



*Media Release – 2 February 2004 Contact: Sebastian Ziccone –*

## **AUSSIE HANDGUN BUYBACK UNDER FIRE**

Shooters in Australia say they were forced to stand in queues in that country's harsh climate for up to 12 hours to hand in recently banned handguns.

Handguns with a barrel length of less than 10cm were banned last year after a student shot two people at Monash University near Melbourne.

The bans which were announced by Australia's Prime Minister, John Howard, led to the formation of a new body that represents the political interests of shooters.

Combined Firearms Council of Victoria President Sebastian Ziccone, said the handgun buyback was a vilification of shooters in response to an incident that the Government was able to avoid.

"The Victorian State Government abolished a system of probationary licences that would have prevented the Monash University shootings," he said.

"This has now been reinstated, and we ended up being the scapegoats."

The bans were followed by a buyback during which shooters were made to queue up outside –in the cold, rain, and Australian sun renown for causing skin cancer.

"We had television crews come along to film shooters trying to get out of the hail. It became a freak show created by the Australian Government that had nothing to do with safety," Mr Ziccone said.

"Our Federal and Victorian State Governments couldn't care less about the welfare of our members or what they are doing to Australia's reputation of enjoying international sport."

Shooters who choose to remain in the handgun target shooting sports face new restrictions including a ban on magazines that carry 10 rounds, which ruled out at least one popular international shooting discipline.

Many shooters used the proceeds from the buyback to purchase new handguns with barrels greater than 10cm in length.

For more information: Sebastian Ziccone

Timezone: GMT + 10hrs

Website (previous press releases and articles): [www.cfev.org.au](http://www.cfev.org.au)

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