



URGENT OPEN LETTER TO ALL ASSOCIATIONS & CLUBS

Re: **Prime Ministers Handgun proposals & Police Ministers Conference 5/6th November**

You should all be aware of the proposals put forward by the Prime Minister for *consideration* by all State and Territory leaders on the 24th of October. This has been mentioned widely, but not correctly in the media. The Prime Minister's proposals to the State Premiers for consideration is as follows, "Restricting classes of legal handguns to those meeting sporting shooter classifications for Commonwealth and Olympic Games and *similar events* or destined for Police, Security or military uses. All other Handguns will be banned. Advice as to the appropriate classifications will be provided by organisations representing sporting shooters through the Advisory Council". *Similar events* was only added after pressure from concerned sporting shooters.

What *similar events* means is still vague. Discussions with representatives of the Federal Minister for Justice in Canberra have determined this means, "*all activities related to State, National and International events, including Collecting and Recreational Sport Shooting*". It is important to note that this "interpretation" has not been put in writing, it is just verbal.. *However the devil will be in the detail*. This detail will be resolved to some degree, next week in Darwin when the Australian Police Ministers meet on the 5/6th of November.

With this concern in mind the Combined Shooters and Firearms Council requested an urgent meeting with the SA Police Minister Pat Conlon. The Council's Legislative Committee met with him yesterday the 30th October. Minister Conlon was forthright in confirming to us that "*he and the Government's focus was on the illegal guns and the illegal possession and use of unregistered guns, not on the sporting or recreational use by licenced shooters and collectors and members of Clubs and Associations*" and that "*further focus was required by the Commonwealth on controlling Australia's borders and restricting the entry of illegal guns*". These are the very issues that the Combined Shooters and Firearms Council (on behalf of all Sporting Shooting and Collectors Clubs and Associations in SA affected by the Prime Ministers proposals) have been consistently saying is where the real problem lies.

Minister Conlon was hopeful that the this would be the view of all State and Territory leaders, and that they will come to a reasonable agreement in Darwin. However, remember the Commonwealth Government and the pressure that might be applied on the States from Canberra.

It is most important and urgent that all Club members and all Associations contact their Federal MP's and SA Senators and ask them to represent their concerns for the Commonwealth to concentrate on the issues of illegal guns rather than further restrictions on law-abiding shooters/collectors and to listen to the States on the real issues of illegal guns.

It is the Federal Government who may apply pressure to the States as they did in 1996, so it is important to also contact State MP's and Legislative Councillors and request they express their concerns to Police Minister Conlon and Premier Rann.

In view of Police Minister Conlon's advice to the Council, the calls by some for marches, rallies etc, are inappropriate at this time. Instead the Council will call a meeting of all Clubs and State Association representatives and inform them of the SA Government's position following the APMC meeting in Darwin. Information on the date, time and venue for this meeting will be forwarded to you all shortly.

David Bennett

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bennett'.

President

Dated: 31st October 2002