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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Gun Prohibitionists Advocating a Culture of Neglect**

The International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH) today described as “socially irresponsible” claims made by the Coalition for Gun Control that the number of legally owned firearms in New South Wales relates to rates of suicide and lethal domestic violence.

WiSH Chairwoman Ms Samara McPhedran stated that “The use of firearms in domestic violence is extremely rare in New South Wales, with violence against women typically involving physical force. In lethal violence, the most commonly used weapon is a knife.”

The number of legally owned firearms in New South Wales has increased, but firearm-related suicides and homicides have declined steadily since the 1980's. Although firearm-related suicides continued the pre-existing downwards trend, suicides by other methods increased after the 1996 gun laws. In 2003-2004, 96% of firearms used in homicide were unregistered.

“By promoting the inaccurate view that firearms legislation can address social problems, gun prohibitionists endorse a culture of neglect towards the most vulnerable members of society. Advocating the misdirection of scant resources into ever-increasing laws concerning legal firearms ownership cannot help people in dire need,” said Ms McPhedran.

“Ideologically-driven misallocation of public funds will not benefit our community. Effective policing initiatives, evidence-based social interventions, and better services for women escaping abuse can make a genuine difference, and deserve our support.”

Reference: “State under the gun”, Daily Telegraph, 20/02/2006.  
<http://dailytelegraph.news.com.au/story/0,20281,18202667-5001021,00.html>

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