



Media Release – 17 December 2003 Contact: Sebastian Ziccone

SHOOTERS TO MISS BUYBACK DEADLINE

Many handgun owners are unlikely to meet the December 31 deadline for handing in banned handguns according to the State's key shooting group.

Combined Firearms Council of Victoria President, Sebastian Ziccone, said he had grave concerns that shooters would be prosecuted for failing to meet the deadline.

"In many cases, shooters – including the elderly and frail - have been unable to get to the buyback centres or arrived during the advertised times to find them closed," he said.

Shooters turning up to the buyback have also been confronted with queues up to 12 hours long, or having to wait in the rain or heat – and in one case, having to queue up in hail. Some shooters took time off work to comply with the buyback, only to be forced to return home with banned handguns.

"One member of my own organisation has told me how he was turned back from buyback centres twice," Mr Ziccone said.

Mr Ziccone said it would be unreasonable to prosecute shooters who were unable to comply with the buyback.

"We have asked the Government to extend the deadline beyond 31 December, as has been the case in other states, but so far it has declined to do so."

For more information: Sebastian Ziccone, President CFCV

ENDS