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## Victorian firearm thefts on the decline

Firearms theft in Victoria has reduced over the past few years, as data obtained by the SSAA Victoria proves.

Crime Statistics Agency (CSA) figures, provided by Victoria Police, shows the number of firearms stolen across Victoria has progressively reduced each year since 2011.

In the year ending September 2012, 816 firearms were stolen across the State. The following year, 774 were stolen, with 764 in 2013-14, and just 710 firearms stolen in 2014-2015.

“The reduction in firearm thefts is a testament to our lawful firearms owners, who store their firearms in accordance with the law,” said SSAA Victoria Chief Executive Officer Jack Wegman.

The figures disprove claims by Superintendent Craig Gillard – reported in The Age 29/11/15 – that organised criminals were stealing “thousands of firearms from registered owners in regional Victoria”.

The data tells a different story – one of reducing firearms thefts and generally low theft rates in regional areas. Several regional Victorian local government areas reported no firearm thefts across multiple years between October 2010 and September 2015.

Both the Indigo Shire Council, which comprises Beechworth and Barnawartha, and Towong Shire, just outside of Albury, experienced four years without a single firearm theft between October 2010 and September 2015. In the same period, Alpine Shire Council had three years without a firearm theft.

Handgun thefts in Victoria have remained in single digits since at least October 2010. The CSA statistics revealed just six pistols were stolen in 2010-11, six in 2011-12, five in 2012-13 and four in 2014-15.

“Fair’s fair,” Mr Wegman said. “These statistics clearly show licensed firearms owners are not the problem.

“The firearm of choice for criminals is the handgun and these statistics clearly show very few handguns are stolen from licensed owners. They’re obviously getting them from somewhere else.

“All we want is a fair go for responsible people.”

ENDS

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