of routine compliance activities or where concerns arise. Non-compliance can lead to serious consequences, including:

- Suspension or cancellation of a firearms licence
- Seizure of firearms
- Potential criminal charges, including imprisonment

Importantly, storage obligations are not a one time requirement but an ongoing condition of firearms ownership. Licence holders must always maintain compliant storage and ensure that any changes in circumstances (such as relocation or acquisition of additional firearms) continue to meet legal standards.



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