



## **STATS CHIEF: GUN LAWS HAVEN'T REDUCED CRIME**

The head of the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in New South Wales, Don Weatherburn, said falls in armed robberies and abductions in NSW in the past few years had more to do with the heroin drought and good policing than firearms legislation.

He is reported to have said that falls in the homicide rate, which have been steady, began long before the gun law debate provoked by the Port Arthur massacre in 1996.

"I would need to see more convincing evidence than there is to be able to say that gun laws have had any effect," Dr Weatherburn said in the report.

"There has been a drop in firearm-related crime, particularly in homicide, but it began long before the new laws and has continued on afterwards. I don't think anyone really understands why. A lot of people assume that the tougher laws did it, but I would need more specific, convincing evidence."

CFCV President, Bill Paterson, said he supported workable gun laws and said the Firearms Consultative Committee established by the Victorian Police Minister, provided a sensible balance for changes to the law in Victoria.

"However there are some in the community who will not distinguish science from popular prejudice and fail to acknowledge what the experts like Dr Weatherburn are telling them," he said.

Dr Weatherburn is reported to have said more arrests have more to do with a decline in crimes involving handguns than the new laws.

"As soon as the heroin shortage hit, the armed robbery rate came down. I don't think it was anything to do with the tougher firearm laws," Dr Weatherburn said according to the report.