

December 22, 2015

ABC's poor report of 10 per cent drop in firearm thefts

The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) is disappointed in the ABC 774 Melbourne Drive Show presenter Warwick Long and his production team.

Following the publication of a media release yesterday citing a reduction in firearm thefts across Victoria, Warwick interviewed the Deputy Police Commissioner Stephen Patton on the program.

The station failed to contact SSAA Victoria for an on-air interview to ensure a balanced report. It instead produced a one-sided, biased and poorly-researched segment.

The 774 Melbourne listeners were not provided the statistics of firearm thefts across the past four years. Neither were they provided the negligible handgun theft figures and they were subjected to misleading statements.

The Deputy Commissioner said firearm thefts had reduced only marginally, however the following Crime Statistics Agency statistics show a noticeable drop in firearm thefts:

- In the year ending September 2012, 816 firearms were stolen across Victoria. The following year, 774 were stolen, with 764 in 2013-14, and just 710 firearms stolen in 2014-2015.
- Handgun thefts in Victoria have remained in single digits since at least October 2010. Just six pistols were stolen in 2010-11, six in 2011-12, five in 2012-13 and four in 2014-15.

"These are statistics obtained by an independent body – the Crime Statistics Agency – using Victoria Police's own records," said SSAA Victoria Chief Executive Officer Jack Wegman.

"Look at the facts – we have gone from 816 firearm thefts in Victoria in the year to September 2012, to 710 in the year to September 2015.

"A 10 per cent reduction in firearm thefts is a significant drop."

Most concerning to SSAA Victoria was a statement from the Deputy Commissioner, who said, "we do see (the stolen firearms) used by criminal elements and, as you would appreciate, a couple of months ago we had quite a spate of shootings ..."

The Deputy Commissioner is trying to draw a link between the stolen firearms and the shooting. Knowing only five handguns are stolen each year, it just doesn't stack up.

ENDS

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