



Stop the porkies

It's time to set the record straight.

Last week's tragic mass murder in the United States has prompted anti-gun lobby group, Gun Control Australia, to make public various falsehoods about Australia's firearms laws.

Appearing on the Today Show on Saturday, Gun Control Australia Director Samantha Lee claimed that the "well-financed, well-connected gun lobby here in Australia has successfully eroded our gun laws".

Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) is calling for Gun Control Australia to own up to fudging these facts in the interview:

1. We no longer have criminal record checks for people gaining access to firearms.
2. People can gain access to multiple firearms without having any checks done.
3. They can also gain access to firearms without having a licence.

It's time for Gun Control Australia to stop using the media as a platform to spread distortions, murky half-truths and more propaganda, and start being accountable.

Ms Lee said "Australia did some great work back in 1996 after the Port Arthur Massacre and we did have very strong laws..." Since 1996, many of the laws have stayed the same, while some have become more stringent. Here are the FACTS:

1. In 1996 the Commonwealth created the National Firearms Agreement (NFA) and Victoria established its own Firearms Act 1996. Since then, rather than reduce restrictions on firearms ownership, the Commonwealth introduced two new agreements:
 - a. The National Firearms Trafficking Policy Agreement (2002) was introduced to control the illegal trade of firearms in Australia.
 - b. The National Handgun Control Agreement (2002) was aimed at restricting the availability and use of handguns.

Earlier this year the Federal Government suspended the importation of the Adler A110 seven-shot shotgun. And the Firearms Amendment (Trafficking and other Measures) Bill 2015 is currently before the Victorian Parliament. This Bill will tighten regulations and increase penalties for people who break the law.

2. In order to obtain a firearms licence, a person must demonstrate a genuine reason, undergo a training course, pass a safety test and be vetted by Victoria Police, who determine whether the person is fit and proper. The NFA states:
 - a. Applicants for a Category B, C, D and H licences must also demonstrate a 'genuine need' for the particular firearm.
 - b. Category C firearms are limited mainly to primary producers.
3. As for people being able to gain access to multiple firearms without any checks being undertaken – this is nonsense. All licence-holders must apply for a permit through Victoria Police before purchasing any new firearm.
 - a. The Firearms Act 1996 states, "In the case of an application for a permit to acquire which has been made by a person who does not possess a registered firearm under



a licence under this Act, the Chief Commissioner must not issue the permit until 28 days have expired after the making of the application for the permit”.

4. Only under very few controlled conditions are people allowed to access a firearm without a licence. Anyone who wishes to use a firearm at a police-certified range, can only do so after filling out a form declaring they are not a prohibited person. They can only progress with shooting while under direct supervision of a licensed person. The Firearms Act 1996 outlines the following:
 - a. The shooter must fill out a Notification of Receiving Instruction form prior to shooting with a handgun and that form must be given to police within seven days.
 - b. A person aged 18 or older cannot have more than 10 unlicensed shoots with a handgun.
 - c. A person who is older than 12 and under 18 who is receiving instruction on the use of a firearm must have written consent from a parent or guardian.

Ms Lee, herself, said Australia had strong laws after 1996 and, as the above shows, the same laws remain in place.

So, Gun Control Australia, it's time to stop painting our law-abiding, licensed firearms-owners as villains. Livestock farmers who put down injured or sick animals on their own properties, croppers who protect their livelihood against pest animals, people who put fresh meat on the table, the Australian Olympic Shooting Team and people who enjoy going to a range for target or clay shooting are not the enemy. They are responsible people – doctors, electricians, teachers, small-business owners, bookkeepers, parents and pensioners, who just want a fair go.

Jack Wegman, CEO

Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)