



Media Release – 30 December 2003 Contact: Sebastian Ziccone –

SHOOTERS FORCED TO MISS BUYBACK DEADLINE

A leading shooting group has blamed poor planning on scores of handgun owners unlikely to be able to meet tomorrow's [31 Dec] deadline for handing in banned handguns.

Combined Firearms Council of Victoria President, Sebastian Ziccone, said he had grave concerns that shooters would be prosecuted for failing to meet the deadline. Victoria Police has indicated that any person in possession of a banned handgun after 31 December risks prosecution.

“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.

Lines of up to 60 shooters and an early closing of the buyback centre at 1pm on Wednesday is expected to leave hundreds of shooters unable to hand in their handguns and receive compensation. Queues at buyback centres have caused waits of up to 12 hours, in hot weather, rain and even hail.

“We told the Government this would happen, but it ignored our advice,” Mr Ziccone said.

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

“We asked the Government to put in more resources to manage the buyback including the establishment of a permanent site, but it declined to do this. We also asked the Government to extend the deadline beyond 31 December, as has been the case in other states, but it has also declined to do this.”

For more information: Sebastian Ziccone, President CFCV,

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