



## **BUYBACK BUNGLE CLAIM**

Shooters say that the buyback of handguns which begins today, has been badly managed.

Combined Firearms Council of Victoria President, Sebastian Ziccone, said that it still was not clear which handguns were banned. He said there was also doubt over whether the Police could legally enforce a 5 year moratorium on owners surrendering licenses or whether a core election promise by the Premier would be honoured.

“The program has been a mess from the start. Legislation introduced into Parliament that was supposed to deal with just the handgun issue, had to be amended because the Minister did not have an effective consultation process,” he said.

“At one point the effect of legislation would even have been to stop people being able to take up the shooting sports. This was completely at odds with the intent of the legislation agreed to between the States.”

Mr Ziccone said that a written promise provided by the Premier in the 1999 State Election to reinstate a Firearms Consultative Committee to avoid confusion over firearms policy, has failed to eventuate.

“We are still talking with the Government but it is clear that the Premier is not being included in this process,” he said.

“It is difficult to understand how the Government has handled the implementation of a policy with such disinterest. There has been no formal consultation forum, no policy parameters and I think most people would be shocked to hear this.”

Mr Ziccone said that letters sent to owners of handguns demanding information provided an illustration of the current policy direction taken from within Government.

He said the letters may have misled owners into thinking they had no option but to respond.

”I am now very concerned about how this Government has approached the whole firearms issue. I think most people would agree with the need for a transparent process, and would be very concerned if firearm owners have been misled”.

He said the CFCV had no option but to use the buyback to raise awareness of the problem to the broader community.

When in opposition, the Labor Government supported changes to legislation which removed probationary periods that would have avoided the shooting at Monash University. Recent amendments to gun laws have reinstated probationary periods.

For more information: Sebastian Ziccone, President CFCV, [edited]

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