

Trends in Firearms Theft in New South Wales

Measuring firearms theft

- It is difficult to accurately measure trends over time in firearms theft in Australia due to inaccuracies in government/police administered lists of legally owned firearms, time lags between data collection and reporting, and incomplete datasets.
- Australia's most populous jurisdiction, New South Wales (NSW), has released up to date firearms ownership and theft statistics.

Do more legal guns mean more theft?

- The number of legally owned (registered) firearms in NSW has continued to increase, while the number of firearms stolen each year in NSW has undergone a downwards trend over time (Figure 1).
- These figures do not support the view that increased numbers of legally owned guns are associated with more guns being stolen.

Is theft in NSW increasing?

- Although the numbers fluctuate from year to year, firearms theft in NSW has been slowly decreasing since 2001 (Table 1).

Table 1: Stolen firearms as a percentage of registered firearms[^]

Year	Number registered	Number stolen	Stolen as % of registered
2001	619,643	851	0.137
2002	641,468	799	0.125
2003	653,834	718	0.110
2004	647,138	514	0.079
2005	649,467	531	0.082
2006	658,808	449	0.068
2007	672,957	560	0.083
2008	691,724	472	0.068
2009	730,420	550	0.075
2010	748,216	569	0.076
2011	758,802*	433**	0.057

[^] Accuracy of firearms registry figures could not be independently verified * At August 2011 ** At 6 September 2011

Data source and further reading

New South Wales Parliament, Minister for Police and Emergency Services. (2011). Responses to Questions on Notice, 0419, 0485.

WiSH Fact Sheet: Firearms registration in Australia.

Figure 1: Number of firearms registered and firearms stolen, 2001-2011

