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Gun Study Response Overwhelmingly Positive

The peer-reviewed research article *Gun Laws and Sudden Death: Did the Australian Firearms Legislation of 1996 Make a Difference?* has generated overwhelmingly positive responses, say the International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH).

“The study has received significant media coverage, which is wonderful because it helps raise awareness about the need for basing public health and safety strategies on evidence and facts,” said WiSH Chair Samara McPhedran, who is a co-author of the study.

Published in the influential British Journal of Criminology, the research showed that the legislative reforms, bans, and buybacks of 1996 did not impact on already declining rates of firearm homicide in Australia. It could not be concluded that the tough laws had any impact on firearm suicide rates, because suicides using other methods also started to decline in the late 1990's.

Ms McPhedran said “We are very pleased that this research is encouraging widespread debate, because Australia still has a long way to go in terms of allocating resources for violence reduction initiatives, mental healthcare, and social services. Regardless of people's opinions about guns, this is something everyone seems to agree on.”

The gun buyback of 1996 cost an estimated AU\$500 million.

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References:

Executive summary: <http://www.ic-wish.org/Executive%20Summary.pdf>

British Journal of Criminology: <http://bjc.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/azl084v1>

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WOMEN ON TARGET FOR POSITIVE CHANGE