



MEDIA STATEMENT: PORT ARTHUR ANNIVERSARY ON 28 APRIL 2006

Victoria's political arm for shooters, the Combined Firearms Council of Victoria, says that the importance of the 10th anniversary of the Port Arthur massacre on Friday, should not be lost.

CFCV President, Bill Paterson said there were three things that have come out of the anniversary from shooters' perspective are:

1. The tragedy of Australia's worst homicide, the loss of loved ones and the impact it has had on the community, is shared by the Australian community, not least by Victoria's 200,000 licensed shooters who are all family people in their own right.
2. The shooting organisations have always supported uniformity in gun laws and while the tragedy of Port Arthur rightly brought that into focus, the way it was done was knee jerk reaction that still hasn't delivered uniformity. The CFCV believes that while restrictions are a necessary part of sensible regulation, the way the laws were brought into effect in haste and under duress, created unnecessary barriers to legitimate participation in the shooting sports (including impacting on the 1998 Commonwealth Games) and significant distrust by the shooting community of the Prime Minister's motives. We understand the Prime Minister was advised not to hand out medals at the shooting events at the 2000 Olympics or the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Shooters still haven't forgiven its traditional ally, the National Party, for its involvement in this matter.
3. The CFCV notes recent media reports which highlight the problem of client privilege standing in the way of "revealing the full story of (Martin) Bryant, who never gave a courtroom explanation" of his actions.

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