



# Newsletter

**Protecting your sport**

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*Submissions gratefully received*

**Summer 2004**

CFCV, PO Box 2279, Dandenong North, Victoria, 3175

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**W**elcome to our first newsletter. It took a while to get around to producing one, but we finally got there !

We hope to be able to provide you with information on what is happening within the CFCV on a periodic basis. Our website contains a significant amount of information that will keep everybody informed on events and issues likely to be of interest to you.

For those who do not have internet access, we hope this newsletter will keep you posted on the main issues.

If you haven't been to our website, you should have a look today. If you go do [www.cfcv.org.au](http://www.cfcv.org.au), the two pages to keep an eye on are "Current Issues" and "Politics" as these are updated regularly.

*Editor*

## **Naphthine & Thwaites Shoot Geoff Howard down on duck season**

**L**abor's Minister for Environment John Thwaites and former Liberal Party Leader Denis Naphthine, both rejected Ballarat East MP, Geoff Howard's call to ban duck season.

Howard is reported to have told the Ballarat Courier "I've long held a personal view that duck hunting should be banned, which I believe is also one held by the majority of the country"

In Parliament, Thwaites refused to stand by his fellow ALP MP in Parliament, confirming his view that duck hunting is a legitimate activity. Naphthine called for Howard to be sacked.

At it's State Conference in December, the ALP rejected a motion to ban duck shooting.

## **Federal Election on the Horizon**

**A** Federal Election in 2004 is a certainty. The CFCV will again represent the interests of shooters. Can you help ?

If you have skills or other interests that could help us help you to protect your sport, such as involvement in a branch of a political party, the media, law or publishing, contact us today on 0425 746 066.

## **Presidents Report**

**T**he shooting sports have never been galvanised in the way they have been now. For many years, we operated independently of each other and found ourselves reacting too late whenever politicians acted on the firearm issue in haste.

The formation of the CFCV a few weeks before the 2002 State Election was a watershed in Australian Politics. Every major shooting organisation joined the CFCV on the handgun issue in recognition of the fact that our fight is really about how firearm policies are developed.

The fact this particular fight involved handguns is incidental. It could have been about the ability to continue to use shotguns, centrefire rifles or the ability of juniors to participate in the shooting sports. Unfortunately, it was handgun owners who became the target.

The CFCV was formed after the 'headline' policies on handguns were set in concrete in Canberra. From that point of view, we were formed too late to stop that. However, as you will see from other items in this newsletter, the CFCV has had material impacts on the development of legislation and regulations that underpin these policies, and in other areas to ensure we have an effective political voice at the next Federal and State elections.

Your support is helping us achieve this and we thank you for that.

*Sebastian Ziccone, President*

## **How to be heard**

**T**he CFCV, Sporting Shooter Council of Victoria and various shooting organisations are working hard to ensure your sport has a voice. However every shooter can also do their bit to do the same. Why not book some time to see your local Member of Parliament today? Your MP won't know what you might think or be saying about your sport unless you let them know.

The most effective way to convey your thoughts is to explain to him or her, what you do and why you enjoy what you do. This can have a much bigger impact than you think. A simple rule of thumb is that one phone call is representative of 10 constituents concerned about the same thing. One letter can indicate a hundred similarly concerned constituents, and one visit to an MP's office, about 1000 similarly concerned constituents. Imagine what impact your club or fellow shooters could have given these odds!

Don't discuss gun laws or politics with MP's unless they mention them. The reason for suggesting this is that many MP's simply do not know much, if anything, about the shooting sports, and a little information can go a long way.

By simply explaining a few things about what you do, they will begin to understand what you are wanting to protect.

## **Skills ?**

**T**he CFCV's main strength is with the people running it and people like you who support it. If you have skills in media, PR, politics, law, newsletter submission or any other area likely to be of use to us in protecting what you do, please let us know.

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## **Q & A's**

*The CFCV doesn't seem to be all that visible. Why is that so ?*

The CFCV has co-ordinated several media articles, including those in newspapers, on radio and on TV. The nature of creating 'news' does not always allow us to advertise the fact it comes from us.

In other cases we have been able to promote the CFCV, including through our brochures which will now be provided to you by a number of major firearm dealers when you make purchases from them. Various member associations are also reporting on CFCV activities in their newsletters and magazines.

*The 2002 Victorian State Election was a landslide to Labor despite the CFCV supporting a number of Liberal and National Party candidates. Was this effort in vain ?*

No. Nothing could stop a landslide.

However an independent statistical analysis shows that the CFCV strategy had a net impact of between 2.5 and 5%.

Not every election is a landslide. We have proven this strategy works – and could make all the difference in a closer contest. This strategy can make or break careers in politics which can also be invaluable.

## Quotes

*"There is no case, in my view, for the ordinary citizens of this country to have access to lethal firearms whether longarms or handguns"*

John Howard  
Prime Minister

*"I would like to thank the people of Victoria for buying me a new pistol"*

Sebastian Ziccone  
President, CFCV  
(commenting on compensation he received at the buyback)

*"A harder regime that's important for the safety of our community and I think it's one of which we can be proud."*

Steve Bracks  
Premier of Victoria

*"We already have some of the tightest gun laws in the world here in Victoria and I don't think it serves anyone well to go rushing off and make legislative changes based on one incident"*

Peter Ryan  
Member for Gippsland South,  
Leader of the National Party

*"I certainly hope that the new gun laws have the desired effect of reducing crime, but somehow I doubt that they will. I think the main effect will be to diminish the sport of target shooting and to remove much of the community spirit and participation that used to be a part of such events."*

Bill Sykes  
Member for Benalla,  
National Party Spokesperson  
for Police and Emergency  
Services

## Commonwealth Games

**Y**ou would think that the State Government's planning for the events and venues for the 2006 Commonwealth Games would be well advanced. However it does not appear that way.

You may recall the Kennett Government won the rights to host the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in the mid to late 90's. Soon after taking office in '99, the Bracks Government initiated a 'review' of shooting (and other) venues. The outcome of this 'review' was to be announced after the 2002 Commonwealth Games. As at the date of writing (late November), this has not happened.

There is little doubt that the shooting events will be held at the Melbourne Gun Club (shotgun), Melbourne International Shooting Club (smallbore, pistol, airgun) and Wellsford Range (Fullbore).

However significant planning and construction time has been lost which will mean that the pressure will be on to complete facilities at international standard on time.

The Minister for Commonwealth Games, the Hon Justin Madden MLC, has been asked about this in both sessions of Parliament this year. His answers did not provide any definitive timeframes and has left venue managers unsure of what is going on. They have not been able to make capital improvements in case those improvements are later removed or demolished – or minds about venues changed.

The 'last minute rush' to complete venue development in 2004 (when some venues have to be completed to comply with international rules) is a poor example of event management by those tasked with that responsibility. If this is not the case, then it is at least the perception.

## Media at the buyback

**T**he CFCV issued a media alert for the media to attend the handgun buyback at Oakleigh in October to coincide with Sebastian Ziccone's attendance. Hail was forecast along with long queues, providing the perfect opportunity for the TV networks in particular.

All of the major networks turned up and started filming – and the hail came down on cue.

The CFCV succeeded in bringing attention to the length of the queues, although no amount of publicity will make up for the inconvenience to handgun owners or the damage the buyback has done (in terms of removal of handguns and loss of membership in pistol clubs).

However, the CFCV hopes this has sent a signal to policy makers on its capacity to bring bad publicity to badly conceived and implemented policy decisions. We are still working 'behind the scenes' to keep the pistol shooting sports intact as far as possible.

## ***Political Support***

A key element of the way the CFCV operates involves playing the same games played by politicians – doing deals. The CFCV provides political and logistical support for those candidates who support the shooting sports – and oppose those who don't.

The strategy is not party specific. While we might support a Labor candidate in one seat, we might support a Liberal in another. This way, we cannot be held hostage to any party line. The exception to this rule is that the CFCV supported all National Party candidates at the 2002 State Election, but only because the party was prepared to support shooters at the time.

The CFCV has started a re-evaluation of its support by providing questionnaires to all sitting State and Federal MP's in Victoria. This information, plus information gathered through Hansard (the official transcript of Parliamentary proceedings), the Media and our own sources is being used to make an early state for the next Federal State elections.

If you have any information relating to your local Federal or State MP (or potential candidate against them) the you believe could be fed into this process, then please let us know at [admin@cfcv.org.au](mailto:admin@cfcv.org.au) or on 0425 746 066. We would be particularly interested in hearing from any shooter who may be involved in any political party or standing as an independent.

## ***Police Minister in hot water over FOI***

Police Minister, Andre Haermeyer, was questioned in Parliament over a meeting that he requested he have with Sebastian Ziccone, CFCV President.

The question, from Robert Doyle, Leader of the Opposition, related to the Minister's interest in a Freedom of Information application made by the CFCV in September, seeking documents relating to who may have accessed the police records held relating to CFCV executive members.

The Minister claimed that Mr Ziccone was 'embarrassed' about the application and that it was an "attempt by the Combined Firearms Council of Victoria to get attention for another issue". Neither statement is true.

At the time of writing, it is probable that the claims made by Mr Haermeyer will continue to dog him regardless of whether or not the FOI application returns a 'positive swab'.

Suggestions and inferences that the Minister 'leant' on Sebastian to withdraw the application are unfounded. The Minister simply said that he had no interest in accessing the police records of any of the CFCV executive members.

By the way, the response to the FOI application was due to be received in late November but has not been received. It is not unusual for applications to Victoria Police to exceed their timeframe, so one should not read something unnecessary into that – however the fact the response has not been received does not help the Minister.

## ***Our Website***

**[www.cfcv.org.au](http://www.cfcv.org.au)**

For those who have access to the Web, why not bookmark it to keep up to date on what is happening with your sport on the political front ?

The site's main pages to watch are "Current Issues" and "Politics" which deal with a combination of things happening of interest to most shooters.

The site now also has a link in "the top bit" that will be a running sheet of what every politician relevant to our sport has said about you and what you do.

These will form part of our strategy going into the next Federal or State election.

You can also download our media releases etc from the "Media" page.

..or ask us a question by emailing us at...  
**[admin@cfcv.org.au](mailto:admin@cfcv.org.au)**.

Traffic through the website is light. It is anticipated however that significant traffic will be experienced as we head into our media campaigns during elections. The site will complement our strategy by including information not included in our advertisements due to space constraints.

Why not have a look today? Help us help protect your sport.