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Australian Gun Registration a Billion Dollar Failure

Investigation by the Radio National 'Background Briefing' program has found that Australia's mandatory gun registration scheme is riddled with inaccuracies, and cannot be shown to have delivered any public health and safety outcomes.

The International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH) say this is a sign that Australia should follow Canada's lead, and abolish registration of rifles and shotguns.

WiSH Chair, Dr Samara McPhedran, said "There is not a shred of evidence that firearms registration has prevented crime, and these latest revelations prove that the Australian system has been nothing more than an expensive failure."

The estimated cost of maintaining lists of legally owned guns over the past 15 years ranges from \$405 million to \$1.5 billion.

The error rate in the registries is thought to be up to 80 percent, meaning up to eight out of every 10 records held by firearms registries is inaccurate.

"Politicians should show some leadership and end this wasteful bureaucratic bungle. This would free up at least \$74 000 each day for improved social services, healthcare, and policing," said Dr McPhedran.

"Gun registration has not been shown, anywhere in the world, to be an effective way to reduce crime. It simply diverts resources away from where they are truly needed."

"This is why Canada is currently getting rid of longarm registration, and why New Zealand abandoned registration in the early 1980s."

"Those countries maintain sensible licensing regimes similar to Australia's, but also recognise that wasting money on firearms registration does not improve public health and safety."

Figures from the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) show that almost all firearms used to commit homicide are unregistered, and the offenders unlicensed. While legal firearm ownership continues to increase, firearm misuse has been declining steadily since the 1980s.

Further information:

Firearms registration in Australia –

<http://www.ic-wish.org/WiSH%20Fact%20sheet%20Firearms%20registration%20in%20Australia.pdf>

Homicide in Australia 2007-08 –

<http://www.ic-wish.org/WiSH%20Fact%20Sheet%20Homicide%20in%20Australia%202007-08.pdf>

Firearm Homicide in Australia, Canada and New Zealand –

<http://www.ic-wish.org/McPhedran%20Baker%20Singh%20Long%20term%20firearm%20homicide%20trends%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

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