



Winter Edition

June 2006

Firearms Consultative Committee



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The establishment of the Firearms Consultative Committee (which advises the Minister for Police on legislation and regulations), during 2005 proved to be a bigger win for shooters than we first thought.

First, the terms of reference are broad enough for the FCC to raise matters with the Minister, rather than be limited by matters he wishes to have examined.

Secondly, the FCC is chaired by Mr Peter Steedman who has demonstrated his willingness to deal with difficult issues head on.

Thirdly, the group includes representation from gun control advocates. While this comment may be enough to send shooters running in the other direction, these are not the sorts of 'advocates' you are used to hearing from.

Rather, these are academics who believe regulation needs to match risk.

In other words, like us, they support sensible laws, but not unnecessary 'red tape'.

The changes to the Firearms Act which went through Parliament late last year, reflect the confidence the Government has in the new body.

The changes which went through:

- clarify the minimum attendance requirements for handgun target shooters by providing for genuine reasons for non compliance such as sickness;
- made provision for collectors in relation to alarm and licensing requirements; and
- did away with the need for cat A/B licenses for paintball.

The changes also restricted the firearms that can be used by the security industry (why, is not clear to us) and restricted access to rifles with high capacity magazines.

While we remain to be convinced about the wisdom or need for the latter two changes, there does appear to be enough flexibility built into the Firearms Act to address unique circumstances.

Probably the more important aspect of the FCC is the demonstration by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Tim Holding, of his determination to iron out flaws in the Firearms Act.

It is a demonstration of goodwill that the shooting organisations really do appreciate.

MPs from both sides of Parliament supported the changes to the Firearms Act and commended the FCC's work.

The Committee is receiving applications from other shooting organisations who have seen the impact it has had.

However the CFCV would rather see them do their 'apprenticeship' as members of the CFCV before joining the FCC (a CFCV initiative).

This is because the shooting organisations involved in the CFCV currently enjoy a great working relationship which is now producing tangible political benefits for the shooting sports.

We want to see that continue.

Special points of interest:

- The Victorian Liberal Party can avoid losing shooters political support through one simple step - by making just one badly needed public statement
- ALP splinter group has been abandoned by its party peers
- Duck protester had a particularly bad week—and got caught out lying
- The best way you can help protect your sport is by shopping at Ritchies IGA. Get your club to help out!
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Ritchies IGA Supermarkets can be found at:
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In addition to wearing flak jacket, his is what we will remember our PM for:

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

"I hate guns. I don't think people should have guns unless they're police or in the military or in the security industry."

"Ordinary citizens should not have weapons. We do not want the American disease imported into Australia."

"I think there's still more that can be done on that front (restricting all firearms); I do. I'd always seize opportunities to do more."

"We just do not need guns."

If he wasn't our Prime Minister, you'd swear his hatred for what we do, borders on pathological.

Just ask any shooter what he or she thinks ...

PM's renewed attack on guns

We expected the tenth anniversary of the Port Arthur tragedy on April 28 to bring the anti-gun lobby out from hiding.

A couple of days beforehand, we put out a media statement sympathizing with the victims and acknowledging the barbaric way shooters were treated at the time.

If the anti-gun lobby did make a pre-emptive strike, then we would be there to ensure our views were also reported.

We expected the PM to reflect on his 'achievements on firearms' but not to come out pushing for even more restrictions.

He said he still loathed guns and said 'more could be done' about restricting firearms.

He said he was particularly concerned at the proliferation of pistols since rapid-fire rifles and shotguns were banned.

This was despite evidence to suggest the number of legally held pistols had declined.

He said nobody should have firearms (ie not just handguns) unless they are an essential part of their job.

"I think there's still more that can be done on that front; I do. I'd always seize opportunities to do more," he told the media.

"We just do not need guns," he said.

Liberal MPs target shooters

In September, two Federal Liberal MP's made specific mention of licensed shooters in commenting on the Commonwealth's crime database, Crimtrac.

Jason Wood (Member for La Trobe) and Greg Hunt (Member for Flinders) were reported in the Herald Sun as arguing for holders of gun licences to have 'extra information' recorded on Crimtrac.

Don't forget, this was just a month after he congratulated pistol shooters at the Commonwealth Games during a visit to the Melb International Shooting Club.

I'm sure if shooters at MISC knew the PM wanted to take their guns away from them a month later, that they would have given him a very different reception.

Many media outlets picked up on the PM's comments which drew sharp responses from shooting organizations including the CFCV.

Federal Opposition Leader, Kim Beazley rejected the PM's comments, saying he saw no reason to change our handgun laws.

The Victorian Labor and National Parties followed suit also rejecting the PM's comments.

The CFCV publicly challenged the Victorian Liberal party to also reject the PM's comments, but it is yet to do so.

The CFCV's Russell Pearson told The Age that *"if the aim of the changes to the law was to give firearm owners a hard time, then it has certainly achieved that."*

This will not only do nothing for tracking illegal firearms or people who have committed crimes, but our Olympians and Commonwealth Games champions and juniors (eg people above 12yo) will be cross-referenced with paedophiles and terrorists.

The CFCV raised this with Mr Hunt who denied he mentioned licensed shooters.

"If it was there to stop mental patients and crooks from getting hold of and using illegal firearms, then it has failed miserably, because these guns are still out there," he said.

"We just hope it won't take another tragedy like Port Arthur for everyone else to realise that."

A Current Affair took a different tack. It ran a story on the handgun 'epidemic' extensively quoting gun control groups.

If the Liberal Party has set out to lose the shooters' vote, then it could not do it any better.

It has a federal leader who, in ten years, has overseen two buybacks and floated the possibility of a third.

It had a state leader who did not disagree with him.

So, in the absence of the Victorian Liberal Party coming out against the PM's comments just seven months before a state election, how could they possibly hope for our support?

We cannot afford to be complacent. We need every shooter to support our efforts to protect what they do.

Doing your shopping at a Ritchies IGA is an ideal way of doing this (see front page ad).

We checked with the journalist who confirmed that that is what he was told.

The journalist has a watertight reputation—even among his counterparts at The Age, so you can work out for yourself who to believe.

So, if you ever see a *how-to-vote* card with either Mr Wood's or Mr Hunt's names on it, remember how they intend to "represent you".

Labor MPs abandon lobby group

Earlier this year, The Age ran a 'correction' in relation to a story it published on duck shooting in December after representation from the CFCV.

The story, titled "No need to duck for cover: Labor MPs", incorrectly implied that a group called *ALP Members Opposed to Duck Shooting* included Labor MPs.

It did not. The group is comprised of a very small number of ordinary members of the party who simply disagree with their party's stance to allow the continuation of duck shooting.

The CFCV surveyed every Labor MP in Victoria as to whether they are - or have been—a member of that group.

CFCV website

The CFCV website is the best way to stay in touch with what is happening to your sport on the political front.

Issues affecting your sport are regularly posted on the 'Current News' page.

Sue Field and Game, says Laurie

Ant-duck shooting protester, Laurie Levy was having a bad week when duck season 2006 started.

He was happy to tell the media gathering for the opening weekend that government officials confiscated a number of fallen birds from a mobile veterinary clinic.

However he was less happy when the operator of the clinic, Ms Denise Garret, told the media that only one freckled duck was handed to (ie not taken by) wildlife officers.

Surprise, surprise, not one Labor MP admitted to being a member of that group.

One Labor MP made his party's position very clear to us:

"MODS is not a constituent unit of the ALP. They do not speak for the ALP or the Bracks Government"

The Herald Sun ran a similar story titled "MPs swing behind duck shooting ban" and ran a similar correction also after representation from the CFCV.

The fact both major papers ran corrections is a significant fact in its own right.

While the name of the group does not actually state that it includes Labor MPs, the group has had plenty of time and opportunity to 'set the record straight' - but has not done this.

We also post voting recommendations prior to state and federal elections on the site about a week before the elections.

If you have email access, why not sign up to our email list ?

Instead, it has allowed readers to continue to think it has support that it does not have.

The group's spokesperson is Trevor Poulton who we assume is himself a member of the ALP.

We would hope that Mr Poulton's party will speak with him to get the group to change its name to avoid future confusion.

This issue got a good run on "The Outdoor Life" show on 94.1FM (city area).

We mention this, because this program is a great show for anybody with an interest in fishing and shooting. You can listen to it on Wednesday mornings 7am to 10am.

You can also download the program from www.outdoorlife.id.au

This way you will stay informed on matters affecting the shooting sports including voting recommendations.

Join today by going to the website—www.cfcv.org.au—and then click on 'Join our email list'.

The last paragraph says quite a bit about Laurie's sense of logic. It says:

"Farmers who saw ducks as a pest could sue the Field and Game Association for putting up nesting boxes."

That was in reference to a discussion on the ability of farmers to get permits to destroy ducks.

Laurie clearly had a bad week.

The good news is that he'll be back next year. That'll give us the opportunity to remind the media how silly he can be.



The CFCV surveyed all Labor MPs to ascertain whether they were members of ALPMODS.

While others didn't respond, we note Ballarat East MLA Geoff Howard didn't either.

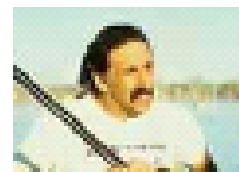
Mr Howard is known for his anti duck shooting views.

What is it about people whose surname is "Howard" ??



Join CFCV's email list by going to it's website at www.cfcv.org.au.

It's free !



Laurie Levy had a bad week when this year's duck season got underway.

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Protecting your sport



CFCV President, Bill Paterson, says shooters are faring well in the media stakes, but that we have to remain diligent on the political front as we head towards this year's state election.

Member organisations of the CFCV are:

- Field & Game Australia
- Firearm Traders Association
- IPSC
- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia
- Target Rifle Victoria
- Victorian Amateur Pistol Association
- Victorian Clay Target Association
- Victorian Rifle Association
- Vintagers (Order of Edwardian Gunners) Inc

**Check our website -
www.cfcv.org.au**

Authorised by Bill Paterson, CFCV Melbourne.
Printed by Fedex Kinkos, Exhibition St, Melbourne

A word from our President

The shooting sports have been getting some encouraging media exposure lately.

This is not just good fortune, but is the result of a lot of people from many facets of the shooting sports working together.

Changes to the Firearms Act and the Commonwealth Games were reported in a very positive way whilst the opening of the Duck Season received very little media coverage.

The newly formed Police Minister's Firearms Consultative Committee assisted the Dept of Justice in drafting desperately needed amendments to the Firearms Act. These were accepted in the Spring session of Parliament with the support of all parties.

It was most encouraging to see the cross party support and positive reporting for changes which were, for once, going to make legislation better for shooters.

The FCC is continuing to work through an extensive list of the many issues which continue to make a shooter's life overly complex and in some cases, near impossible.

The Commonwealth Games were a great success particularly for shooters, with the Australian team performing well and the overall outstanding competitor award going to the brilliant pistol shooter from India Samresh Jung.

At the Opening ceremony it seemed that every second flag bearer was a shooter, (even the Skeet Shooter Ray Martin referred to as the "well known Sheet Scooter"!)

This was all great publicity for shooting.

On the other side of the coin, we were notably absent from the media for Duck Opening.

This was despite Laurie and his associates desperately trying to stir up media attention.

Not surprisingly, the international media, who were sent here to cover the Commonwealth Games, preferred to do just that, rather than accept the invitation extended by the "ALP Members Against Duck Hunting" to decamp Melbourne for a duck swamp.

Likewise, our local media preferred to stay with the big stories at the Games rather than report Laurie claiming for the 23rd time "this is the last Duck Season in Victoria".

It was gratifying to see the support given by politicians, from Minister Thwaites in his granting the season, increasing the bag limits and putting the Blue Winged Shoveler back on the game list, to the Premier when he was questioned as to whether we should be having a season.

As for the group calling themselves "ALP Members Opposed to Duck Hunting", they have no formal support from the ALP and their activities should not be seen as being in any way reflective of the Victorian ALP.

The 28th April was the 10th anniversary of the massacre at Port Arthur and the media ran various articles, mainly dealing with the lunatic Bryant and the result of the tightened laws and Buy-back. Are we safer as a result?

Unfortunately, we still do not have uniformity in our gun laws, but have had many restrictions imposed on shooters willing to obey the law and nothing at all done as far as criminals and illegal guns go.

As the anniversary approached, I was quite concerned at what tack the media were going to take as CFCV media releases were getting little coverage.

It appeared that the media already had their stories prepared.

This concern was further heightened when John Howard made his outrageous and emotive statements citing his view that guns are evil and should only be held by those whose profession required them.

In fact, the articles were generally well balanced, particularly those in The Age on the 28th.

Finally, we have the upcoming State election to prepare for.

This is absorbing a lot of our Executive's time.

However we are making good progress and have agreed our strategy and are now developing our tactics and drawing up budgets to finance our campaign.

We have good data on which electorates we have a high representation of shooters in and where we can expect to be able to influence the result.

We will be taking a focused approach, concentrating on candidates who we know to be pro or anti shooting rather than parties as a whole.

Certainly, with this approach and the addition of the new political party, Country Alliance, it promises to be a very interesting election, despite the fact that it is unlikely that Labour will lose government.

**Bill Paterson
President, FCV**