

Flash in the Pan — Estimating the Impacts of the Tasmanian Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026

A report prepared for Curious Minds Media

**Final Report
31 July 2026**

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Executive summary

Introduction

We have been engaged by Curious Minds Media to assess the benefits and costs of the proposed Tasmanian Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026. As at 31st July 2026, only New South Wales has introduced new firearms restrictions and a corresponding gun buyback scheme in response to the Bondi mass shooting in December 2025.

The *Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026* proposes wide-ranging changes to Tasmania's firearms framework, partly to prepare for the National Firearms Register and partly in response to the December 2025 Bondi attack. The principal measures include:

- reclassifying straight-pull and button/lever-release centre-fire rifles and shotguns as Category C firearms; introducing magazine-capacity limits for certain Category A and B firearms;
- making Australian citizenship and Tasmanian residency the default requirements for a firearms licence;
- tightening the rules governing lending, storage-location notifications and licence verification; expanding police inspection powers;
- modernising dealer records; and
- strengthening offences and penalties for stealing or possessing stolen firearms.
- Owners who are no longer eligible to possess reclassified firearms, or who cannot satisfy the new citizenship requirements, may be required to surrender them through a buyback scheme that is still being negotiated between the Tasmanian and Australian governments.

The Government's Bill does not impose a general limit on the number of firearms that an individual licence holder may own. However, ownership caps have been proposed, as amendments to the Bill.

- Tasmanian Labor has announced that it intends to seek limits of five firearms for recreational hunters and ten for primary producers and competitive or sporting shooters, with scope for exemptions through the Commissioner of Police. This approach is supported by the Greens and some independent members.
- Separately, independent MP Peter George has publicly advocated a general cap of six firearms. At this stage, these appear to be political statements rather than formally

published amendment clauses, and the precise design — including exemptions, transitional arrangements and any associated buyback — may therefore change before the Bill is debated.

Background and context

On 14 December 2025, two men opened fire on a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach, New South Wales. Fifteen innocent people, mostly Jewish Australians, were killed. One of the perpetrators was shot and killed by police. That individual, who was not an Australian citizen, held a current New South Wales firearms licence, and the firearms used — two rifles and a shotgun — were legally registered to him.

Within hours, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stated that Australian gun laws — a responsibility of states and territories — would change. After an urgent meeting of National Cabinet on 15 December 2025, media reports emerged that state and territory leaders had agreed to make significant changes.

Since then, two issues have dominated the national debate:

- i) The number of firearms an individual with a Category A or B licence can own, especially for the ‘genuine reasons’ of target/sports shooting and hunting (see Appendix A for information about licence classifications and acceptable ‘genuine reasons’).
 - a. In late December 2025, New South Wales legislated to limit the number of firearms a hunting licence holder can own to four, and a target shooter licence holder to ten. Primary producers have also been limited to ten firearms. Previously, there was no upper limit on ownership for any of these licence types.
 - b. New South Wales followed the Western Australian model, introduced in 2024, which limited hunters to five firearms and target shooters and primary producers to 10 (from previously no limits).
 - c. Some governments (Queensland, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Victoria) have indicated that they will not be placing caps on gun ownership.
- ii) The type of firearms that can be owned.
 - a. New South Wales has legislated to reclassify all lever-release, button-release, straight pull and pump action firearms, into the heavily restricted Category C.¹
 - b. Western Australia reclassified lever- and button-release firearms in late 2024.

¹ A Category C firearms licence in NSW is highly restricted, primarily available to primary producers or professional pest controllers for specific, high-need scenarios. It covers self-loading rimfire rifles (max 10-round magazine) and pump-action/self-loading shotguns (max 5-round magazine), generally requiring proof that a Cat A/B licence is insufficient.

- c. Some governments (Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory, to date) have openly stated that they will not be reclassifying any firearms while others (South Australia) have not disclosed any intent to do so.

Economic importance of the Tasmanian firearm owner community

Tasmania has a particularly large and active firearm-owning community relative to its population. In December 2025, the state had more than 37,000 firearms licences and over 155,000 registered firearms, giving it one of the highest—on the available national figures, the highest—rates of lawful firearm ownership in Australia. Most firearms are registered in Categories A and B, and hunting is by far the most common genuine reason for holding a licence, recorded against approximately 34,500 licences in 2024. A further 5,000 licences were associated with sport or target shooting. These figures reflect the importance of firearms not only for recreation, but also for primary production, pest management, animal welfare and established rural and regional lifestyles.

This community supports an economically meaningful network of businesses and employment across Tasmania. A Tasmanian Government-commissioned study estimated that recreational hunting and sports shooting generated expenditure of approximately \$133.5 million in 2022, contributed \$88.4 million to Gross State Product and supported 676 full-time-equivalent jobs. This comprised \$48.0 million in direct economic activity and \$40.4 million through supply-chain and other flow-on effects. Hunting accounted for around three-quarters of the measured contribution—including \$29.3 million from deer hunting and \$37.9 million from hunting other species—while sports shooting contributed a further \$21.2 million. Expenditure is dispersed across firearms and ammunition dealers, clubs, vehicles and equipment, fuel, groceries, accommodation, hospitality and other services, meaning that the economic footprint extends well beyond the specialist firearms industry (BDO EconSearch and AMR, 2023).

The contribution of firearm owners also extends beyond measured market expenditure. Recreational hunters provide landholders with an important source of voluntary pest-control effort, supplementing commercial and government programs and helping to limit agricultural losses and environmental damage caused by deer, rabbits and other invasive animals. This role is increasingly relevant as Tasmanian farmers report rising pest-management costs, while the Tasmanian Government has itself supported expansion of the Farmer Assist program linking landholders with qualified volunteer hunters. Hunting and shooting also provide recreational, social, physical-activity and wellbeing benefits to participants. Accordingly, reforms that materially reduce participation or limit access to firearms may impose wider costs on regional communities, primary producers and associated businesses that are not captured by the direct compensation paid under a buyback.

What we did

This report undertakes a comprehensive economic and policy assessment of the proposed *Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026* and the additional firearm-ownership limits that may be pursued during the parliamentary process. It examines the principal provisions of the Bill, that are connected with the proposed national buyback scheme put forward in response to the Bondi shootings — namely the proposed reclassification of straight-pull and button/lever-release firearms into Category C and the possibility that Labor and members of the crossbench may secure broader limits on the number of firearms held by individual licence holders.

The report begins by examining the cultural and economic footprint of lawful firearm ownership in Tasmania. It considers the importance of hunting, sports shooting, primary production and pest management; the scale of the firearm-owning community; and the expenditure, employment and supply-chain activity supported by these pursuits. This establishes the economic baseline against which the proposed reforms are assessed and identifies the channels through which costs may arise for firearm owners, primary producers, dealers, clubs, regional businesses and the wider Tasmanian economy.

The report then reviews the academic and policy literature on firearm regulation and buybacks, with particular attention to firearm homicide and mass-shooting outcomes. Building on the analysis undertaken for Victoria and New South Wales, it applies econometric and statistical techniques to test the central policy proposition that reducing the stock of legally registered firearms would materially reduce firearm homicides or the risk of mass shootings. The analysis considers alternative specifications and robustness checks, while recognising the substantial statistical limitations created by the rarity and idiosyncratic nature of mass-shooting events.

The economic modelling assesses two distinct policy scenarios:

- **Reclassification only scenario:** implementation of the proposed firearm reclassifications and related provisions of the Bill, without a general ownership cap or 20 per cent buyback. This scenario estimates the effects on affected firearm owners, dealers and the supply chain, together with the associated administrative, compliance, fiscal and economic costs.
- **Reclassification plus ownership limits scenario:** a stylised scheme under which approximately 20 per cent of Tasmania's registered firearms are acquired and destroyed, reflecting the possibility that firearm-ownership limits are added to the Bill. The cost–benefit analysis applies both evidence-based assumptions consistent with the empirical findings and a deliberately favourable specification to test whether the policy could be justified under more optimistic assumptions.

For each scenario, the report estimates the direct fiscal cost to government and the broader effects on the Tasmanian economy. We utilised a macroeconomic model to assess impacts on Gross State Product, employment, household consumption, industry activity on the

Tasmanian economy and the Rest of Australia (RoA), incorporating both the fiscal shock and disruption to the firearms-related supply chain. Taken together, the analysis provides a comprehensive assessment of whether the proposed reforms are likely to generate net benefits for the Tasmanian community and whether their stated public-safety objectives could be achieved through less costly or more targeted measures.

Our findings

Do more guns lead to more firearm homicides?

The empirical analysis undertaken in this report applies a range of econometric and statistical techniques to examine the relationship between firearm availability and violent crime outcomes in Australia. Across multiple model specifications, the results show no statistically significant or robust causal relationship between the stock of firearms and the incidence of mass shootings or firearm homicides. The rarity and idiosyncratic nature of mass shooting events also make it difficult to establish any credible population-level relationship between firearm prevalence and these incidents.

The broader evidence indicates that long-term changes in firearm homicide rates are more plausibly explained by underlying economic, social and demographic trends than by discrete changes in the stock of legally registered firearms. Accordingly, the evidence does not support the central proposition underlying either the proposed reclassification or a broader buyback—that reducing lawful firearm ownership in Tasmania would produce a measurable reduction in mass shootings or firearm homicides.

Cost benefit analysis of the reclassification and associated gun buyback policy

The cost–benefit analysis examines a stylised scheme under which approximately 20 per cent of Tasmania’s 155,477 registered firearms — around 31,100 firearms — are acquired by the Tasmanian Government and destroyed.² This is a conservative assumption: available comparisons suggest that ownership limits and reclassification could reduce Tasmania’s firearm stock by between 25 and 30 per cent. However, we have kept the analysis conservative and aligned with previous studies related to Victoria and NSW.

² We acknowledge that figures published for the most recent month indicate a total of 152,037 registered firearms. However, in February 2026 the Commissioner of Police stated that there were over 157,000 firearms registered in Tasmania (Adams, 2026). Based on data for the 12 months from 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2026, 4,218 firearms were surrendered/seized. Based on these 12-month figures, it appears exceptionally unlikely that firearm seizures/surrenders within the period February to July 2026 could explain an apparent decrease of around 5,000 registered firearms. This suggests there may be issues with data reporting/accuracy. Therefore, in this report we use figures published to reflect the year 2025, to not only reflect a mid-point between the two recent sets of numbers given for 2026 but also to align with the firearm misuse data used in this report plus published Australian Government data that has formed the basis of federal policy deliberations.

Under an evidence-based assessment, the benefits of the scheme are extremely limited because the empirical analysis does not establish that reducing the lawful firearm stock (i.e. firearms owned by licensed gun owners) would prevent mass shootings or firearm homicides.³ The only comparatively defensible benefits arise from possible reductions in accidents and other relatively rare firearm-related harms. These benefits are small relative to the costs imposed on taxpayers (for the gun buyback), firearm owners and affected businesses along the supply-chain.

We then undertake a deliberately favourable assessment that gives the policy the strongest plausible benefit claims. This scenario assumes that the buyback would:

- prevent all future mass shootings in Tasmania, whether from a licensed or unlicensed firearm;
- reduce firearm homicides and associated injuries as per the econometric analysis (that did not show a statistically significant relationship);
- reduce firearm accidents and suicides;
- reduce other firearm-enabled violent crime; and
- generate associated health, policing and justice-system savings.

The costs include:

- the fiscal cost of compensating firearm owners and administering the scheme (see below);
- the deadweight cost of raising taxation to fund the buyback scheme;
- household welfare losses from reduced choice, sentimental value and compliance burdens; and
- losses to firearm dealers and the wider supply chain through reduced margins, ammunition and accessory sales, inventory write-downs and business closures.

*Even on these highly optimistic assumptions, the estimated gross benefits are only around \$27 million in net present value terms, compared with gross costs of \$128.7 million. **The resulting benefit–cost ratio is approximately 0.21, meaning that each dollar of cost produces only around 21 cents of benefit.** The policy therefore fails the standard economic welfare test for proceeding even when its benefits are deliberately overstated. Under assumptions more consistent with the empirical evidence, the net social loss would be significantly larger.*

³ We note here that the Port Arthur massacre in 1996 was carried out with unlicensed firearms, specifically semi-automatic rifles that were unregistered and obtained illegally.

Fiscal cost of the gun buyback

The fiscal cost of the modelled 20 per cent buyback would be concentrated in its first year. Assuming average compensation of \$2,000 per firearm, including associated accessories and equipment but excluding ammunition, the direct compensation cost is estimated at **\$62.2 million in nominal terms**. In present-value terms, this equates to approximately \$58.1 million in 2025–26 dollars.

The scheme would also require additional expenditure on implementation, administration and compliance. These functions include processing compensation claims, verifying surrendered firearms, maintaining registry records, storing and destroying firearms, monitoring compliance, resolving disputes and coordinating across government agencies. Administration costs are estimated at approximately **\$2.8 million in the first year**, declining to around **\$0.7 million annually** over the remainder of the forward estimates, for a total of **\$4.9 million**. Including an estimated **\$20.0 million deadweight cost of raising the taxation required to fund the scheme**, the total fiscal and associated taxation burden is estimated at **\$87.2 million over four years**.

Table 1 Fiscal costs of Tasmanian gun buyback, \$m nominal

Cost category	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Buyback (\$m)	62.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Administration (\$m)	2.8	0.7	0.7	0.7
Total (\$m)	65.0	0.7	0.7	0.7
Memo:				
<i>Deadweight economic cost of raising taxation to fund buyback</i>	19.5	0.2	0.2	0.2

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis.

Economic cost of gun buyback on Tasmania

The economic costs of the proposed Tasmanian gun buyback extend beyond the direct fiscal outlay. Funding the scheme diverts household consumption and investment towards an activity that does not generate offsetting productivity or output gains, while reduced firearm sales and participation affect dealers, suppliers and other businesses connected to hunting and sports shooting. These broader effects were estimated using Qaive's Computable General Equilibrium model, which captures changes in Gross State Product, employment and private expenditure across Tasmania and the Rest of Australia.

Table 2 (below) reports the results of the analysis and includes supply-chain effects, capturing reductions in firearm-related industry activity and downstream (retail) impacts. Including supply-chain effects materially amplifies the economic cost, demonstrating that the buyback reduces both public and private economic activity.

- Under full Tasmanian Government funding with supply-chain impacts, **Tasmanian GSP declines by \$39.5 million and GDP in the Rest of Australia by \$12.6 million over the four years, employment falls by 119 FTEs in Tasmania and 35 FTEs in the Rest of Australia, and private expenditure declines by \$10.4 million in Tasmania and a further \$38.1 million in the Rest of Australia.**
- Under a 50/50 funding split, Tasmania experiences a \$25.4 million reduction in GSP with a further \$66.9 million reduction in Australian GDP, 64 FTE job losses in Tasmania with a further 119 FTEs in the Rest of Australia, and a \$8.6 million fall in private expenditure in Tasmania and a further \$72.1 million fall in the Rest of Australia (Table 5.3).

Table 2 Economic impacts of gun buyback on Tasmania and the Rest of Australia, 2026-27 to 2029-30, including supply-chain impact

Impact NPV (7%, 4 yrs)	GSP/GDP (\$m)	Employment (FTE) Year-1 impact	Private expenditure (\$m) Year-1 impact
Scheme 100% funded by Tasmania			
<i>Impacts on Tasmanian economy</i>	-39.5	-119	-10.4
<i>Impacts on RoA</i>	-12.6	-35	-38.1
Total Impact	-52.1	-154	-48.5
Scheme jointly funded (50/50) by Tasmania and Commonwealth			
<i>Impact on Tasmania</i>	-25.4	-64	-8.6
<i>Impact on Rest of Australia</i>	-66.9	-119	-72.1
Total impact	-92.3	-183	-80.7

Source: Tulipwood Economics and Qaive's CGE model.

Reclassification-only scenario

Cost Benefit Analysis

The reclassification-only scenario examines the effects of moving straight-pull and button/lever-release firearms into Category C without imposing a broader cap on firearm ownership. The analysis assumes that approximately 1,500 firearms would be affected—around one per cent of Tasmania’s registered firearm stock and roughly one-twentieth of the number surrendered under the modelled 20 per cent buyback. Because detailed information on the affected owners and firearms is not yet available, the results are indicative and are based largely on proportionately scaling the broader buyback analysis, with an allowance for administrative costs that would not decline fully in proportion to the scheme’s size.

The indicative cost–benefit analysis for the reclassification-only scenario estimates gross costs of approximately \$7.0 million. **Even under deliberately favourable assumptions, estimated benefits are only around \$1.4 million, producing a benefit–cost ratio of approximately 0.19 and a net social cost of \$5.7 million.** When benefits are restricted to the smaller and more defensible categories — such as possible reductions in accidents, suicides and public-service costs — estimated benefits fall to approximately \$0.3 million and the benefit–cost ratio declines to around 0.04.

The reclassification-only scenario performs poorly in the CBA because the evidence does not establish that removing these firearms would materially reduce firearm homicide or mass shooting risk.

Fiscal and economic impact

The reclassification scheme is estimated to involve a direct budgetary outlay (in nominal terms) of approximately \$3.5 million, rising to around \$4.6 million once the deadweight cost of raising taxation is included. **Proportionately scaling the economic modelling for the full gun buyback scenario based on the number of firearms re-purchased by the Tasmanian Government suggests a reduction of approximately \$1.3 million in Tasmanian GSP and \$4.6 million in national output, together with a small number of Tasmanian and RoA job losses in FTE terms in the first year.**

Although these impacts are much smaller than those of a general ownership cap and 20 per cent buyback, the central conclusion is unchanged: the reclassification would impose real fiscal, economic and welfare costs without a demonstrated offsetting public-safety benefit.

Conclusion

There is no statistically credible link between the stock of licensed firearms and mass shootings in Australia

The analysis presented in this report leads to a clear conclusion. **The available econometric and statistical evidence does not support the proposition that reducing the stock of legally registered firearms in Tasmania would produce a measurable reduction in mass shootings or firearm homicides.** These events are rare, idiosyncratic and driven by complex individual and social factors that cannot credibly be explained by variations in aggregate firearm ownership. The principal public-safety rationale for either a broad ownership cap or a large-scale buyback is therefore not supported by the available evidence.

On a range of scenarios, the proposed legislation fail to pass a properly specified cost benefit analysis

When assessed through a formal cost–benefit framework, a 20 per cent Tasmanian gun buyback performs poorly. Even under deliberately favourable assumptions — including granting the policy credit for preventing all future mass shootings in Tasmania and reducing other firearm-related deaths and injuries — the estimated benefits remain substantially below the social costs.

Table 3 (below) summarises the results of the cost-benefit analysis across the gun buyback and reclassification-only scenarios. All four scenarios considered fail to pass a properly specified CBA — with the range of net social benefits between four cents and 21 cents for every dollar invested in the Gun Buyback or Reclassification-only policies.

Table 3 Summary of cost benefit analysis results, by scenario

Scenario	Gross Costs (\$m, NPV)	Gross Benefits (\$m, NPV)	Net benefit NPV)	social (\$m,	Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR)
Central Case – 20% buyback	128.7	8.4	-120.3		0.07
Positive case – 20% buyback	128.7	27.0	-101.7		0.21
Reclassification only – restricted benefit case	7.0	0.3	-6.7		0.04
Reclassification only – positive benefit case	7.0	1.4	-5.7		0.19

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis. Some numbers do not add exactly due to rounding error.

The fiscal and economic impacts are negative and significant in the context of the size of Tasmania

The scheme would also impose substantial fiscal and economy-wide costs. A 20 per cent buyback is estimated to involve compensation for around 31,100 firearms and **generate a total fiscal and associated taxation burden of approximately \$87.2 million over four years.**

- Under the central jointly-funded scenario, including supply-chain impacts, **Tasmanian GSP would decline by around \$25.4 million, with total national output falling by approximately \$92.3 million. Employment would fall by an estimated 64 full-time-equivalent jobs in Tasmania and 183 nationally in the first year, while private expenditure would decline by around \$80.7 million across Australia.** Commonwealth cost-sharing would redistribute part of this burden, but it would not eliminate the underlying economic loss.

The narrower reclassification provisions set out in the Tasmanian Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026 would affect fewer firearms and consequently impose smaller aggregate costs than a general ownership cap and buyback. Nevertheless, they would still impose compensation, compliance, administrative and business costs on lawful firearm owners and the associated supply chain, without a demonstrated public-safety benefit. More broadly, the findings highlight the importance of subjecting firearm regulation to the same standards of evidence, proportionality and value for money as other major policy interventions.

1 The cultural and economic footprint of gun ownership in Tasmania

1.1 Introduction

Firearm ownership in Australia reflects a combination of historical, cultural and economic influences that extend well beyond contemporary policy debates. While Australia has never had the same scale of civilian gun ownership as some other countries, firearms have long been embedded in rural life, agricultural practice, hunting and sporting traditions (Alpers, Rossetti & Wilson, 2020). Historical factors have also played a role: firearm skills contributed to Australia's military performance and, conversely, returning servicemen from conflicts such as the First and Second World Wars and Vietnam contributed to familiarity with firearms and, in some cases, brought weapons or firearm skills back into civilian life — though this was not the dominant driver of ownership (Squires, 2014).

Over time, a regulated domestic market developed around firearms and related goods and services, supporting a modest but economically meaningful supply chain (Australian Parliament, 2015). Understanding this broader context is important, as it highlights that firearm ownership in Australia is shaped by practical use, cultural norms and institutional settings, rather than being solely a function of crime or public safety considerations.

Tasmania has a strong tradition of lawful firearm ownership associated with hunting, recreational shooting, primary production and regional lifestyles, while also holding a unique place in Australia's firearm policy history due to the 1996 Port Arthur tragedy. That shooting, in which 35 people were killed, was committed by an unlicensed offender who used two military-style semi-automatic firearms. Subsequently, all Australian jurisdictions adopted the National Firearms Agreement (NFA).

1.2 Legal firearm ownership

Reasons for legal firearm ownership in Australia include sports/target shooting (both pistol and rifle/shotgun), recreational shooting/hunting, primary production, collecting, occupational (e.g., vertebrate pest control), animal welfare (e.g., veterinarians) and business (e.g., firearm dealers, both wholesale and retail).^{4,5}

⁴ Law enforcement and military are not included in this market.

⁵ Further detail about each of these 'genuine reasons' is at Appendix A.

In December 2025, there were over 4.1 million legally registered firearms and almost one million license holders (Australian Government, 2026; Table 1-1). In raw numbers, Tasmania has among the lowest number of firearms licenses and registered firearms.

When population size is taken into account however, according to the Australian Government figures Tasmania has the highest rate of firearm ownership in the country with around 6,000 licenses per 100,000 people and around 27,000 registered firearms per 100,000 people.

Table 1-1 Licenses and registered firearms by State and Territory, 2025

State/Territory	Licenses ⁶	Firearms
NSW	260,946	1,158,654
VIC	243,851	974,279
QLD	231,732	1,143,895
SA	61,498	329,580
WA	73,166	272,453
TAS	36,965	156,339
NT	14,268	55,678
ACT	7,315	22,857
TOTAL	929,741	4,113,735

Source: Australian Government (2026).

It is unclear whether dealer and collector stock was included in the figures for Tasmania reported in Table 1-1 (above). Tasmania Police firearms registry data does not provide breakdowns by individual, dealer, or collector stock. This should be taken into account in the discussion below, because if figures include dealer/collector stock this may distort the picture of ‘in use’ firearms held by private individuals only.

Most firearm licenses in Tasmania are Category A and B licenses⁷. The latest available data⁸ show that 143,055 firearms in total were registered against Category A and B licenses (Tasmania Police, 2026).

In 2024, 5,046 Tasmanian licenses were held for the reason of sport or target shooting.

- There are around 100 different target shooting disciplines, and types of competitive matches number in the hundreds in Australia.

⁶ There may be variations between different states and territories in how license numbers are counted. For example, some jurisdictions provide figures for individual licensees while others provide number of licenses. License numbers may be greater than individual licensees due to some individuals holding multiple licenses (e.g., a dealer’s license plus an individual license for a reason such as target shooting or hunting).

⁷ Further detail about Category types is at Appendix A.

⁸ Accessed 23 July 2026.

In 2024, 34,486 Tasmanian licenses were held for the genuine reason of hunting,⁹ indicating that over 90 per cent of licenses are held for that reason.¹⁰

- Hunted animals in Australia include both native (such as ducks) and introduced (sometimes referred to as pest, feral, or invasive) species. Introduced species include rabbits, hares, foxes, cats, pigs, wild dogs, goats, buffalo, and six species of deer. Many of those species have been recognised as major threats to important biodiversity, environmental, and agricultural resources (Bengsen & Sparkes, 2016).
- In Tasmania, hunted species include rabbits, hares, cats, goats, pigs, fallow deer, wallaby, five species of duck, and other birds (e.g., quail). Specific regulations and guidelines apply to a number of these species and include requirements to use certain types and/or minimum calibres of firearm.

Long-term, reliable statistics about firearm ownership in Australia are not available. Pre-1996 figures¹¹ are estimates only and based heavily on International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) data (e.g., van Dijk, van Kesteren & Smit, 2007) and other self-report surveys. In the 1989 ICVS survey, 404 out of 2012 Australian respondents indicated that they, or someone in their house, owned a firearm (around 20%). In 1992, 321 out of 2006 Australian respondents said they, or someone in their house, owned a firearm (around 16%).¹²

- In the late 1980s, it was estimated that there were around 3.5 to 4 million guns in private ownership in Australia (Chappell, Grabosky, Wilson, & Mukherjee, 1988).
- Gun control groups cited a figure of about 4.25 million guns pre-1996, while gun ownership groups cited up to 11 million.
- It has been suggested that there were about 3.2 million firearms in 1996 (Reuter & Mouzos, 2003). Based on 1996 population figures, that equates to around one firearm for every 5.7 people.
- In 1997, based on a NewsPoll telephone survey of 2,400 people, it was estimated that there were 2.5 million guns in Australia. Based on 1997 population figures, that equates to around one firearm for every 7.4 people.
 - That survey also estimated that 1.2 million people owned firearms and that the incidence of firearm ownership had dropped relatively little over the past 12 months due to many gun owners retaining possession of firearms (NewsPoll, 1997).

⁹ One individual can hold multiple license types and have multiple genuine reasons; exact breakdowns by individual are not routinely published. Information for 2024 was sourced from an undated Right to Information release.

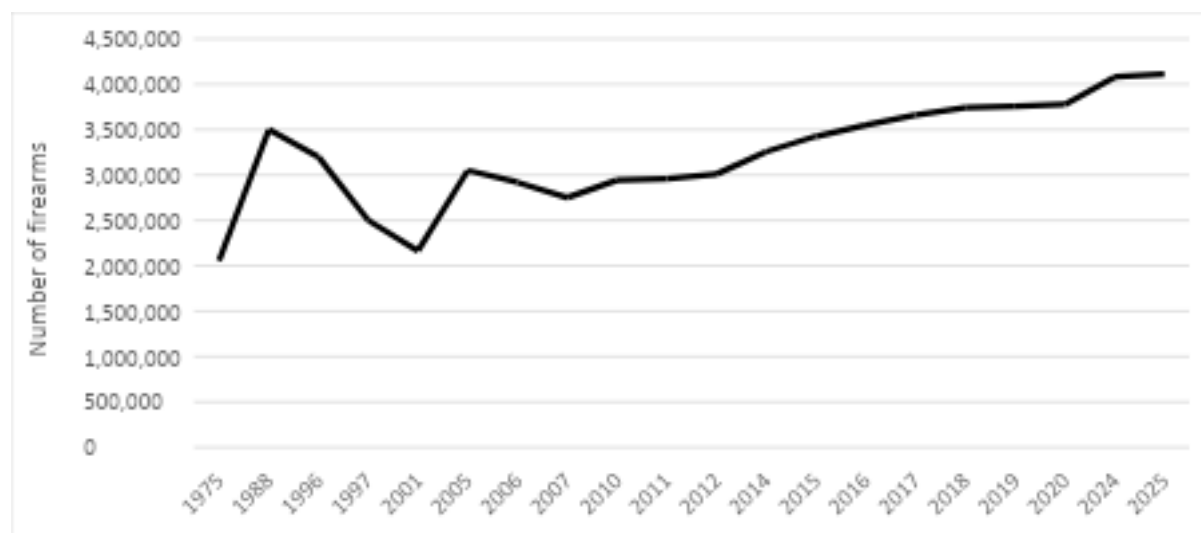
¹⁰ Based on the 2024/25 license figure of 37,207.

¹¹ That is, before all states and territories adopted the National Firearms Agreement, which required mandatory registration of all firearms. Some states already had registration systems but records are not publicly available.

¹² Australia did not participate in the 1996 survey.

States and territories have not consistently published post-1996 information about firearm ownership, however based on available information there is clear evidence of a steady Australia-wide increase commencing from around the mid 2000's (Figure 1-1).

Figure 1-1 Gun ownership in Australia, 1975 to 2025



Sources: Australia Institute (2025a); Australian Government (2026); Gunpolicy.org (2022); Reuter & Mouzos (2003). Note that the years 1975, 1988, and 1996 are estimates only and that data is not available for all years.

Gun ownership in Tasmania

Like the rest of Australia, reliable pre-1996 data is not available for Tasmania. One estimate (81,000 firearms in 1975; Harding, 1981), was derived from survey data. It was reported that before the repeal in 1996 of the Guns Act 1991 there were approximately 56,400 individual firearms licenses and an estimated 142,000 firearms owned, out of a population of around 474,500 (Warner, 1999).

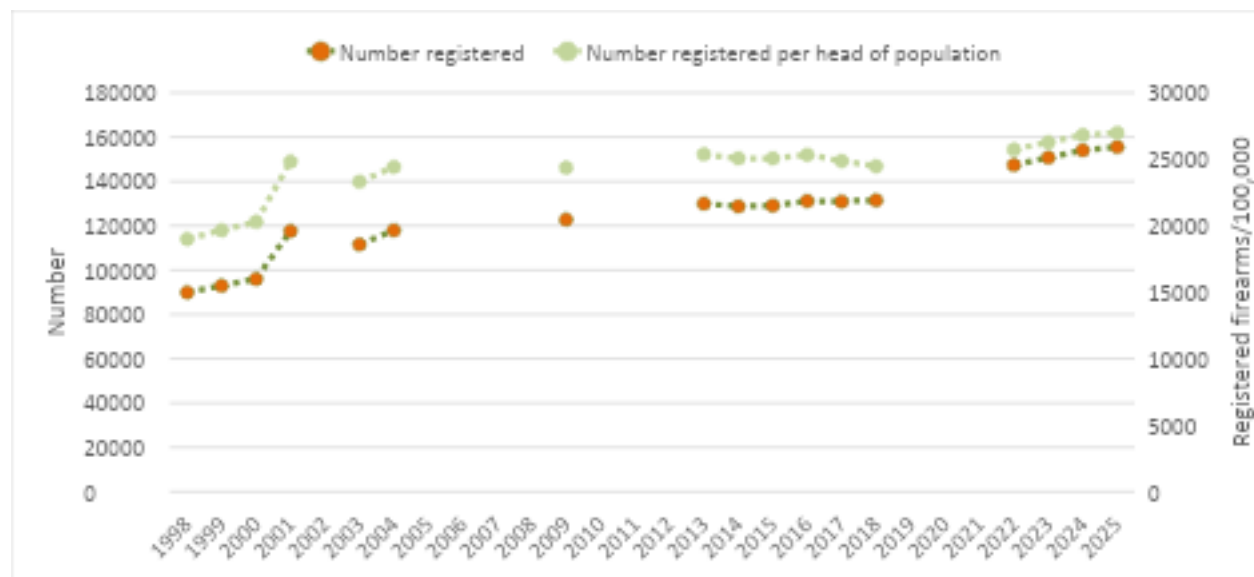
The ICVS found in 1989 that 24 out of 57 Tasmanian respondents (around 42%) reported that they or somebody in their household owned a firearm. By 2000, that had declined to 14 out of 49 respondents (around 29%).

- These figures should be viewed with caution. The percentage of ICVS respondents in 2000 who reported household firearm ownership was substantially greater than the percentage of the adult Tasmanian population¹³ who held a firearms license in 2000 (around 11%).
- This may indicate normal variation between individual-level and household-level measures; the percentage of people living in a household with firearms would be expected to be higher than the percentage of individual people owning firearms. It could also indicate that the ICVS was detecting both licensed and unlicensed ownership (or that responses given were not accurate).

¹³ This measure is used here, because only persons aged 18 years and over can possess a firearms license. The ICVS captures respondents aged 16 and over.

Post-1996 information about Tasmanian firearms ownership is incomplete, with many years of missing data. Nevertheless, it shows that firearm ownership has increased since the early 2000s not just in numbers but also rates (that is, gun ownership has increased, even when population increases are taken into account; Figure 1-2¹⁴).

Figure 1-2: Registered firearms, Tasmania, 1998-2025



Sources: Parliament of Tasmania (2005); Tasmania Police (2026); Tasmania Police (various years a, various years b); Warner (1999)

Note: Large dots indicate years for which data is available. Small dots indicate estimated levels.

1.3 Economic contribution of shooting and hunting

Firearm-related activities make a significant contribution to the economy.

- Shooting group estimates based on member surveys suggest that in an average year, around 40 per cent of members spend between \$1,000 and \$5,000 on firearms specifically, while an additional 10 per cent spend more than \$5,000 on travelling for shooting activities (Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, 2026).
- A 2006-07 Game Victoria mail survey found that, on average, hunters spend \$2,396 per year on their activities (RCMG, 2014).
- In 2011-12, a national survey that looked only at hunting expenditure found that the average direct expenditure on hunting was \$1,835 per person per annum, whereas indirect expenditure was \$2,168 (Finch, Murray, Hoy, & Baxter, 2014).

¹⁴ Note that early and later years may not be directly comparable due to possible differences in counting/reporting practices over time; there was insufficient information available to assess this possibility.

- Statistics from the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (DPI) showed that in the 2019-20 financial year, hunting was worth more than \$1.4 billion to that state's economy, which was greater than wool output in the same year (\$1.09 billion). (Hogan, 2021).

More detailed economic analyses show that shooting and hunting activities support multiple types of businesses. These include a combination of 'on trip' and 'off trip'¹⁵ suppliers such as firearm and other specialist hunting/sport shooting equipment dealers (gun shops) and importers, hunting guides, taxidermists, hunting and sport shooting clubs, dog breeders and trainers, 4WD vehicle equipment retailers, vehicle repairers and dealers, camping equipment dealers, and broader 'tourism type' services (e.g., food, fuel, and accommodation services including campsites, caravan parks, motels, and hotels).

Table 1-2 summarises key findings from recent reports on the economic contribution of shooting and hunting to gross expenditure, Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/Gross State Product (GSP), and fulltime equivalent (FTE) jobs.

¹⁵ 'On trip' expenses typically measured in studies include: Fuel; Long-distance transport (e.g., airfares if hunting interstate); Takeaway and restaurant meals; Groceries; Accommodation; Ammunition; Other supplies; Vehicle repairs; Competition fees/fees to landowners/fees to hunting guides. 'Off trip' expenses include: Firearms; Ammunition; Other equipment (e.g., camping goods, photography equipment); Specialised clothing; Vehicles/boats (specific for purposes); Vehicle repairs; Taxidermy fees; License fees; Hunting dog expenses; Hunting/shooting club memberships; Training/practice (e.g., range visits to test equipment).

Table 1-2 Economic contribution of shooting and hunting, recent evidence

	Economic and social impacts of recreational hunting and shooting (RCMG, 2019)	Economic contribution of recreational hunting and shooting to the Tasmanian Economy (BDO EconSearch and AMR, 2023)	Economic impact of recreational hunting in NSW (RCMG, 2017)	Economic contribution of recreational hunting in NSW (RCMG, 2023)	Economic contribution of recreational hunting in Victoria (RCMG, 2020)	Estimating the economic impact of hunting in Victoria in 2013 (RCMG, 2014)
Year/s conducted	2019	2023	2017	2022	2019	2013
State	National	Tasmania	New South Wales	New South Wales	Victoria	Victoria
Method/s	Online survey	Online survey	Online survey	Online survey	Online survey	Online and telephone survey
Study focus	Hunting and sports shooting	Hunting and sports shooting	Hunting only	Hunting only	Hunting only	Hunting only
Sample size	16,576 hunters and sports shooters	953 Tasmanian game hunting license and sports shooting license holders	2,422 NSW hunting license holders (1,690 Restricted Class License holders, 465 General Class License holders, 267 who did not hold a NSW game hunting license)	5,207 NSW hunting license holders (3,370 Restricted Class License holders, 708 General Class License holders, 1,129 who did not hold a game hunting license)	1,671 Victorian game license holders	994 Victorian game license holders

Table 1-2 Economic contribution of shooting and hunting, recent evidence (cont.)

	Economic and social impacts of recreational hunting and shooting (RCMG, 2019)	Economic contribution of recreational hunting and shooting to the Tasmanian Economy (BDO EconSearch and AMR, 2023)	Economic impact of recreational hunting in NSW (RCMG, 2017)	Economic contribution of recreational hunting in NSW (RCMG, 2023)	Economic contribution of recreational hunting in Victoria (RCMG, 2020)	Estimating the economic impact of hunting in Victoria in 2013 (RCMG, 2014)
Contribution to GDP/GSP ¹⁶	\$2.4 billion in GDP \$0.8 billion direct \$1.6 billion flow-on	\$88.4 million in GSP \$48.0 million direct \$40.4 million flow-on	\$119 million in GSP (game license holders) \$37 million direct \$83 million flow-on \$548-1,612 million (non-game license holders) \$171-\$498 million direct \$377-\$1,114 million flow-on	\$508.9 million in GSP \$196.1 million direct \$312.8 million flow-on	\$356 million in GSP ¹⁷ \$160 million direct \$196 million flow-on	\$439 million in GSP \$177 million direct \$262 million flow-on
Gross expenditure	\$1.93 billion	\$133.5 million	\$100 million (game license holders)	\$601.6 million	\$351 million	\$417 million

¹⁶ Direct and flow-on amounts may not sum to total amount due to rounding.

¹⁷ Discrepancies between 2019 and 2013 are likely due to changes in duck hunting seasonal conditions leading to reduced opportunities to hunt duck.

			\$446-\$1,366 million (non-game license holders)			
Jobs (FTE)	19,500 FTE total 8,800 direct 10,700 flow-on	676 FTE total 438 FTE direct 238 FTE flow-on	860 FTE (game license holders, 664 FTE firearm hunting only) 389 FTE direct (game license holders, 299 FTE firearm hunting only) 472 flow-on (game license holders, 365 FTE firearm hunting only) 3,932 - 11,572 FTE (non-game license holders, 2,355 - 6,369 firearm hunting only) 1,784 - 5,231 FTE direct (non-game license holders, 1,064 - 2,853 FTE firearm hunting only) 2,148 - 6,341 FTE flow-on (non-game license holders, 1,291 - 3,516 FTE firearm hunting only)	4,192 FTE total (3,454 FTE firearm hunting only) 2,273 FTE direct 1,918 FTE flow-on	3,138 FTE total 1,626 FTE direct 1,513 FTE flow-on	2,382 FTE total 1,115 FTE direct 1,268 flow-on

Nationally, in 2019, the states where the highest amount of expenditure occurred were New South Wales (\$650 million; \$237 million 'on trip' and \$413 million 'off trip') and Victoria (\$512 million; \$192m on-trip and \$320m off-trip), collectively accounting for 60 per cent of total expenditure. This is due to the relatively large populations of hunters and shooters in those two states and the tendency for hunters and shooters in other states to make expenditures there (RCMG, 2019).

Out of the national sample (RCMG, 2019), 99 per cent of respondents had gone on at least one hunting or shooting trip in the last twelve months.¹⁸

- It was also found that around 70 per cent of hunters and shooters who had not made a hunting or shooting trip in the last 12 months still made relevant expenditures and that they spend around 42 per cent as much as more 'active' hunters and shooters on average.
- The strongest predictor of expenditure was participation; for example, hunters who spent more on hunting have been found more likely than those who spent less to hunt more frequently.

Nationally, on-trip expenditures accounted for 37 per cent of total expenditures associated with hunting and sports shooting. Around one-quarter of on-trip expenditure was made on fuel and one-fifth on groceries. The other most significant on-trip expenditure items were ammunition, takeaways and restaurant meals and accommodation.

Off-trip expenditures accounted for the remaining 63 per cent of the total, half of which was on firearms, bows, other firearm equipment and ammunition. The other most significant off-trip expenditures were on vehicles/motorbikes/boats (purchased with hunting in mind) and other equipment to support hunting/shooting activities.

Regarding whether shooting and hunting would be substituted with other forms of discretionary spending if current shooters and hunters could no longer participate:

- The net contribution to GDP from recreational hunting and sport shooting activity in Australia in 2018 was estimated to be \$335 million in total comprising \$80 million directly and \$255 million as a result of flow-on economic activity.
- The net contribution estimate is approximately 14 per cent of the gross contribution estimate.
- The net contribution to FTE employment from recreational hunting and sport shooting activity in Australia in 2018 was estimated to be approximately 3,300 FTE in total comprising 2,000 directly and 1,300 as a result of flow-on economic activity.
- The net contribution estimate is approximately 17 per cent of the gross contribution estimate (RCMG, 2019).

¹⁸ The survey sample was not random, self-selection bias was expected to skew the results to over-represent active participants.

In the national economic analysis, Tasmania was estimated to have 32,789 firearm hunters and 1,743 sports/target shooters (who only undertook that activity) (RCMG, 2019).

- A total of 528 responses to that survey were from Tasmania.
- Of those, 343 were from regional and 185 were from metropolitan areas.
- In Tasmania, the total estimated national gross contribution of recreational hunting and sports shooting activity to GDP of Australia and GSP of that state in 2018 was \$97 million consisting of \$39 million direct, \$45 flow-on intrastate, and \$12 million flow-on interstate.
- In Tasmania, the total national estimated gross contribution of recreational hunting and sports shooting activity to employment (FTE) in 2018 was 856 FTE consisting of 465 FTE direct, 324 FTE flow-on intrastate and 67 FTE flow-on interstate.

Tasmania-specific analysis (BDO EconSearch and AMR, 2023) found that in the 12 months prior to February-March 2023, Tasmanian game hunting license holders and sports shooters:

- Contributed \$88.4 million in GSP (\$48.0 million direct and \$40.4 million flow-on)
- Generated 676 FTE jobs (438 FTE direct and 238 FTE flow-on jobs).

Deer-related hunting activity accounted for 33 per cent of total economic contribution:

- \$29.3 million in GSP (\$15.9 million direct and \$13.4 million flow-on)
- 223 FTE jobs (144 FTE direct and 79 FTE flow-on jobs).

Other hunting activity accounted for 43 per cent of total economic contribution:

- \$37.9 million in GSP (\$20.5 million direct and \$17.4 million flow-on)
- 289 FTE jobs (186 FTE direct and 103 FTE flow-on jobs).

Sport shooting activity accounted for 24 per cent of total economic contribution:

- \$21.2 million in GSP (\$11.7 million direct and \$9.6 million flow-on)
- 165 FTE jobs (108 FTE direct and 56 FTE flow-on jobs).

Total expenditure on recreational hunting and sports shooting in Tasmania was estimated to be \$133.5 million.

The top on-trip expenditures were:

- Fuel (\$19.3 million);
- Groceries (\$16.6 million);

- Ammunition (\$14.5 million);
- Hunting/shooting equipment (\$14.4 million); and
- Other items (\$10.5 million).

The top off-trip expenditures were:

- Firearms (\$10.7 million);
- Vehicles (\$7.0 million);
- Ammunition (\$5.1 million);
- Hunting/shooting equipment (\$4.6 million); and
- Vehicle repairs and hunting dog expenses (\$2.5 million each).

Table 1-3 shows the top on-trip and off-trip expenditures by activity type (over page).

Table 1-3 Expenditure by activity in Tasmania

Deer hunting		Other hunting		Sports shooting	
On-trip (\$m)	Off-trip (\$m)	On-trip (\$m)	Off-trip (\$m)	On-trip (\$m)	Off-trip (\$m)
Fuel (6.8)	Vehicles (3.4)	Fuel (8.7)	Vehicles (3.6)	Ammunition (6)	Firearms (4.1)
Groceries (6.6)	Firearms (3.3)	Groceries (8.0)	Firearms (3.3)	Fuel (3.8)	Ammunition (2.6)
Hunting/shooting equipment (5.3)	Hunting/shooting equipment (1.9)	Hunting/shooting equipment (6.4)	Hunting dog expenses (2.5)	Fees to landowners/competition fees (3.0)	Hunting/shooting equipment (0.9)
Other items (3.7)	Ammunition (1.1) Vehicle repairs (1.1)	Ammunition (4.9)	Hunting/shooting equipment (1.7)	Hunting/shooting equipment (2.7)	Hunting/shooting club memberships (0.6)
Vehicle repairs (3.6)	Licenses (0.6) Other items (0.6)	Other items (4.7)	Ammunition (1.3)	Other items (2.1)	Training (0.4)

Relative to Victoria, Tasmanian hunters made a slightly higher economic contribution to the state:

- In Victoria, economic contribution by hunters was \$7,295 in total GSP and 0.06 FTE jobs per hunter. In Tasmania it was \$7,606 in GSP and 0.06 FTE jobs per hunter, likely explained by higher hunter activity rates in Tasmania compared with Victoria.
- Estimated expenditure per hunter in Tasmania was substantially higher (\$11,606 per hunter) than in Victoria (\$7,192 per hunter) (BDO EconSearch and AMR, 2023).

Gun limits are likely to affect hunting/shooting effort (e.g., the number of species that are hunted or number of competitive matches shot). Overall reduction in participation and therefore expenditure in Tasmania is likely.

Animal management

Invasive species have significant agricultural, environmental, social, and human health costs (Moran, Wang, Hanea, & Kompas, 2025). Australian agriculture is especially affected by invasive animal species, with affected sectors including beef, sheep (meat and wool), and crops (e.g., banana, barley, chickpea, cotton, maize, oats, sorghum, sugarcane, and wheat) (Hafi et al., 2023).

- Economic assessments suggest that private control efforts in Australia amount to around \$581 million per year, with residual agricultural losses estimated at a further \$286 million (Hafi et al., 2023).
- In Tasmania, rabbits alone have been estimated to cost agriculture \$3 million each year in private control and \$2 million in residual agricultural losses (Hafi et al., 2023).
- Industry estimates suggest that the average annual combined cost of control and lost production in Tasmania increased from \$41,300 per landholder in 2020 to \$58,700 in 2025, driven by a combination of growing pest pressure, higher values of lost production and increasing costs associated with control measures (TasFarmers, 2025).

Hunters provide a volunteer workforce that contributes to managing introduced animal species, including for the agricultural sector. For example, there are a number of programs in place around Australia to connect volunteer hunters with landholders (such as the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia 'Farmer Assist' program). This is in addition to less formal hunter contributions to removing pest species.

It is unclear what the impacts of the gun buyback would be on hunter participation in pest species management, or what the flow-on economic impacts would be for landholders (for example, in farmers having to hire paid workers to undertake shooting that is no longer performed by volunteer hunters). It is unclear what amount governments would need to

spend to compensate for lost hunter effort, in the event of reduced hunting activity due to gun limits and restrictions on firearm types.

‘Intangible’ measures

In addition to economic aspects, some reports have assessed more ‘intangible’ measures such as physical activity and wellbeing. For example, RCMG (2019) found that:

- An average hunting/shooting trip involving three hours of time constituted between 86 and 116 minutes of moderate physical activity, contributing significantly to the objective of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week.
- For those who hunt/shoot only a small number of times a year, hunting/shooting will contribute a relatively small amount of their overall physical activity. For those who hunt/shoot regularly, it will contribute a significant amount.
- Based on a conservative estimate, hunting/shooting alone provides 44 per cent or more of required physical activity for the 23 per cent of hunters/shooters who hunt/shoot most weeks or more frequently.
- For those who hunt/shoot around once a fortnight – almost one in four hunters/shooters (24%) – between 30 and 40 per cent of physical activity needs are met.
- For those who hunt/shoot once every month (18%) or once every couple of months (16%), between 7 and 18 per cent of physical activity needs are met.

Overall, hunters and shooters were more likely to meet sufficient physical activity requirements than the average Australian adult:

- Among hunters and shooters, 58 per cent met physical activity recommendations, compared to only 44 per cent of Australian adults, including 61 per cent of those aged 18-59 (compared to 48% of those aged 18-64 in the general population), and 53% of those aged 60 and over (compared to 28% of those aged 65 and over in the general population).
- The proportion with sufficient physical activity is higher for those who hunt/shoot more often, an indicator that hunting/shooting is making a contribution to meeting physical activity guidelines.¹⁹

Shooters and hunters have also been found to have better wellbeing than the general population, for all age groups and both sexes (RCMG, 2019). It is recognised that a person’s

¹⁹ These findings are associations: they do not identify whether the reason for the high activity levels of older hunters/shooters is because only those who have managed to maintain high activity still engage in this activity, while others stop hunting and shooting activities as they become older.

subjective wellbeing relates to life outcomes. Those with higher wellbeing typically live longer, have fewer health problems and reduced demand on health services, and are better able to contribute to their community, work and family (RCMG, 2019).

The 'wellbeing gap' was largest for younger age groups – younger hunters/shooters reported much higher wellbeing than young people in the general population, while older hunters/shooters report slightly higher wellbeing compared to the general population. This suggests that hunting and shooting may potentially have more significant wellbeing benefits for younger people, particularly those aged under 60. There was also a clear and strong association between frequency of hunting /shooting and subjective wellbeing, with those who had been on more frequent hunting/shooting trips on average reporting higher wellbeing (RCMG, 2019).²⁰

Overall, this suggests a potential wellbeing benefit generated through participation in hunting/shooting activities, that may also extend beyond private wellbeing to broader social wellbeing in the form of reduced demand on services and increased community participation.

²⁰ A longitudinal study would be needed to confirm whether shooting/hunting lead to better wellbeing, or are merely associated with it.

2 Proposed gun buyback policy

2.1 Post-Bondi legislative changes and proposed ‘buyback’ program

The day after the Bondi massacre, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese convened an urgent meeting of National Cabinet to discuss changes to gun laws, after which he announced that premiers and first ministers had agreed to strengthen gun laws and develop options for a range of changes including a crackdown on 3D-printed firearms, limits on the number of firearms a person can own, gun imports, and further restricting the types of firearms that can be owned (Albanese, 2025).

The Australian Government subsequently announced that a ‘buyback’ program will be run to compensate owners of newly reclassified firearms, and those who have firearms in excess of newly legislated limits. The program will purchase “surplus, newly banned and illegal firearms” (Australian Government, 2025). Although details have not been released, it appears that the scheme will be modelled on the 1996 national buyback program.

On 24 December 2025 the New South Wales Parliament passed the *Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2025*. Among a host of measures, the Act placed limits on how many firearms an individual may own, of four for hunters and 10 for sports shooters and primary producers. It also reclassified button- and lever-release firearms, and straight-pull and pump action firearms into the heavily restricted Category C. Other jurisdictions have been urged to follow this model.

At the time of writing, New South Wales was the only jurisdiction to have enacted general ownership caps and activated participation in the proposed national buyback following the Bondi attack.

- The Australian Capital Territory appears set to follow, although with a limit of five, not four, firearms for hunters.
- Western Australia passed its own set of changes (with an accompanying buyback scheme) in 2024.
- Queensland, the Northern Territory, South Australia, and Victoria have indicated that they do not intend to further restrict the number or type of firearms that can be owned.²¹

²¹ On 5 March 2026 the Queensland Parliament passed the *Fighting Antisemitism and Keeping Guns out of the Hands of Terrorists and Criminals Amendment Act 2026*. The Act received Royal Assent on 11 March 2026.

2.1.1 Tasmania's legislative landscape

The Tasmanian Government has released the Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026 for public consultation. If introduced and enacted in its current form, the Bill would reclassify lever-release, button-release and straight-pull firearms as Category C firearms.

The Bill does not impose ownership limits. However, the Labor opposition have indicated that with the support of the Greens and crossbenchers they will seek to amend the Bill to impose limits of five firearms for hunters and 10 firearms for target shooters and primary producers. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether this amendment will be passed.

The current political situation in Tasmania creates two scenarios for modelling:

Scenario 1: Reclassification only

Scenario 2: Reclassification plus ownership limits.

These are considered separately throughout this report.

2.1.2 The 1996 buyback program

The 1996 buyback program ran after semi-automatic firearms and pump-action shotguns were prohibited following the Port Arthur massacre. It provided monetary compensation to firearm owners who could no longer own those firearms. Between 1996 and 1997, 643,726 newly prohibited firearms were handed in with compensation payments made at “fair value” (market value).²² The buyback program was budgeted at \$500 million and financed by a one-off 0.2 percent Medicare levy.²³

- Total public expenditures were about \$320 million (approximately \$500 per gun, in 1996 dollars).
 - The total cost of compensation to individual owners was about \$304 million.
 - By the end of the scheme, a total of 480 claims had been submitted by firearm dealers for loss of business.²⁴

²² Additional firearms were handed in, that were not prohibited. Note that the figure of 643,726 is less than the figure cited by Reuter & Mouzos (2003). This may be due to Reuter & Mouzos (2003) including firearms that were handed in, for which compensation was not paid.

²³ There was a smaller scale buyback of handguns in 2003 plus multiple uncompensated amnesties run at various periods, with an estimated total from all buybacks and amnesties of around 1,038, 089 firearms handed in. The handgun buyback is not considered in this report, and amnesties are only mentioned if relevant.

²⁴ Breakdowns of exact costs paid to dealers are not available for all jurisdictions, however parliamentary records in Queensland indicate that firearms dealers in that state were compensated \$9.975M for loss of business value. Industry estimates suggest that there were around 300 firearm dealers in Queensland in 1996, equating to an average compensation payment per dealer of around \$33,250 for loss of business. This does not include compensation for stock on hand, nor does it include payouts for non-viable businesses who handed in their dealers licenses.

- About five per cent of compensation payments made in Victoria were for parts and accessories. No figures were available for other states and it remains unclear how much was paid in compensation for surrenders of significant quantities of spare parts.
- Around \$57 million was paid to the States and Territories to cover the costs of establishing, promoting and operating the scheme.
- \$4 million was allocated to a national public education campaign.
- \$1.5 million was allocated for development of an accredited firearms training program.
- \$400,000 was allocated to upgrade the National Exchange of Police Information (NEPI) system (Australian National Audit Office, 1997).

The buyback was accompanied by an amnesty period, enabling people to hand in any type of firearm (not just newly prohibited types), however those were not eligible for compensation.

2.1.3 The current buyback program

Unlike the 1996 buyback, which was fully funded by the Commonwealth Government, the current buyback program is designed to be split 50/50 between federal and state governments. It does not appear that the Australian Government plans to impose a levy to fund the scheme (Ilanbey, 2026). It is not clear what will, and will not, be compensated. The initial administrative costs of the scheme (i.e., how much it will cost each jurisdiction to set up the scheme, establish collection centres, and dispose of firearms) are not known, however it was estimated that if Queensland took part those costs would be between \$120 and \$160 million (Levinson, Rabe, & Ilanbey, 2026).

The Prime Minister has stated that the buyback will cost around \$1 billion, however industry estimates cost the scheme at up to \$15 billion, based on updated market values and extrapolations from the 1996 buyback (SIFA, 2025). Detailed costings have not been released, and the 2026-27 Budget states that disclosure of anticipated costs would prejudice the Commonwealth's negotiations with jurisdictions on funding levels (Commonwealth of Australia, 2026a).

- Western Australia ran its own buyback in 2024-25, and paid up to \$1000 per firearm (i.e., a capped payment rather than market value). That scheme cost \$64.3 million and 83,764 firearms were surrendered.
- Although Queensland has declined to participate in the buyback, speculative figures suggest the cost of buying firearms at market value could be \$680 million in that state, assuming that 400,000 of the state's 1.15 million registered firearms would be captured by the scheme at an average market price of \$1700 (Levinson, Rabe, & Ilanbey, 2026).

- New South Wales has not announced what value it will attach to surrendered firearms. Based on other jurisdictions' approaches, and the approach adopted for the 1996 buyback, it is conceivable that payment per firearm could range anywhere from a capped maximum value of \$1000, through to more than fair market value.
- The Tasmanian Government has stated that it will be offering 1.5 times market value for surrendered reclassified firearms. If the New South Wales-style, legislative scenario 2 was adopted (reclassification plus gun limits), that has been estimated by the Tasmanian Government as costing Tasmania over \$20 million in compensation costs alone (Levinson, Rabe, & Ilanbey, 2026; Pulse Tasmania, 2026).
 - Administrative costs associated with the logistics of running a buyback have not been disclosed.
 - Additional administrative costs associated with 'back end' processing – such as updating registration records to reflect firearms handed in - have not been disclosed.

2.2 Impacts on the legal firearms market

Based on pre- and post-1996 estimates, the 1996 buyback led to the removal of approximately 20 per cent of the nation's total stock of firearms (Reuter & Mouzos, 2003; Table 2-1). Nationally, estimates of the buyback 'compliance' range between 40 percent and 80 percent (Reuter & Mouzos, 2003), meaning that an unknown number of newly prohibited firearms were not handed in for destruction (even in states where registration of firearms was already required). In Tasmania, police estimated that around 90 per cent of prohibited firearms were handed in (Reuter & Mouzos, 2003). Data about the number of non-prohibited firearms handed in is not available.

Table 2-1 1996 Gun Buyback, Totals and Expenditures, by jurisdiction

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number of firearms collected</i>	<i>Compensation paid to firearm owners (A\$ thousands)</i>	<i>Population (100,000s, approximate)</i>	<i>Guns per 100,000</i>
Victoria	207,409	101,823	48	4,300
New South Wales	155,774	83,535	65	2,400
Australian Capital Territory	5,246	2,803	3	1,800
Tasmania	34,584	19,650	5	6,400
Northern Territory	9,474	5,039	2	4,700
Western Australia	51,499	18,758	19	2,700
South Australia	64,811	25,369	15	4,300
Queensland	130,893	67,614	36	3,600
Total	659,940	359,600	193	3400

Source: Adapted from Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (2002); ABS (2001).

Source: Reuter & Mouzos (2003).

The exact number of Tasmanian license holders and firearms that will be affected by reclassification (scenario 1), or by reclassification and firearm limits (scenario 2), is unknown.

- In Western Australia prohibition of lever- and button-release firearms, and limits of five firearms for hunters and 10 for target shooters led to a 24 per cent decrease in total firearm ownership (Government of Western Australia, 2026).
 - 83,764 firearms were surrendered (57,053 rifles, 19,166 shotguns and 7,545 handguns).
- Although Victoria has not announced any plans to limit firearm numbers or reclassify firearms, modelling suggests that with a limit of four firearms for hunters, and including exemptions for primary producers and sport shooters to have up to 10 firearms, approximately 286,749 firearms (or close to 30 per cent of registered firearms) could be disposed of in Victoria (Lay, 2026).
- In Tasmania, industry estimates are that around 1,500 firearms will be affected by reclassification (scenario 1).
 - If correct, that equates to around one per cent of Tasmania's legally owned firearms.
 - Although some individual license holders affected by reclassification may be eligible for a Category C license, that number is likely to be very low given the restrictions surrounding Category C licenses.

An unknown percentage of firearm owners affected by reclassification are likely to purchase new firearms to replace the firearms surrendered. However, for scenario 1 (reclassification only), this report conservatively assumes no replacement and models the impacts of a one per cent reduction in firearm stock (or about 1/20th of the effect of the 20% gun buyback scenario).

- The Tasmanian Police Commissioner has stated that around 9,000 people own six or more firearms (Adams, 2026).
 - That equates to almost one quarter (around 24%) of Tasmania's almost 38,000 license holders²⁵, but does not indicate firearm numbers affected.
- Gun control groups have conservatively estimated that around 10,000 individuals in Tasmania would be affected by reclassifications and limits on ownership (scenario 2; Alannah and Madeline Foundation, 2026).

²⁵ Based on the most up to date published figures.

- If correct, that equates to just over a quarter (around 26%) of firearm license holders. Again, the exact number of firearms that would be affected is unknown.

The above figures relating to gun limit impacts are broadly consistent with the estimated reduction in firearm stock of around one-fifth, thought to have been produced by the 1996 law changes and buyback scheme.²⁶

In Victoria (the only jurisdiction to have released information about the anticipated impacts of gun limits on ownership), firearm license holders possess an estimated 4.1 firearms each, on average (Lay, 2026). In Tasmania, based on the most recent available data, similar figures apply (Tasmania Police, 2026).

Around a 25-30 per cent decrease in total privately owned firearm stock in Tasmania is a reasonable anticipated reduction resulting from reclassification and limits on ownership (scenario 2). This equates to between approximately 38,800 and 46,600 firearms.²⁷ For scenario 2, this report models an extremely conservative figure of 20 per cent reduction.

No estimates of the impacts of the proposed legislative changes on firearm businesses in Tasmania have been released. While legislative scenario 1 – reclassification only – may create a short-term increase in sales due to replacement of newly reclassified firearms with other types, legislative scenario 2 – gun limits – is likely to have substantial ongoing negative impacts.

In New South Wales, industry estimates are that gun shop revenues have decreased by up to 80 per cent as a result of the 2025 law changes (SIFA, 2026). This is supported by recently released New South Wales Police data, showing a sharp decline in dealer ‘disposal’ transactions (i.e., sales) since December 2025 (NSW Police, 2026).

Tasmanian industry estimates are that sales will decline by a similar amount (SIFA, pers. comm.), with some dealers already reporting significant declines in trade. It appears that regional gun shops are experiencing greater impacts than metropolitan-based businesses.

This is broadly consistent with observations from 1996:

- Media reports suggested that about two-thirds of the firearms dealers in Melbourne were expected to close due to decline in turnover (Johnson, 1997).
- The Firearm Dealers Association of New South Wales suggested that only 150 out of 400 firearms dealers intended to continue trading, and that a number of dealers had not sold a firearm in “months” (Wainwright, 1997).

²⁶ It is acknowledged that the ownership limits set, and the types of firearms prohibited, may have been selected for the specific purpose of achieving a 20-25 per cent reduction in firearm ownership, however there is no information available to confirm whether achieving a certain percentage reduction was a pre-determined policy objective guiding decision-making.

²⁷ Based on the 2025 figures; as noted in footnote 2, the registered firearm figures cited in February versus July 2026 vary by almost 5000 firearms, suggesting data accuracy issues, hence the December 2025 figure, which is also a midpoint value between the two varying figures for 2026, was selected.

- There was a short-term increase in the number of rifles and shotguns imported into Australia in 1996 and the first half of 1997, to more than double the usual quantity of imports (Australian Customs Service, multiple years), suggesting at least some degree of substitution from prohibited firearm types to other firearms.
 - This is not incompatible with observations about declines in individual dealer turnover; it may reflect greater market concentration among dealers who were able to withstand a downturn.
- This was followed by a decline in the number of firearms imported in the second half of 1997 and first three months of the 1997-98 financial year, falling almost 70 per cent relative to the previous period (Wainwright, 1998).
- After that decline, import numbers remained relatively steady until around the mid-2000s, after which they began to grow (Australian Customs Service, multiple years). This implies an approximately 10-year downturn in trade in new firearms post-1996 (noting that import figures relate only to new, not second-hand, firearms).

In Tasmania, information about the number of firearm dealer licenses held is not routinely published. Industry figures indicate that 18 firearm dealer businesses operate throughout the state. This only takes into account businesses that specifically cater for firearms; other businesses (such as general outdoor suppliers) are also likely to be affected by legislative change. In addition, businesses in other states, who trade into Tasmania, are likely to be impacted. Legislative impacts are not just confined to an individual state, but can affect businesses across the country.

A difference between 1996 and today is that applying caps on ownership (scenario 2) means 'substitution' or 'replacement' is likely to be lower, which will have a more significant and longer-term impact on firearm businesses. Owners who reach their 'cap' will essentially be removed from the pool of customers.

3 Do gun buybacks reduce firearm homicides?

3.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the evidence in relation to gun buybacks and firearm-related homicides.

- We first look at trends in firearm deaths and injuries.
- Second, we look at the existing literature, particularly studies related to Australia.
- We then look specifically at the evidence about whether a reduction in the stock of firearms reduces the probability of a mass shooting event (see Appendix B for more detail).
- We then look at the more general relationship between the stock of firearms and firearm-related homicides (see Appendix B for more detail).

3.2 Trends in firearms deaths and injuries

Buyback programs seek to reduce the number of firearms owned, with the rationale that this in turn will reduce the occurrence of firearm-related violence, thus improving community safety. This assumption is based in part on observations from Australia in the early 1980s, when firearm-related deaths were increasing and firearm numbers were thought to be increasing (e.g., Australian Institute of Criminology, 1990). It also draws on research from the United States of America (USA), where estimates of gun ownership suggest that more guns translate to more gun deaths – particularly, homicides (e.g., Miller, Hemenway, & Azrael, 2007).²⁸

However, Australian data shows that firearm-related homicides and suicides, as well as deaths of accidental and undetermined intent²⁹, have been declining for many decades despite the growth in firearm ownership (Figures 3-1 to 3-3; for broader context, non-firearm homicides and suicides are also shown in Figures 3-1 and 3-2). In addition,

²⁸ Note that the evidence for this is contested and that different studies produce inconsistent and conflicting results, especially when longarms and handguns are considered separately; handguns are much more strongly associated with homicides.

²⁹ Note that in early decades these figures are heavily dominated by deaths of undetermined intent; it is likely that a proportion of these were suicides, but where there was insufficient proof of intent for a coroner to make a final determination of suicide. The number of deaths of undetermined intent has fallen markedly since the early 2000s.

firearm-related injury hospitalisations for assault and unintentional reasons^{30,31} have declined since the early 1990s (Figure 3-4).

Figure 3-1 Homicides in Australia, firearm v non-firearm, 1915 to 2024

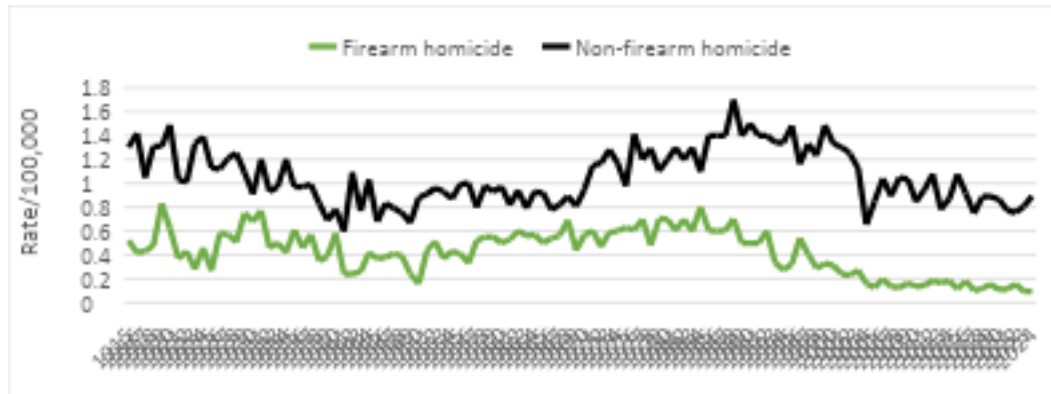


Figure 3-2 Suicides in Australia, firearm v non-firearm, 1915 to 2024

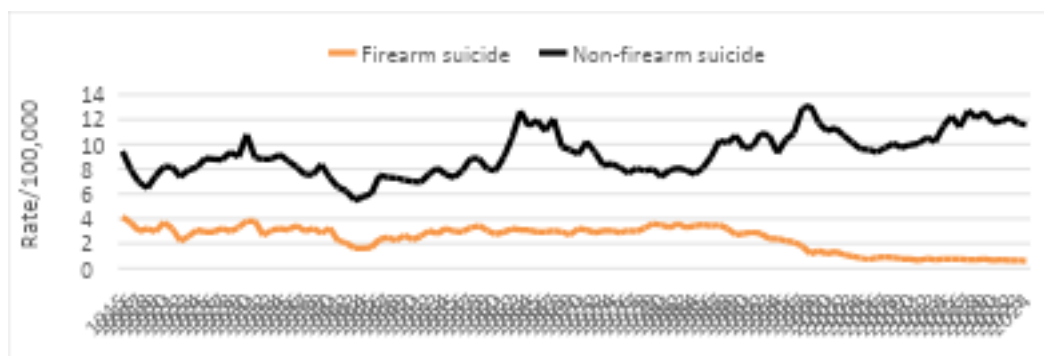
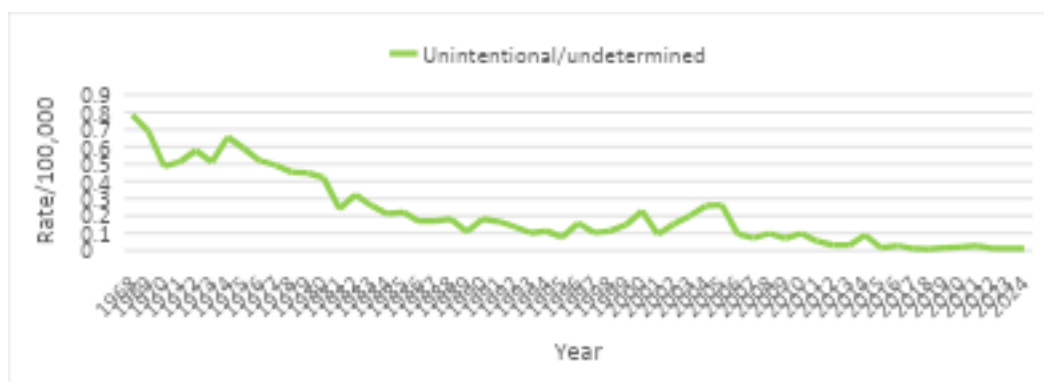


Figure 3-3 Unintentional or undetermined firearm deaths, 1968 to 2024

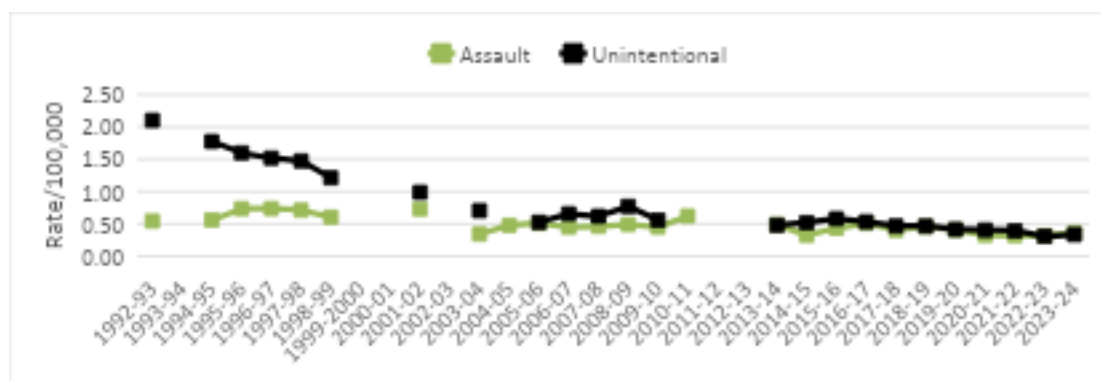


Source: ABS, Causes of Death, Australia (multiple years).

³⁰ This refers to intentional misuse. For accidental firearm harms, only injuries are shown below. For accidental firearm-related deaths, there have been fewer than five cases per year for the past decade.

³¹ There are very few firearm-related hospitalisations for intentional self-harm with a firearm; when firearms are used for self-harm they typically result in fatality (suicide).

Figure 3-4 Hospitalisations for firearm-related injury, Australia, 1992-93 to 2023-24



Source: AIHW (2025a).

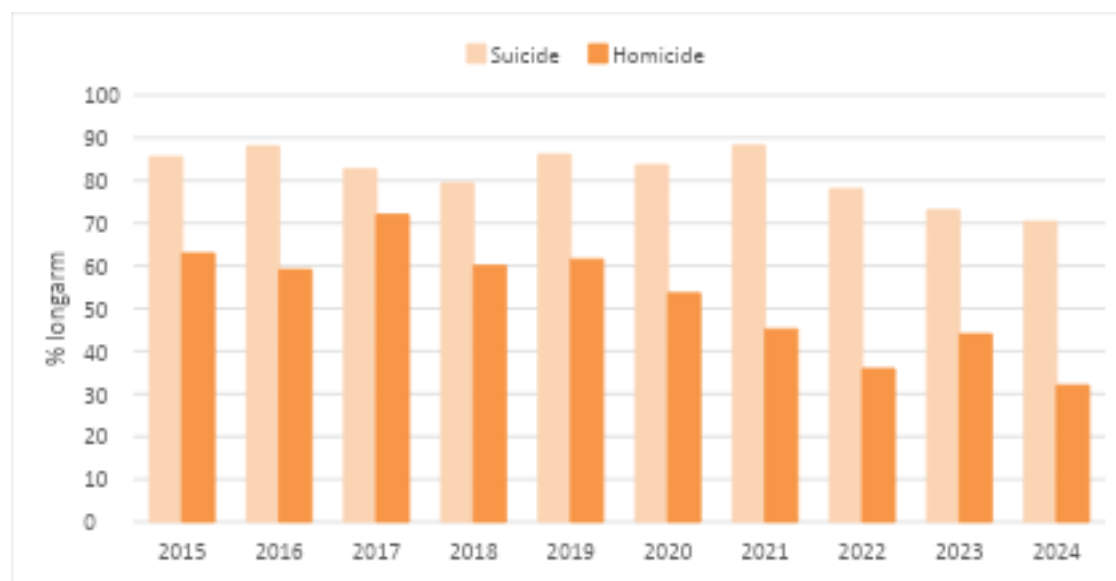
The proportion of different firearm types involved, varies by type of death (Figure 3-5). The majority of suicides over the past decade involved rifles or shotguns (81.5% on average). Far fewer rifles or shotguns were used in firearm homicides (52.6% on average over the past decade).³² Around 80 per cent of firearms in unintentional deaths involved rifles or shotguns, however there have been fewer than five unintentional deaths per year in Australia for the past decade.

Although most suicides involve longarms, which will be subject to the buyback, firearm suicide requires only a single shot from one firearm. Ownership limits and restrictions on the type of firearm owned would therefore not be expected to have any impact on suicides.

Around half of firearm homicides involve longarms. This suggests that the maximum impact that could be expected on homicides, which would occur only if all longarm homicides were stopped by the proposed changes, would be around half of the total number of firearm homicides per year.

³² Note that 5.3 per cent of firearm suicides and 26.8 per cent of firearm homicides involved other or unspecified types of firearm.

Figure 3-5 Firearm deaths by rifle/shotgun, 2015 to 2024



Source: ABS, Causes of Death, Australia (multiple years).

3.3 What impacts do buyback schemes have on firearm-related deaths?

A number of studies — most using national-level data — have examined overall impacts of Australia’s 1996 gun law changes on firearm related deaths (primarily suicides and homicides).

- Ozanne-Smith et al. (2004) considered gun laws in Victoria and the Rest of Australia, and found that while legislative changes may have affected firearm suicides, there was no significant impact on firearm homicides in that state.
- Chapman, Alpers, Agho, and Jones (2006) found that the ratio of trend estimates for firearm homicides pre- and post-1996 did not statistically differ ($p = 0.15$). The ratio of trend estimates for firearm suicide differed statistically ($p = 0.007$).
- Baker and McPhedran (2007) found that the pre-existing downward trend observed for firearm homicide continued post-1996. Predicted homicide by firearm (0.28) did not differ significantly from the observed firearm homicide rate (0.27). Suicide rates by firearm pre- and post-NFA both showed decline, but the observed rates post-NFA were consistently lower than the predicted values. The predicted mean suicide rate (1.85) was significantly higher than the observed mean suicide rate (1.22).
- Lee and Suardi (2010) found, using a battery of structural break tests, that there was little evidence to suggest that the 1996 intervention had any significant effects on firearm homicides and suicides.

- Baker and McPhedran (2015) found no significant difference between predicted (0.24) and observed (0.22) firearm homicide rates. The predicted mean firearm suicide rate (1.50) was significantly higher than the observed mean firearm suicide rate (1.05).
- Chapman, Alpers, and Jones (2016) found that after 1996 there was a statistically significant acceleration in the pre-existing downward trend for firearm suicide, but not for firearm homicide.
- Ukert, Andreyeva, and Branas (2018) found that the assumption that 1996 represents a break in the data was flawed. Controlling for stochastic trends produced less statistical evidence of the impact of the 1996 laws on firearm mortality than previously reported by Chapman et al. (2016). Introducing artificial interruptions in 1990 through 1995 produced statistically significant decreases in all firearm-related mortality measures well above the expected type 1 error. Those authors suggest that evidence showing decreases in firearm mortality after the 1996 gun laws relies on a model that may have limited ability to identify the true effects of the law.
- Gilmour, Wattanakamolkul, and Sugai (2018) found that for both men and women, the NFA had a non-significant effect on trends in firearm-related assault mortality (i.e., homicides) over and above a broad decline in rates observed for both firearm- and non-firearm-related deaths. There was no additional effect of the NFA on firearm-related suicide mortality.
- Bartos, McCleary, Mazerolle, and Luengen (2020) found, using a 'synthetic' control group constructed from other countries' data, that from 2002 on, Australia's homicide rate declined more quickly than the synthetic control. They also examined the impact of the 1996 intervention on motor vehicle fatalities, finding no impact, and concluded that this showed a causal impact of the buyback program on homicide rates. They found "only an idiosyncratic effect" on suicides (p.135). However, that study looked at homicide and suicide rates overall, rather than firearm homicide and suicide rates specifically, meaning that it does not give any insights into firearm-related deaths.
- Duenow and Connelly (2024) found that, using a 'synthetic' control group constructed from other countries' data (Spain, Chile, and the USA for homicides, and Denmark, Norway, Greece, and Finland for suicides), there was a statistically significant post-1996 drop of around 0.135 firearm-related homicides per 100,000 (or around 35 firearm-related deaths per annum). The rate of suicides by firearm dropped by an average of 0.299 per 100,000 population, per year (a population estimate of 77 firearm-related suicide deaths per annum). However, that study found a notable increase in homicide by other means, offsetting any overall benefits from reduced firearm homicides. Some evidence was also found for substitution of other suicide methods.

Studies that are based on real-world Australian data, that look specifically at firearm suicides and homicides, generally find that there may have been some effect of the laws on reducing firearm suicides, but less (or no) evidence for any effect on firearm homicides.

There has been little attention given to whether the 1996 laws were a cost-effective intervention. One study (Vos et al., 2010) assessed cost-effectiveness in suicide prevention. The concluded that the gun buyback scheme and legislative changes were a high-cost measure and that the decline in suicide that followed could not be unequivocally attributed to the scheme.

The 1996 gun laws encompassed a wide range of measures, including changes to licencing requirements (such as fit and proper person status and disqualifying offences), mandatory registration of all longarms, waiting periods, permits to acquire, safe storage, and safety training. The changes were introduced in all states and territories during 1996-97. Given the number of changes that were made simultaneously, it is difficult to establish any unique effect that removal of a large number of firearms may have had (over and above effects of the many other measures introduced).

Studies into what effect the buyback component specifically may have had on gun deaths (in other words, what happens when a certain amount of firearms are removed from the population), as opposed to other changes that occurred alongside the buyback, are scarce. One study, Leigh and Neill (2010), asked whether firearm death rates decreased more substantially in states where more guns were bought back.

- They estimated that withdrawing 3,500 guns per 100,000 individuals (approximately the rate of withdrawal due to the NFA) reduced firearm suicides by 1.9 deaths per 100,000 (using the time period up to 2006).
- They found no significant effects for firearm homicides.
- The paper did not present individual findings for each state and territory. In other words, all the study shows is that firearm suicides changed after 1996 and that there was some correlation (not necessarily causation) between that change, and the number of guns removed.
- Because there was no way of knowing how many firearms had been in circulation prior to 1996 in each state and territory, assumptions cannot be made about the magnitude of decrease in each jurisdiction's total firearm stock and how that may have related to death rates.
- That paper also found that states with larger firearm buybacks initially experienced a slight relative decline in non-firearm suicides but then saw a large increase in non-firearm suicide around five to six years after the buyback.

3.3.1 Firearm misuse in Tasmania

Even prior to Port Arthur, Tasmania had begun to tighten its firearm laws. For example, the *Guns Act 1991* made changes to licencing, ownership, and storage requirements. To qualify for a gun license a person had to be 18 years of age, have the relevant gun safety knowledge and be 'a fit and proper person'. In deciding whether a person was 'fit and proper', the Commissioner of Police was required to take into account the likelihood of the person using the firearm for an unlawful purpose or to harm themselves and, in particular, to take into account any criminal activity of the applicant, their mental and physical condition and any restraint order or interim restraint order made in respect of the person (Warner, 1999). Following Port Arthur, further restrictions were imposed; particularly, prohibitions on certain types of firearms and the requirement that license holders establish a 'genuine reason' for ownership.

- One report (Parliament of Tasmania, 2005) compared firearm suicide numbers across three time periods: 1985-1992 ('no legislation'), 1993-1996 ('Guns Act 1991') and 1996-2003 ('Firearms Act 1996'). It did not examine firearm homicide.
- That report found that suicides had declined over time and that the downward trend become apparent after the *Guns Act 1991* was implemented. That Act introduced a licensing and safe firearm handling training requirement.
- The report did not control for population size or for underlying trends over time that may have affected the results (i.e., effects related to factors other than firearm legislation).

In Tasmania, as in other jurisdictions, most firearm-related deaths (over eight out of 10) are suicides. Faulkner and colleagues (2022), using Tasmanian Suicide Register data, found that relative to non-firearm suicides, individuals who used firearms were more likely to be male, retired, and residing in more remote locations of Tasmania. Just over half (54%) of decedents were licensed firearms owners but fewer (46%) were both licensed and used their own registered firearm, meaning that when both license and registration status are taken into account slightly less than half of firearm suicides in Tasmania involved legal ownership.

Firearm-related suicides were less likely to:

- Involve polysubstance use at the time of the incident
- Report previous suicidal ideation and self-harming behaviours
- Have had a previous mental illness diagnosis
- Have accessed mental health treatment or broader health or social services.

Interpersonal and family stressors involving the decedent's partner or other family members (e.g., parents, children) were less likely among those that died by firearm than other means. Contextual and situational stressors that involved violence were also less likely to be

identified among firearms users. The average number of identified stressors among those who died by firearms was significantly lower than those who died by other means (Faulkner et al., 2022).

These findings are similar to other states'. In New South Wales, for example, Negin et al. (2021) showed that over the period 2002-2016 rates of self-harm injury and death were highest for older people, men, and residents of outer regional/rural/remote areas, and rates of intentional self-harm injuries caused by firearms were strongly correlated with rates of licensed gun owners ($r = 0.94$; $p < 0.001$).

3.3.2 Socioeconomics and firearm misuse

Tasmania has higher rates of firearm-related suicide relative to other Australian jurisdictions. Some have attributed this to higher rates of firearm ownership in Tasmania (e.g., Alpers, Rossetti, & Picard, 2018). However, Tasmania also has higher than average non-firearm suicide rates.

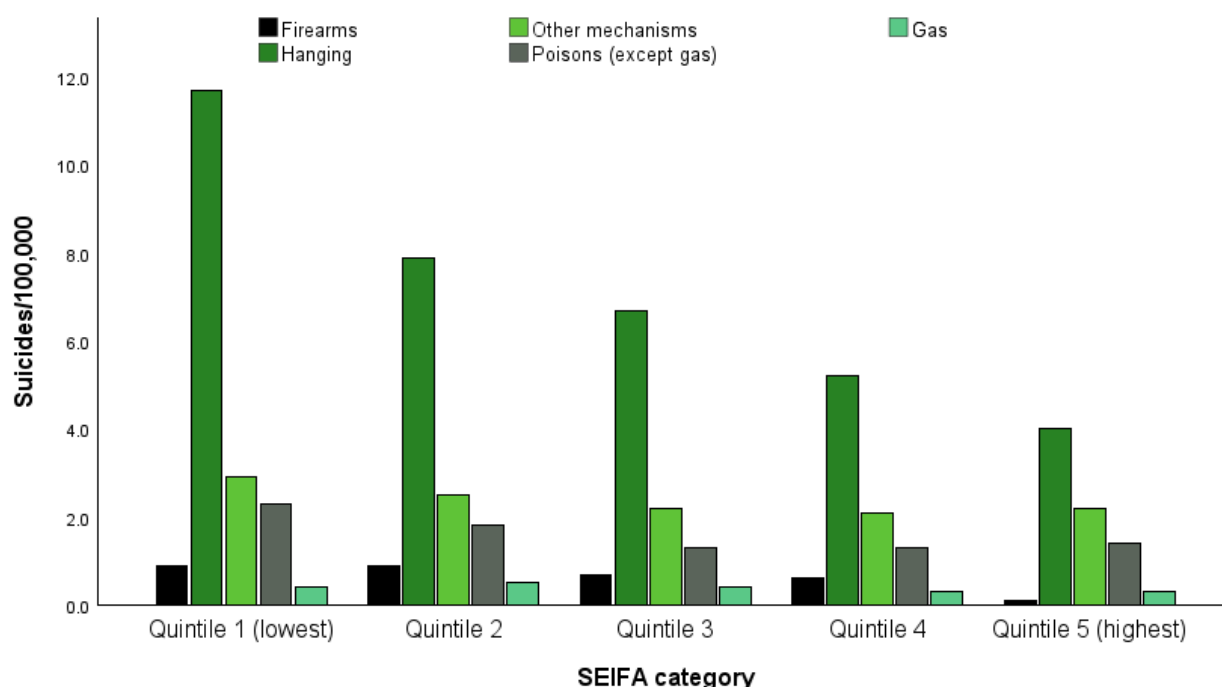
Both firearm and non-firearm suicide are linked with socioeconomic factors. For example, national data shows that firearm suicide (like suicide more generally) occurs more commonly within lower socioeconomic categories (Figure 3-6).

Tasmania has greater levels of socioeconomic disadvantage than other jurisdictions. Relative to all other Australian jurisdictions Tasmania has:

- Low year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rates (ABS, 2025a)
- The highest or second highest unemployment and underemployment rates (ABS, 2026a; Department of Treasury and Finance, 2026)
- The lowest personal income rates (ABS, 2025b).

Tasmania also has an older population than other states (ABS, 2022). Firearm suicides, in particular, tend to be associated with older age (De Leo, Draper, Snowden & Kolves, 2013).

Figure 3-6 Suicide rate by socioeconomic index



Source: AIHW (2025b)

There are too few firearm homicides in Tasmania per year to produce reliable statistics. However, like suicide, both firearm and non-firearm homicide are associated with socioeconomic and demographic factors. In New South Wales, for example, Negin et al. (2021) showed that over the period 2002-2016 firearm assault injury rates were highest in major cities, for men, and for people aged 19 to 30 years. Rates of firearm-related assault injuries were not correlated with rates of licensed gun owners ($p = 0.23$).

In light of relationships between socioeconomics, demographics, and firearm misuse, it cannot be concluded that rates of firearm ownership in Tasmania ‘explain’ firearm misuse (particularly suicide).

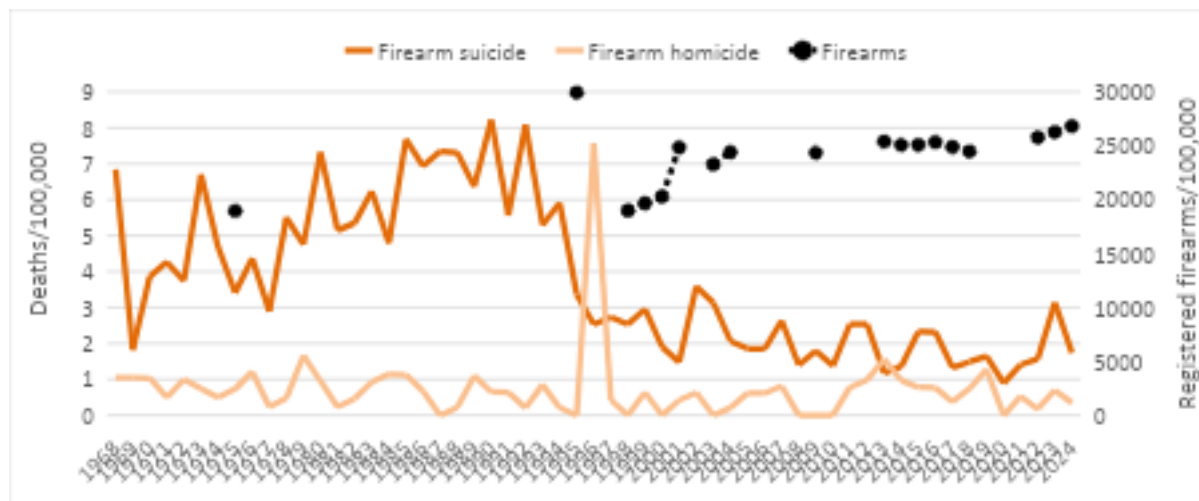
3.3.3 Trends in firearm misuse

Reliable long-term firearm ownership and non-lethal firearm misuse data is not available for Tasmania. Figure 3-7 (Panels A-C), below, shows points where Tasmanian firearm ownership data is available (large dots), with interpolated ownership levels (small dots) between those points. Note that pre-1997 ownership levels are estimates only.

For attempted murder, sexual assault, and kidnapping, most years of available data had zero cases or figure was not published, indicating very small numbers of incidents (less than five) (ABS, various years). Hospitalisations each year for firearm incidents are not published for Tasmania, indicating very small numbers of cases (less than five) (AIHW, 2025a).

Figure 3-7 Firearm misuse and guns owned in Tasmania

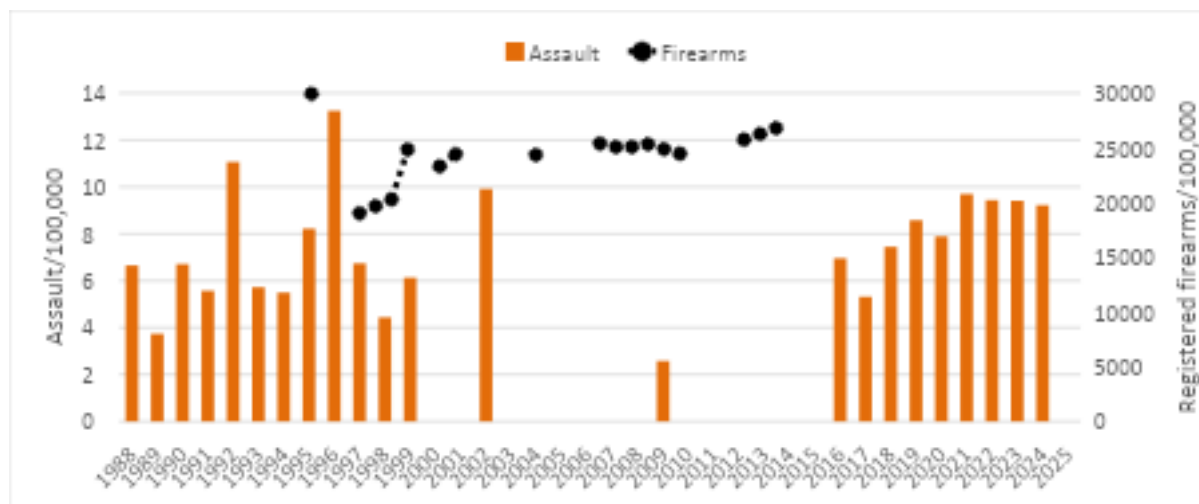
(A) Homicide and suicide with a firearm, 1968-2024



Source: ABS Causes of Death, Australia (multiple years); Parliament of Tasmania (2005); Tasmania Police (2026); Tasmania Police (various years a, various years b); Warner (1999).

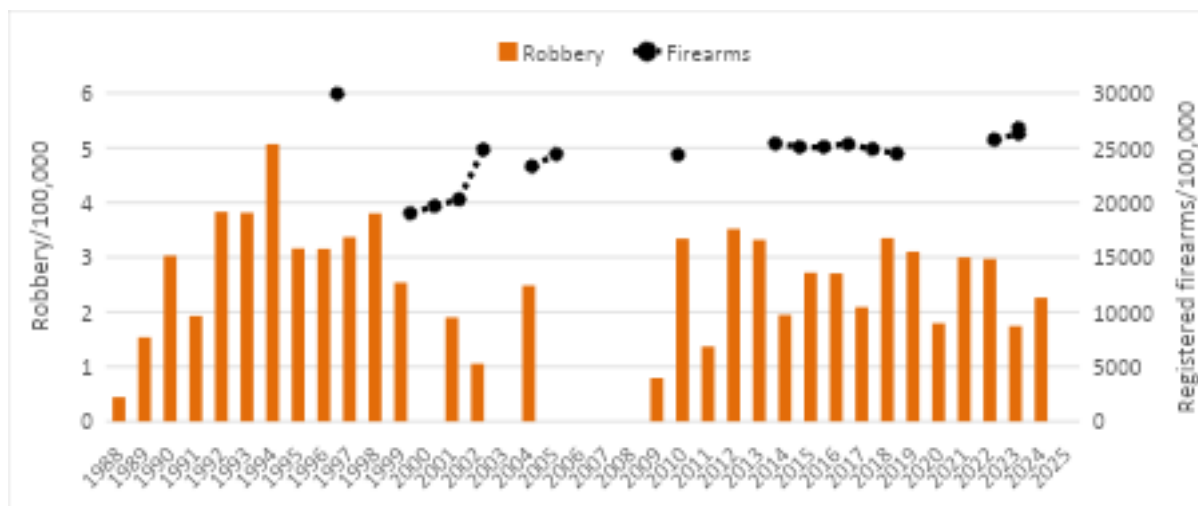
Note: The elevated homicide rate in 1996 was due to the Port Arthur incident.

(B) Assault with a firearm, 1988-2024



Sources: ABS Recorded Crime – Victims (various years); Parliament of Tasmania (2005); Tasmania Police (2026); Tasmania Police (various years a, various years b); Warner (1999).

(C) Armed robbery with a firearm, 1988-2024



Source: ABS Recorded Crime – Victims (various years); Tasmania Police (2026); Parliament of Tasmania (2005); Tasmania Police (various years a, various years b); Warner (1999).

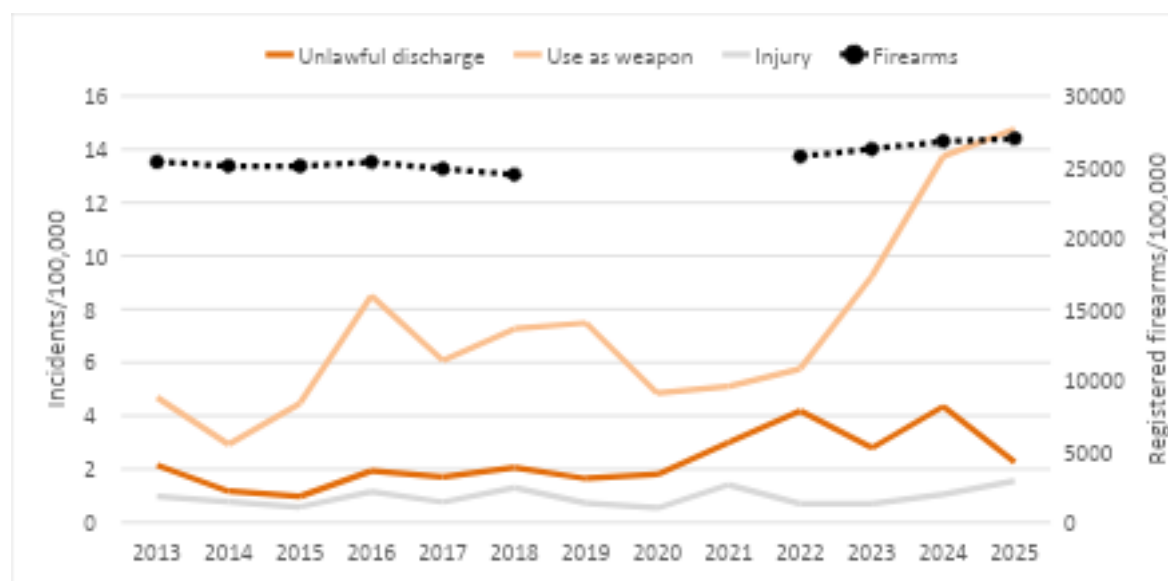
Other incidents

Figure 3-8 shows rates of other types of firearm-related incidents in Tasmania, such as unlawfully discharging a firearm.

There was an apparent notable increase in incidents involving the use of a firearm as a weapon, with those incident rates approximately doubling between 2022-2025. It is unclear whether this reflects a ‘real’ increase (that is, more incidents), or whether policing practices – such as definitions of what constitutes ‘use’ of a firearm in an incident – may have changed, creating an ‘administrative’ increase. For example, it appears that threats may now be categorised as ‘use’ within the context of domestic violence (Webb, 2026). It is also not clear whether firearms were actually present in such incidents.

Figures for firearm use as a weapon incident type should be viewed with great caution. In addition, information about license and registration status is not available, meaning that conclusions cannot be drawn about the involvement of legally owned firearms in firearm incidents.

Figure 3-8 Other firearm-related incidents, 2013-2025



Source: Tasmania Police (2026); Tasmania Police (various years b).

3.4 Do buyback schemes reduce mass shootings?

In addition to drawing attention to the number of firearms a person can own, the Bondi massacre has driven calls for increased restrictions on the types of firearms a person with a Category A or B license can own. As noted above, New South Wales has passed legislation to recategorise lever- and button-release, as well as straight pull and pump action, firearms into the heavily restricted Category C.

The rationale is that those types of firearms are faster to reload than ‘standard’ action firearms, and are thus ‘almost like’ the semi-automatic firearms (and pump action shotguns) that were prohibited after the Port Arthur Massacre in 1996.³³ A stated goal of the 1996 gun law changes was ending mass shootings (Reuter & Mouzos, 2003). This relies on the premise that availability of a certain type of firearm makes mass shootings (using the standard definition of four or more deaths, not including the perpetrator) more likely to occur.

3.4.1 Firearm type and relationship to mass shootings

The assumption that there is a connection between firearm type and mass shootings typically draws on the dramatic difference in the frequency of mass shootings in the USA and Australia (and, indeed, the USA and most countries).

However, the differing availability of semi-automatic longarms is just one of an extensive range of very substantial legislative and other differences between the USA and Australia. A

³³ It is acknowledged that this does not reflect the technical facts about those firearms’ manual reloading action, however it is not the purpose of this report to consider the technical specifications of the firearms in question.

key difference between Australia and the USA is that in the USA, firearm ownership levels (which are often estimated based on proxy indicators such as the number of hunting permit holders in a particular state) are *positively* associated with firearm-related deaths, whereas in Australia there is a *negative* relationship.

It cannot be assumed that between-country differences in the ‘type’ of firearms individuals may own, offers significant explanatory power in terms of mass shootings. Further, evidence from the USA about relationships between the availability of ‘assault’ firearms and mass shootings is limited, weak, and often contradictory (for a brief overview see RAND Corporation, 2026).

3.4.2 Mass shootings in Australia

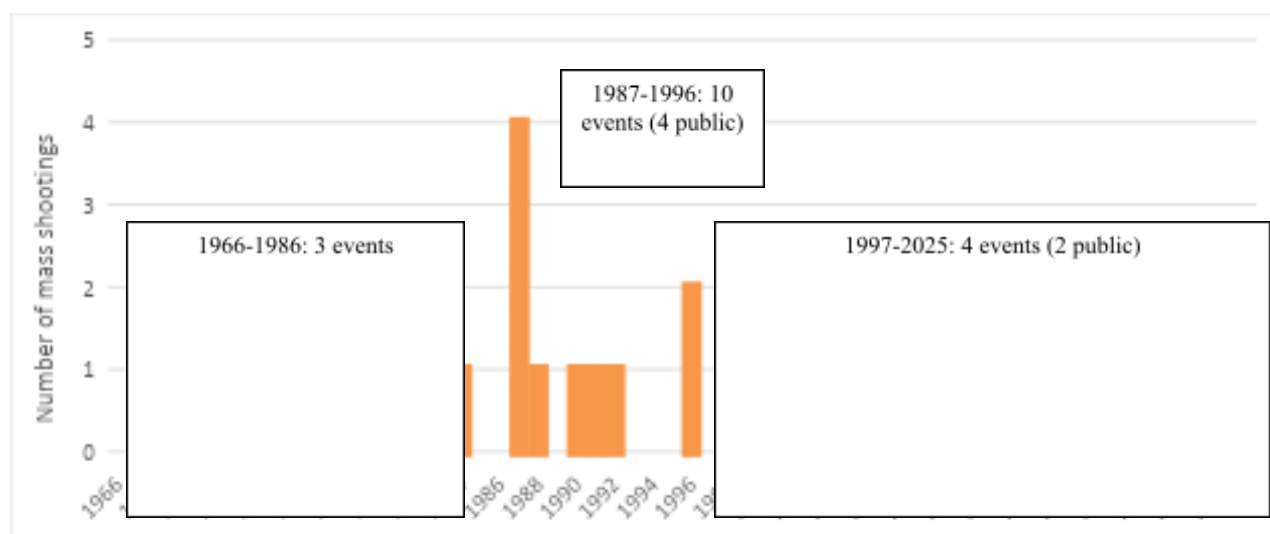
Mass shootings have always been an extremely rare event in Australia. Their infrequency makes them difficult to statistically examine. Most studies simply examine a certain period of time after 1996 and say that there were no mass shootings in that time, then attribute that to the 1996 gun laws (e.g., Chapman, Alpers, Agho, & Jones, 2006).

Chapman, Stewart, and Alpers (2018) compared mass shootings during the period January 1979 to June 1996 (210 months) with the period July 1996 to February 2018 (260 months), and concluded that before 1996, approximately 3 mass shootings took place every 4 years. They state that had mass shootings “continued at this rate, approximately 16 incidents (SD, 4) would have been expected since then by February 2018.” (p.63).

That analysis fails to consider that mass shootings were not evenly spaced over time but heavily clustered within the decade from 1987 to 1996. When a longer time series is examined, with 30 years before and 29 years after 1996, the years 1987 to 1996 stand out (Figure 3-9). There is no clear explanation for why such a number of mass shooting events (10 out of 17, or 59%, and four out of six public place mass shootings³⁴) were clustered within a short space of time. Based on estimates, gun ownership had also started to decline by that point. It therefore seems unlikely that the sudden cluster of mass shootings could be explained by rising levels of gun ownership.

³⁴ Note that the Darwin mass shooting in 2019 involved a range of locations across that city, some of which were semi-private (such as motel rooms) and some of which were more public places. The shootings occurred in the course of the perpetrator looking for an intended victim, who was known to them. In this sense, it differs from other public mass shootings in a number of characteristics and is most accurately viewed as an event that does not neatly fit in either the public or the private category. However, to avoid any perceptions of attempting to reduce the number of public mass shootings, it is included in that category.

Figure 3-9 Mass shootings in Australia since 1966



Sources: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2018); Commonwealth of Australia (2026b); Fell (2025); McPhedran (2020); Smith & Marsh (2019).

The relationship between gun types/gun numbers and mass shootings is not straightforward. Various different types of firearms have been used to commit mass shootings, with usually one or two firearms used (McPhedran, 2020). Updating the data from McPhedran (2020), out of 17 mass shootings with 18 individual perpetrators over the period 1966 to 2025:

- 7 perpetrators out of 18 (38.9%) held a gun license
- 3 (17.7%) shootings were committed with a pump action shotgun
- 3 shootings out of 17 (17.7%; and three out of the five public place shootings³⁵) were committed with semi-automatic firearms
- 1 (5.9%) public place shooting was committed with a sawn-off semi-automatic firearm that had to be manually reloaded.

It cannot be assumed that restricting certain firearm types and/or limiting the number of firearms an individual can own will reduce (already extremely infrequent) mass shootings.

Although it is unlikely that restrictions can prevent mass shooting events, it is acknowledged that the political/policy context surrounding the proposed buyback scheme is heavily focussed on this objective and on public place shootings in particular. If it is accepted that this will be achieved (as unlikely as the evidence suggests that to be), what, then, is the maximum impact that can be expected?

³⁵ Although information about firearm type was not available for all private place mass shootings, it was available for all public place mass shootings.

To answer this, we examined the average yearly death toll from public place mass shootings in Australia, using the data and time period described above.

- Only mass shootings committed by individuals who held their firearms legally are included, because the policy would not be expected to affect unlicensed persons (this excludes the Port Arthur and Darwin shootings, both committed by unlicensed individuals).
- Only those shootings involving firearms that are now prohibited (or proposed for prohibition) are included, because those are the firearms that have been described (rightly or wrongly) as being especially connected to mass shootings.

Based on this:

- On average, there have been 0.48 deaths per year in Australia due to public mass shootings by licensed individuals.
- On average, there have been 1.12 people injured per year in Australia due to public mass shootings by licensed individuals.

This translates to an expected maximum impact of around half a life saved per year, on average. To have this impact, the buyback would have to stop all public mass shootings by licensed individuals.

3.4.3 Firearms and terrorism in Australia

The Bondi shootings were a declared terrorist attack. The current definition of terrorism³⁶ within the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth; s100.1) is an action or threat of action where:

- a) the action is done or the threat is made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause; and
- b) the action is done or the threat is made with the intention of:
 - (i) coercing, or influencing by intimidation, the government of the Commonwealth or a State, Territory or foreign country, or of part of a State, Territory or foreign country; or
 - (ii) intimidating the public or a section of the public.

Australia has had relatively few terrorist events, and of those, fewer still have involved firearms. The most high-profile incidents, prior to Bondi, both occurred in New South Wales: the 2014 Lindt Café Siege (Sydney) and the 2015 murder of Curtis Cheng (Parramatta).

³⁶ There is debate about how to define terrorism, and the legal definition is currently under review by the Independent National Security Legislation Monitor.

The Lindt Café Siege was committed by a man who had migrated to Australia from Iran in 1996. At the time of the siege, he was on bail and facing trial for sex offences and for arranging the murder of his ex-wife. Although the incident featured a prominently displayed jihadist flag, it was determined to be unclear whether the perpetrator was motivated by Islamic State. However, he was deemed to have become “radicalised” (State Coroner of New South Wales, 2017).

The perpetrator used an illicitly obtained sawn-off pump action shotgun. He had 28 shotgun cartridges that had been produced in the 1990s. Searches of the Australian Crime Commission’s Firearm Transaction Database and the National Firearm Licensing and Registration System did not contain any record of the shotgun. It was considered possible that the shotgun had been legally imported to Australia in the 1960s, however no further records existed (State Coroner of New South Wales, 2017).

The Curtis Cheng murder was committed by a 15 year old boy who was killed by police after firing several shots at officers who had responded to the attack. In the robes he was wearing at the time, police found a note that said he had come “to put terror into your hearts”. He used an illegally obtained handgun. Four men – one of whom was described as a “radicalised” supporter of Islamic State and actively involved in the indoctrination of others - were subsequently found guilty of conspiracy to commit that murder. The handgun was found to have been illegally obtained by one of those individuals, who had also been subject to a Firearm Prohibition Order (Australian Federal Police, 2016; Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, 2020).

Although the 2022 Wieambilla shootings in Queensland had elements consistent with terrorism, such as religious/political preoccupations, that incident was determined by the Queensland State Coroner to not fulfil the definition of a terrorist act.³⁷ Nevertheless, some expert witnesses suggested that the perpetrators had become radicalised towards violent extremism and terrorism from around mid-2021.

One of the three perpetrators had held a firearms license that had been cancelled approximately four months prior to the incident. He had three registered firearms in his possession that had not been removed when his license was cancelled. Another of the perpetrators had a minor entry on his criminal history for possession of an unregistered firearm in 1998. A number of unregistered firearms were found at the property (Coroners Court of Queensland, 2025).

One perpetrator at Bondi held a New South Wales Category A and B firearms license. The circumstances surrounding the Bondi shootings, and that firearms license, remain under investigation.³⁸ The Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, tasked with finding those answers, has recommended in its interim report that “The Commonwealth, states and territories should prioritise efforts to implement the proposed National Gun

³⁷ The State Coroner also observed that the current definition of terrorism was “unhelpfully narrow.”

³⁸ There is little information publicly available, to date, about how one of the perpetrators obtained a New South Wales firearms license. Significant questions have been raised about the past involvement of federal law enforcement and security agencies, and about irregularities in the licensing process (such as the three year period between the perpetrator applying for, and receiving, a license).

Buyback Scheme”. The only rationale articulated for this recommendation is that it “could reasonably be expected to reduce the number of firearms available in the community” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2026b, p.94). Again, this reflects the assumption that more firearms lead to more misuse.

Overall, the majority of recent firearm-related ‘terrorist’ incidents in Australia (three out of four) have involved unlicensed perpetrators using unregistered firearms (or, in the case of Wieambilla, a mixture of unregistered firearms, and registered firearms that should no longer have been in the possession of one of the perpetrators). This suggests a limited relationship between legally owned firearms and terrorist acts. It does, however, draw attention to the illicit market.

3.4.4 The illicit firearms market

Government and media reports indicate that most firearms used in crimes, up to and including homicide, are not legally held. Quantifying the impacts of the illegal market on firearm-related harms was outside the scope of this report. However, the illicit market (including new technologies that contribute to that market, such as 3D printing) is crucial to recognise when analysing the likely impact of restrictions on legal ownership.

The size of the illegal pool of firearms in Australia is unknown and estimates of its size vary greatly, ranging upwards from a lower estimate of 250,000 longarms and 10,000 handguns (Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, 2016). Up to date information is not available, however:

- From 1997 to 1999 (i.e., post-1996 law changes), over 90 per cent of firearms used to commit homicides were not registered and their owners not licensed (Mouzos, 2000).
- Between 1989-90 and 2005-06, of the 150 offenders known to have used a handgun to commit homicide, 12 per cent were licensed firearms owners and two percent had used a registered handgun. Considering all firearms (n=313), 15 per cent of offenders held a firearms license and 11 per cent of firearms used were registered (Bricknell, 2008).
- National Homicide Monitoring Programs no longer publish licensing and registration statistics but have continued to state that the majority of firearms used in homicides were unregistered and/or the perpetrators unlicensed (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2015).

It is reasonable to assume that only around 10 per cent of firearms used to commit homicide are legally owned. Meaning, around 90 per cent of homicides – and potentially more - will not be directly impacted by changes to the number and type of firearms that can be legally owned.

3.4.5 Flows between the legal and illicit markets

A way that legally owned firearms may relate to firearm violence is by leakage to the illicit market. This can occur via a range of pathways (e.g., diversion, theft, staged theft, legal loopholes). The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC)'s 2016 report into their firearms trace program shows the 'grey market' – meaning firearms that were prohibited but not handed in during the 1996 gun buyback³⁹ – was the most common origin of illicit firearms.

- Between 2004 and 30 June 2016 the most significant diversion methods overall (all firearm types) were the grey market (3,022 firearms or 44 per cent); unknown methods of diverting untraceable firearms (2,158 or 31.4 per cent); and theft (630 firearms or 9.2 per cent). Theft accounted for the diversion of 8.5 per cent of firearms traced in 2015–16.
- For longarms specifically, the grey market accounted for 79.2 per cent of firearms traced. Theft accounted for 9.2 per cent. Other sources were negligible.
- In contrast, for handguns, theft accounted for 30.8 per cent of firearms traced, and the grey market 1.5 per cent. Legislative loopholes that had allowed deactivation/reactivation accounted for 18.5 per cent of traces, and domestic manufacture for 13.5 per cent (ACIC, 2016).

Despite the low prevalence of theft as a source of illicit firearms, theft has been cited as a justification for reducing firearm ownership. For example, it has been argued that restricting the type and number of firearms people can own will reduce the likelihood of firearms being stolen and subsequently misused (SBS News, 2026).

- Past research indicates that around 85 per cent of stolen firearms were registered at the time of theft (Bricknell, 2020).
- Most firearm theft incidents (40% or n=339) resulted in the theft of a single firearm, 20 per cent (n=170) in two firearms and 13 per cent (n=111) in three firearms (Bricknell, 2020).
- That is, almost three-quarters of theft incidents involved the theft of *fewer* than four firearms.

There is little up to date information about connections between firearm theft and crime in Australia. Based on past data, a very low percentage of stolen firearms are linked with crime.

- The majority of firearms stolen are Category A and B longarms, with handguns (Category H) only comprising 7 per cent of thefts between 2005-06 to 2008-09.

³⁹ The difference between the 1996 buyback and the current scheme, is that all firearms must now be registered, meaning that police have records of who owns what type of firearm, and how many are owned by each license holder.

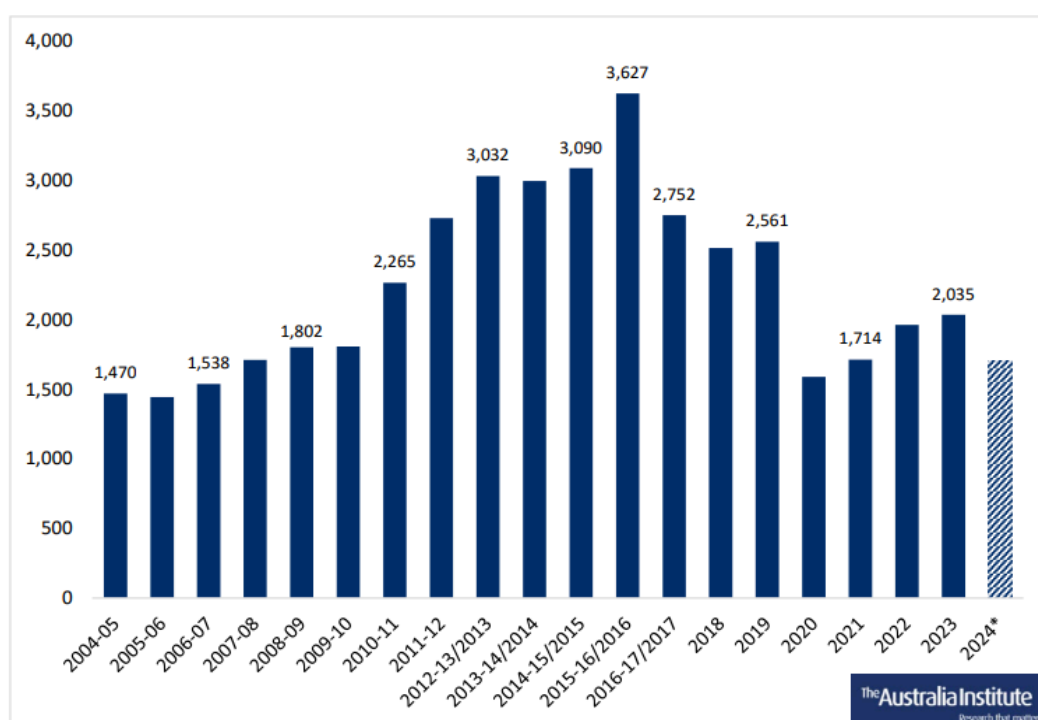
However, 61 per cent of all Serious and Organised Crime Group-seized firearms were (restricted) Category C, D, or H (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2015).

- In 2008–09 information about whether stolen firearms were used in subsequent criminal activity, or found in possession of persons charged with serious offences, was available for 65 per cent of theft incidents (n=392).
- Of these, firearms stolen in 10 incidents (or 3%) were recorded as being used in subsequent criminal activity, or in the possession of a person charged with serious offences. Only one theft incident resulted in the use of a firearm to commit a violent crime (manslaughter) (Bricknell, 2011).
- Between 2005-05 and 2008-09, stolen firearms were known to be used in six armed robberies, three murders or suicides, two home invasions, one manslaughter, one attempted murder, and one domestic violence incident. (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2015)

Importantly, this information is dated and does not reflect changes to the illicit market that have been brought about by new technology such as 3D printing.

Firearm theft statistics are not consistently published, however despite the increases in firearms ownership, theft appears to have been declining nationally since around 2016 (Figure 3-10). This suggests that policy measures specifically focussing on theft reduction – such as safe storage compliance inspections and related enforcement activities (Bricknell, 2020) - may be effective.

Figure 3-10 Firearm theft in Australia, 2004/05 to 2024



Source: Australia Institute (2025b).

In Tasmania, firearm theft has fallen markedly since its high point in 2015/2016 (Figure 3-11). Again, this has occurred despite ongoing increases in the number of registered firearms.

- The most recent available Tasmania Police data about firearms theft indicates that from June 2025 to May 2026, there were 40 firearm theft incidents with 155 firearms stolen (Tasmania Police, 2026).
- This means an average of 3.9 firearms were stolen per theft incident.

Figure 3-11 Firearm theft in Tasmania



Source: Australia Institute (2025b); Tasmania Police (2026).

Firearm theft has fallen despite rising firearm ownership, suggesting that the number of firearms that are legally owned does not relate to the number of firearms stolen. Based on the available information, it is unlikely that firearm theft in Tasmania will be significantly affected by caps on ownership.

3.4.5. Unintended consequences?

The objective of the gun buyback scheme is to reduce the number of firearms in the community. However, initial evidence from New South Wales suggests that there may be an unintended consequence of the law changes; they may directly drive an increase in the number of people who hold a firearms license and possess firearms.

Media reports early in 2026, for example, suggested that in New South Wales from 16 December 2025 to 16 January 2026, relative to the previous year:

- Applications for new firearms licenses increased by 71 per cent
- Applications to acquire firearms increased by 33 per cent (NewsCorp, 2026).

Similar evidence has emerged from the Australian Capital Territory, with a 57 per cent increase in monthly firearm license applications (Tindale, 2026).

Recently released New South Wales Police data indicates that license applications have remained at well above average levels throughout February and March (NSW Police, 2026), suggesting that the December-January increase was not a one-off event (Figure 3-10).

- From January to December 2025, an average of 1,641 new license applications was received each month.
- From January to March 2026, an average of 2,473 applications was received each month.

The reasons for this are unclear. New applicants may be, for example, partners or other family members of existing license holders who now hold firearms in excess of newly imposed (or proposed) limits, and those family members may intend to acquire the excess firearms. They may be individuals who had already been considering applying for a license and were prompted to do so by the high-profile debate occurring. They may be individuals who see obtaining a firearms license as a means of ‘sending a message’ to a government whose actions they disagree with. Or, there may be other reasons that are not apparent.

- Estimates based on license and registration data suggest that in Tasmania the average number of firearms owned is around four. However, there is no published information available about the ‘distribution’ of ownership.
- Based on suggestions that around 9,000 Tasmanian firearm license holders have more than six firearms (Adams, 2026), this implies that around 29,000 firearm license holders have less than six firearms. Some of those may have five firearms (i.e., the proposed limit for hunters under legislative scenario 2).
- A conservative estimate is that over half of Tasmanian firearm owners have fewer firearms than the potential (scenario 2) ownership cap of five (for hunters) or 10 (for target shooters and primary producers).
- Licensees who currently possess fewer firearms than the limit may be motivated to acquire additional firearms in order to ‘reach’ their limit.

Legislative changes involving limits on ownership may have the perverse outcome of increasing rather than decreasing firearm ownership, directly contrary to the stated aim of the policy. A proportion of individual license holders may have fewer firearms than they previously had, but the total pool of firearms may remain constant - or even grow - and

potentially be spread across a greater number of people, elevating overall gun ownership prevalence.

3.4.6. The law of diminishing returns

The law of diminishing returns is a long-standing concept in economics (e.g., Cannan, 1892). First described in the 18th Century by economists concerned with agricultural production, it has since become a key concept within economic analysis. Briefly, the law of diminishing returns states that as an input (for example, expenditure) is increased, at some point the resulting output (for example, productivity) for every one unit of input will start to decrease. That is, input and output are not proportional and higher levels of investment will produce ever-smaller gains. Further, a point may come at which a unit of input becomes inefficient and unproductive, producing not just diminishing but negative returns.

The law of diminishing returns has been demonstrated extensively across diverse fields such as health, fertility, wellbeing and needs satisfaction, education and other forms of human capital, and ecological performance. It has been observed within law enforcement, crime, and justice policy. For example, the marginal effect of an extra year in prison generally diminishes for longer sentences (Productivity Commission, 2021). Similarly, increasing police numbers or patrols may have a deterrent effect up to a point, after which increased numbers may deliver diminished crime reduction outcomes (e.g., Braga et al., 2019).

A topical example of the law of diminishing returns in Australia – and one where analogies may be drawn to firearms - is tobacco control. Recent statistics highlight the possibility that tobacco control in Australia has reached (and potentially passed) the point of diminishing returns for reducing smoking rates, as well as introducing perverse market incentives and generating a black market (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2026; Coyne & Campbell, 2025). Tobacco control uses the same public health model that underlies many elements of firearm legislation in Australia, and similarities between the two are often invoked (e.g., Bendle, 2025).

Given the low levels of firearm misuse in Tasmania (and Australia more generally), the potential that legislative intervention around legal firearms ownership has reached the point at which further investment may produce diminishing (or even negative) returns, cannot be overlooked.

4 Cost-benefit analysis of the Tasmanian Firearms Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2026

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we report the results of the cost benefit analysis (CBA) undertaken of the Tasmanian gun buyback scheme where we estimate that 20 per cent of the stock of registered firearms are purchased by the Tasmanian taxpayer in return for market value compensation (see Box 4-1 for a description of CBA).

As we note in Section 3 of this report, the 20 per cent figure has been used to ensure consistency with the NSW and Victorian analysis, and to take an extremely conservative approach, however the proposed Tasmanian legislation under scenario 2 (including gun limits) would potentially be in the 25-30 per cent range.. This means that the estimated fiscal and economic costs in this report are at the lower end of a reasonable range of likely costs.

In terms of the CBA specification:

- We have focussed the analysis on the State of Tasmania.
- We have assumed that the buyback scheme would seek to reduce the total number of registered firearms by 20 per cent, from 155,000 firearms in Tasmania to around 124,000 firearms (i.e. a reduction of 31,000 firearms).
- We assume that the buyback scheme is effective in the sense that the registered firearms subject to the policy are surrendered by licensed owners in exchange for monetary compensation.
- The compensation paid by the taxpayer to registered firearm owners represents market value. Based on our market analysis, we assume the compensation paid is \$2,000 per firearm, on average.
- The time-period for the analysis is 20-years from 2026-27 to 2046-47. This longer timeframe allows for any benefits flowing from the policy, such as avoided deaths caused by firearms, over time to be fully captured.

- We use a net present value framework whereby all the future costs and benefits over time are discounted back to today's dollars (i.e. 2025-26). We use the standard 7 per cent discount rate recommended by the Federal Government's Office of Impact Analysis.
- We separately assess the net benefits of the proposed reclassification amendments. This is the 'reclassification-only' scenario.

Box 4-1 What is Cost Benefit Analysis

What is Cost Benefit Analysis?

Cost–benefit analysis (CBA) provides a structured framework for evaluating policy by comparing all expected costs and benefits on a common monetary basis. Unlike partial or qualitative assessments, CBA is grounded in welfare economics and seeks to measure changes in overall social wellbeing, not just financial flows. By converting impacts into comparable units, it allows policymakers to assess whether a policy generates a net gain to society and to rank alternative interventions based on their economic efficiency. For this reason, CBA is widely regarded as the gold standard in policy appraisal, underpinning decision-making across infrastructure, health, environmental and regulatory domains.

A defining feature of CBA is its breadth. It goes beyond a narrow fiscal or financial perspective — which focuses on government budgets or firm-level profitability — to capture the full range of social impacts, including those not traded in markets. This includes valuing non-market effects such as changes in health outcomes, safety, time, environmental quality and amenity, alongside direct economic costs and benefits. In doing so, CBA attempts to provide a comprehensive measure of social welfare by identifying, quantifying and monetising all material effects of a policy. While such estimates are necessarily subject to uncertainty and judgement, the framework ensures that trade-offs are made explicit and that policy choices are informed by a transparent and consistent assessment of their overall economic impact.

4.2 Costs of the gun buyback

4.2.1 Household welfare costs

While the primary objective of firearm buyback policies is to reduce potential harm through lower firearm availability, these policies also impose private welfare costs on households. These costs arise because firearms provide non-market value to their owners. For example, firearms provide households with a means to play sport and exercise via target shooting and hunting, which gun owners value.

Accordingly, the removal of firearms through a mandatory or incentivised buyback therefore constitutes a reduction in household utility, even where sufficient monetary compensation is

provided to offset the confiscation of a firearm. Although these broader social welfare costs may be given low value politically, it nevertheless represents a real cost that any thorough analysis should include.

From a welfare economics perspective, these effects can be understood as a combination of:

- Loss of consumer surplus from forgone use and choice (i.e. the option value of maintaining multiple firearms that serve different purposes).
- Loss of non-market value (e.g. sentimental attachment).
- Compliance and transaction costs associated with the surrender of firearms.
- Health benefits from participation in shooting or hunting sports and pastimes.
- Potential loss of trust in government as a result of the confiscatory buyback policy.
- Loss of self-sufficiency for those who value it (e.g. hunters who harvest meat).
- Substitution and access costs where legal markets are restricted (i.e. search and risk costs, and potentially higher monetary costs, in obtaining similar firearms illegally).

Below we expand on the main costs that we measure in the central case CBA.

Loss of consumption value and reduced choice

Firearms provide direct consumption value to households through a range of activities, including hunting, sport shooting and collection. In economic terms, this is reflected in the consumer surplus derived from firearm ownership—that is, the difference between an individual’s willingness to pay and the market price of the firearm.

Restrictions on firearm ownership reduce both:

- the availability of firearm types (reduced variety), and
- the ability to consume firearm-related services.

The literature emphasises that firearm ownership is not purely functional, but also reflects preferences, identity and recreational value. Cook and Ludwig (2004) highlight that individuals reveal a willingness to pay for firearms even in the presence of regulatory constraints, implying a non-trivial private benefit.

In this context, the buyback can be interpreted as eliminating the stream of consumption benefits associated with firearm use. Even where compensation is paid, this is unlikely to fully offset the loss of consumer surplus, particularly where prices do not reflect heterogeneity in preferences.

Sentimental and non-market value

In addition to use value, firearms often carry non-market value. This may arise from:

- inheritance (family heirlooms);
- personal customisation; and/or
- cultural or identity significance.

Standard economic theory recognises such effects through the endowment effect, whereby individuals value owned goods more highly than equivalent goods not in their possession. Empirical estimates suggest that willingness-to-accept compensation for the loss of an owned good may exceed willingness-to-pay by a factor of 1.5 to 3 times. As a result, compensation paid under buyback schemes — typically benchmarked to market prices — may systematically understate the true welfare loss experienced by households. This component is particularly important in explaining resistance to buyback policies and should be treated explicitly in welfare analysis.

Administrative and compliance costs

Participation in a buyback scheme involves a range of transaction costs, including:

- time spent understanding eligibility requirements;
- travel to surrender locations; and
- administrative processing and documentation.

These costs represent a pure deadweight economic loss, as they do not correspond to a transfer between parties but rather a consumption of real resources.

The broader regulatory literature suggests that compliance costs for individuals typically range from 1 to 5 per cent of asset value, or can be measured directly in terms of time. Applying a time-cost framework, even modest administrative burdens (e.g. 2–5 hours per firearm) translate into measurable economic costs.

Self-sufficiency

A further dimension of value arises from self-sufficiency, which can be understood as a form of non-market consumption and household production. For some firearm owners, hunting provides a direct source of food, contributing to household consumption outside formal market channels. The literature shows that activities such as hunting, fishing and foraging can increase food availability, improve dietary quality and enhance the stability of household food supply, even in high-income countries. In this sense, hunting functions as a form of self-provisioning, generating real economic value that is not captured in market transactions but nonetheless contributes to welfare (Bliss et al, 2024).

Beyond the direct food value, hunting also delivers broader non-market benefits associated with agency, resilience and autonomy. Evidence suggests that non-market food production

can act as a skills-based safety net, allowing households to buffer against shocks and maintain access to food independently of commercial supply chains. From a welfare economics perspective, this implies that firearm ownership may embody both consumption value (through harvested meat) and option value (the ability to provide for oneself if needed). To the extent that a buyback policy restricts these activities, it may reduce household welfare in ways that are not reflected in observed market behaviour, but which should nonetheless be recognised in a comprehensive cost–benefit framework.

Summary of household welfare costs

The various components discussed above can be brought together into a unified framework for estimating household welfare impacts. Table 4-1 (below) provides indicative ranges for each cost category.

Table 4-1 Indicative per owner values of costs measured in the CBA

Cost component	Description	Indicative value (AUD)
Loss of consumer surplus	Forgone use (hunting, sport, recreation) over and above the paid (market value) of the firearm	\$500 - \$2,000 per gun per year
Sentimental value	Endowment effect / non-market attachment over and above the market value paid to the owner by the taxpayer	10-100% of market value
Administrative loss	Time, travel, compliance burden. Estimated at 2-8 hours per year (at \$50/hour wage rate)	\$100-\$400 per year
Loss in self sufficiency	Loss of self-sufficiency: reduced ability to hunt and self-provision food, resulting in a loss of non-market consumption and option value (self-reliance).	\$500-\$1,500 per year per hunter

Source: Tulipwood Economics estimates.

Taken together, these components indicate that firearm buyback policies impose non-trivial private welfare costs on households, even where compensation is provided. Three points are particularly important:

- First, the costs extend beyond simple market value. Non-market and behavioural factors — including sentimental value and self-sufficiency — play a significant role.
- Second, many of these costs are not directly observable, and must be inferred using standard economic techniques such as revealed or stated preference techniques or parameter proxies.

- Third, these effects are conceptually analogous to a regulatory confiscation, in which private assets are removed or restricted in pursuit of broader social objectives.

This does not imply that buyback policies are welfare-reducing overall. Rather, it highlights the need for a balanced cost–benefit framework that accounts for both:

- the social benefits of reduced firearm harm; and
- the private costs imposed on affected households.

Household welfare costs are, therefore, an integral component of the economic evaluation of firearm buyback policies. While the public debate has focused primarily on the (assumed) benefits of reduced violence and injury, the analysis demonstrates that these policies also entail measurable private costs. Incorporating these effects strengthens the analytical framework and ensures that policy evaluation is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of both individual and social welfare.

4.2.2 Results

Table 4-2 reports the results of the cost of a Tasmanian Gun Buyback policy. We report only those costs that were measured in the central scenario. The central scenario reflects the most likely outcome of the policy, in our view.

The key distinction in this case is that, unlike a standard CBA — where compensation payments are treated as transfers and only the deadweight cost of taxation is counted — the buyback involves the destruction of a privately held asset. As a result, the fiscal outlay is not offset by a corresponding social gain. Specifically, the taxpayer bears the full cost of funding the scheme, while the firearm owner is, in principle, left no better or worse off after exchanging the asset for cash compensation. Because the asset is removed from use rather than reallocated, the transaction does not generate offsetting value elsewhere in the economy.

Accordingly, the compensation payment cannot be treated as a neutral transfer. Instead, the policy results in a net loss to society broadly equal to the full fiscal cost of the scheme, in addition to the deadweight cost of raising public funds.

Table 4-2 Estimated costs of Tasmanian Gun Buyback, Central Scenario

Cost (in 2025-26 dollars)	\$m (7% NPV)
Resource value of firearms destroyed, proxied by market-value compensation, funded by the taxpayer	58.1
Administration costs (real resources) initial and ongoing	4.3
Deadweight cost of taxation to fund buyback	18.7

Household welfare costs (loss of consumer surplus)	
<i>Reduced options (choice of firearm)</i>	13.6
<i>Sentimental value</i>	5.5
<i>Red tape (time and money)</i>	4.1
Business (direct and supply chain) costs	
<i>Lower gross margins (producer surplus)</i>	18.2
<i>Lower domestic supply chain profit n.e.c. (producer surplus)</i>	2.0
<i>Lower ammunition and related accessories sales</i>	1.8
<i>Inventory write-downs and stranded working capital</i>	1.6
<i>Business closures and exit costs</i>	0.7
Total Costs	128.7

Source: Tulipwood Economics estimates.

4.3 Benefits of a Tasmanian gun buyback policy

4.3.1 Introduction

The benefits of the proposed buyback are conceptualised as avoided social costs, including reductions in deaths, injuries and associated economic impacts. In the initial iteration of the CBA, benefits were conservatively set to zero, reflecting the finding from the econometric and statistical analysis that there is no robust evidence of a causal relationship between firearm stock and mass shootings or firearm-related homicides. To test the sensitivity of this result, a second specification adopts a deliberately favourable assumption that reductions in firearm stock do prevent these outcomes, and includes avoided mass shootings and homicides in the central case. This approach effectively grants the strongest plausible benefit claims to the policy; however, as shown below, even under these assumptions the benefit–cost ratio remains well below 1.0, indicating that the policy does not generate net social benefits.

4.3.2 Central case scenario

The benefits of the policy are conceptualised as a series of avoided social costs, including reductions in deaths, injuries and related economic impacts. A wide range of potential benefit channels were considered; however, to maintain consistency with the econometric and statistical evidence presented in earlier chapters, the initial CBA assessment does not

assume that reductions in the stock of firearms would lead to measurable declines in mass shootings or firearm-related homicides.

In the absence of robust evidence supporting such relationships, these categories are conservatively excluded from the quantified benefit stream. Instead, the analysis focuses on the most direct and empirically defensible channel—namely, reductions in accidental firearm incidents. However, deaths from firearms accidents in Australia are extremely low at around 5 per year, so a 20 per cent reduction in firearms in a single state would provide a barely measurable benefit.

The resulting benefit-cost ratio (BCR) was extremely low, **at 0.07**. This means that for every dollar invested in the gun buyback scheme only seven cents of benefits are created.

4.3.3 Positive case scenario

In the central case scenario, despite the lack of strong evidence connecting the stock of firearms to mass shootings, we have nonetheless included avoided mass shootings as a benefit in our central case. The reasons are twofold:

- First, it is difficult to analyse the relationship between the stock of firearms and mass shootings because mass shootings are rare events and many of the years in the time series are “zero” (as in “zero mass shootings”). Therefore, it is problematic to interpret the results of any statistical analysis.
- Second, a stated purpose of the proposed legislation in Tasmania and proposed in other states is to reduce (or eliminate) the number of mass shootings (particularly, terrorism-related events) in the future.

In our central case CBA, we therefore assume that one benefit of the gun buyback will be to avoid any future mass shootings.

- We assume a reduction, on average, of 0.6 deaths per year from mass shootings in Tasmania; and
- A reduction, on average, of 1.1 serious injuries per year from mass shootings in Tasmania.

These benefits are monetised at standard rates for the value of life and hospital resources costs (see discussion at Appendix C).

Table 4-3 (below) lists the benefits considered in the CBA.

Table 4-3 Estimated benefits a Tasmanian Gun Buyback policy, Positive Case scenario

Benefit (in 2025-26 dollars)	\$m (7% NPV)
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Avoided mass shootings (homicides)	5.8
Avoided mass shootings (injuries)	11.7
Avoided homicides by firearm (death and injury)	3.4
Avoided firearm suicides (death and injury)	3.6
Avoided firearm accidents (death and injury)	2.0
Reduced violent crime (ie. armed robbery, threats, standover)	0.2
Health system savings - injuries (real resources)	0.2
Policing and Justice savings (real resources)	0.2
Total benefits	27.0

Source: Tulipwood Economics estimates.

4.4 Comparison of CBA results

Even under highly favourable assumptions, the proposed amendments to the Tasmanian Firearms Act 1996 is highly unlikely to generate net social benefits. The CBA deliberately adopts a generous specification on the benefit side, effectively assuming the elimination of future mass shootings and material reductions in the number of firearm homicides, despite the absence of robust empirical evidence supporting these relationships. Under these assumptions, gross benefits are estimated at approximately \$27.0 million in present value terms. However, these are outweighed by gross costs of around \$128.7 million, driven by the initial fiscal outlay, the deadweight cost of raising taxation to fund the amendments, household welfare losses and impacts on the firearm-related supply chain.

This yields a benefit–cost ratio of approximately 0.21, well below the threshold of 1.0 required to justify the policy. Accordingly, even on the most optimistic interpretation of its benefits, the implementation of the proposed amendments represents a net loss to society.

This implies that, even on the most optimistic assumptions for the gun buyback policy, for every dollar of cost incurred, only around twenty-one cents of benefit are realised.

This result is striking given the deliberately favourable assumptions adopted on the benefit side. While the econometric and statistical analysis presented earlier in the report found no

robust evidence of a causal relationship between firearm stock and mass shootings or firearm homicides, the CBA nonetheless incorporates a positive benefit stream by assuming that the policy eliminates all future mass shooting deaths and injuries.

4.5 CBA of the ‘reclassification-only’ scheme

The proposed reclassification is expected to affect approximately 1,500 straight-pull and button/lever-release firearms, equivalent to around one per cent of Tasmania’s registered firearm stock. This is approximately one-twentieth of the number of firearms assumed to be surrendered under the broader 20 per cent buyback scenario. In the absence of more detailed information, the costs and benefits of the reclassification scheme can therefore be estimated by proportionately scaling the broader CBA, with adjustments for the Tasmanian Government’s commitment to compensate owners at 1.5 times market value and for the fixed costs of administering a smaller scheme.

The value of the affected firearms is estimated at approximately \$2.8 million, based on an average market value of \$2,000 per firearm. The Government’s commitment to compensation at 1.5 times market value would increase the nominal compensation outlay to approximately \$4.5 million. For welfare-analysis purposes, the market value of the firearms destroyed is treated as the underlying resource loss, while the additional compensation above market value is a transfer to affected owners. However, the full fiscal outlay must be financed and therefore contributes to the deadweight cost of raising taxation.

Administration costs are assumed to have a present value of approximately \$0.5 million. This is higher than a strict one-twentieth scaling of the wider scheme because a number of implementation functions—including program design, communications, claim processing, firearm verification, storage and destruction—will involve fixed costs. Household welfare and firearms-industry costs are scaled according to the proportion of the firearm stock affected.

On this basis, the total social cost of the reclassification scheme is estimated at approximately **\$7.0 million in present-value terms**. Under a deliberately favourable benefit scenario, in which all benefit categories in the wider buyback CBA are scaled in direct proportion to the number of firearms removed, total benefits are approximately **\$1.4 million**. This produces a benefit–cost ratio of approximately **0.19** and a net social cost of around **\$5.7 million**.

Table 4-4 Estimated costs of a Tasmanian Gun Buyback policy, Positive Case scenario

Cost category	\$ million, 7% NPV
Market value of approximately 1,500 firearms destroyed	2.80
Administration and implementation costs	0.50
Deadweight cost of raising taxation	1.41

Reduced firearm choice and consumer surplus	0.66
Sentimental and non-market value	0.27
Household compliance and red-tape costs	0.20
Lost firearm-dealer gross margins	0.88
Other supply-chain profit losses	0.10
Reduced ammunition and accessory sales	0.09
Inventory write-downs and stranded capital	0.08
Business closure and exit costs	0.03
Total costs	7.01

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis.

The favourable benefit estimate in the Positive Case scenario should be interpreted as an upper bound. It assumes that removing one per cent of Tasmania's firearm stock generates approximately one-twentieth of the benefits attributed to a 20 per cent buyback, including reductions in mass shootings and firearm homicides. The econometric and statistical analysis in this report does not establish such a relationship. If only the smaller firearm-accident, suicide and public-resource savings categories are retained, estimated benefits fall to approximately **\$0.3 million**, producing a benefit–cost ratio of about **0.04** (Table 4-4).

Table 4-5 Estimated benefits a Tasmanian Gun Buyback policy, Positive Case scenario

Benefit category	\$ million, 7% NPV
Avoided mass-shooting fatalities	0.30
Avoided mass-shooting injuries	0.59
Avoided firearm homicides and associated injuries	0.16
Avoided firearm accidents and suicides	0.27
Reduced firearm-enabled violent crime	0.01
Health-system savings	0.01
Policing and justice-system savings	0.01
Total benefits	1.36

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis.

4.6 Conclusion

The cost–benefit analysis indicates that neither a broad 20 per cent buyback nor the narrower reclassification scheme is likely to generate net benefits for the Tasmanian community. Under the evidence-based specification, the benefits of reducing the lawful firearm stock are limited because the empirical analysis does not establish a reliable relationship between firearm prevalence and either firearm homicide or mass shootings. Even under deliberately favourable assumptions, the 20 per cent buyback generates approximately \$27 million in benefits against costs of \$128.7 million, producing a benefit–cost ratio of around 0.21. The policy would therefore return only about 21 cents of benefit for each dollar of social cost.

The reclassification scheme is much smaller in scale, but this does not materially improve its economic performance. The indicative CBA estimates costs of approximately \$7.0 million and benefits of about \$1.4 million under the deliberately favourable specification, resulting in a benefit–cost ratio of around 0.19 and a net social cost of approximately \$5.7 million. When the benefit assessment is restricted to the smaller and more defensible categories—such as possible reductions in accidents, suicides and public-service costs—estimated benefits fall to around \$0.3 million and the benefit–cost ratio declines to approximately 0.04.

These results reflect a basic weakness in the policy rationale: there is no demonstrated evidence that straight-pull and button/lever-release firearms present a materially greater public-safety risk than other legally held Category A and B firearms. The reclassification would impose compensation, administrative, compliance and welfare costs on lawful owners and affected businesses, while its benefits remain speculative. Although its aggregate cost is substantially lower than that of a general buyback, the narrower scheme still fails the economic test for proceeding and cannot be justified on value-for-money grounds without stronger evidence of a specific and material risk reduction.

Table 4-6 Summary of cost benefit analysis results, by scenario

Scenario	Costs (\$m, NPV)	Benefits (\$m, NPV)	Net benefit NPV)	social (\$m,	Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR)
Central Case – 20% buyback	128.7	8.4	-120.3		0.07
Positive case – 20% buyback	128.7	27.0	-101.7		0.21
Reclassification only – restricted benefit case	7.0	0.3	-6.7		0.04
Reclassification only – positive benefit case	7.0	1.4	-5.7		0.19

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis.

5 Fiscal and economic impact of proposed Tasmanian scheme

5.1 Introduction

This chapter assesses the fiscal and broader economic impacts of the proposed amendments to the Tasmanian Firearms Act 1996. Consistent with the preceding analysis, the focus is on quantifying the direct cost to government of implementing a large-scale reduction in the stock of privately held firearms. The fiscal assessment is based on a stylised scenario in which a proportion of the existing registered firearm stock is acquired by the State at market-based compensation rates.

The analysis proceeds in two stages. First, we estimate the direct fiscal cost of the buyback, including compensation payments and associated administrative expenditures. Second, we outline the approach to estimating the broader economic cost, which will be undertaken using a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model to capture economy-wide impacts. The CGE results are not presented in this chapter but will form part of the final assessment.

5.2 Fiscal cost

The fiscal cost of the proposed buyback is driven primarily by the scale of firearm acquisition and the compensation paid to owners. For the purposes of this analysis, we adopt the following central assumptions:

- Tasmania has 155,477 registered firearms as at 2025;
- We assumed that the scheme achieves a 20 per cent buyback rate, equivalent to just over 31,000 registered firearms;
- We have assumed an average compensation cost of \$2,000 per firearm, inclusive of accessories and related equipment. We do not anticipate the Tasmanian Government compensates gun owners for ammunition. This assumption keeps consistency across the Victorian, NSW and Tasmanian analyses.
- The scheme is open for a 12-month window, in 2026-27, and then closes.
- There are ongoing administration costs for the scheme over the four-year forward estimates period in terms of additional resourcing required to monitor the scheme.

On this basis, the direct compensation cost (in nominal terms) can be expressed as:

Fiscal Cost = 31,095 firearms × \$2,000 per firearm (on average) = \$62.2 million

This implies a baseline fiscal cost of \$62.2 million for the compensation component alone. It's worth noting that in the modelling, which is undertaken in a net present value framework, the discounted value of the fiscal cost (in 2025-26 dollars) is \$58.1 million.

The proposed buyback scheme would entail ongoing administrative and compliance costs extending beyond the initial acquisition phase. These costs reflect the need to maintain the regulatory, enforcement and operational infrastructure required to administer the scheme, monitor compliance, process transactions and manage surrendered firearms and related records. Administration costs of approximately \$2.8 million in the first year and then declining over the forward estimates to \$0.7 million per year is considered reasonable given the scale of the proposed Tasmanian legislation, the need to maintain a firearm registry system, the number of affected firearm owners, and the ongoing compliance and enforcement functions associated with a large-scale reduction in firearm ownership.

The ongoing administration costs would include:

- maintenance and expansion of firearm registry systems and databases;
- staffing for compliance, licensing, auditing and enforcement activities;
- processing and verification of firearm surrender and compensation claims;
- storage, transport and destruction of surrendered firearms and accessories;
- legal, appeals and dispute-resolution processes;
- public communication, education and stakeholder engagement activities;
- policing and intelligence activities associated with illegal retention and non-compliance;
- monitoring and evaluation of the scheme and ongoing reporting requirements;
- IT, cybersecurity and records management costs associated with sensitive firearm data; and
- coordination between state agencies, police and relevant Commonwealth bodies.

5.2.1 Total fiscal cost

Combining compensation and administrative components yields an indicative total fiscal cost in nominal dollars over a four year forward estimates period, as follows:

- **\$62.2 million in buyback costs (nominal) in Year 1; \$58.1 million in NPV terms**

- **\$4.9 million in administrative costs (nominal) over Years 1 to 4; \$4.3 million in NPV terms.**
- **\$20.1 million in deadweight costs (i.e. the cost of raising the tax dollars to pay for the scheme) over a four-year period; \$18.7 million in NPV terms.⁴⁰**

This estimate should be interpreted as a central case, subject to variation depending on:

- actual participation rates;
- realised compensation levels (which may vary by firearm type and condition); and
- administrative efficiency and program design.

Table 5-1 presents the fiscal costs over a four year forward estimates time period. In the table below, the fiscal costs are reported in nominal terms as per usual budget practice.

Table 5-1 Components of total fiscal cost of proposed amendments to the Tasmanian Firearms Act 1996, 2026-27 to 2029-30

Fiscal cost component	Cost (\$m, nominal)
Year-1 cost of gun buyback in Tasmania	62.2
Administrative cost of scheme (Years 1-4)	4.9
Deadweight cost of raising tax revenue to pay for the scheme	20.1
Total fiscal cost of the scheme over 4-years	87.2

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis. The total doesn't exactly sum due to rounding error.

5.3 Economic impacts on the Tasmanian economy

Beyond the direct fiscal impact, the direct effects as a result of the fiscal transfers, the administrative burden and the suppression in retail activity as a consequence buyback scheme will be expected to generate broader economic effects through changes in (for example) household behaviour, industry activity and resource allocation. These include:

- reductions in consumption and welfare associated with firearm ownership;
- impacts on firearm-related businesses and supply chains; and

⁴⁰ The fiscal cost of the scheme represents a direct budgetary outlay, funded through general taxation or borrowing (i.e. future taxation). As such, it carries an associated deadweight cost of public funds, reflecting the economic inefficiency of raising additional taxation revenue. At the state level, this inefficiency is generally estimated at 30 cents in the dollar.

- adjustments in labour and capital across affected sectors.

These effects have been quantified using a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model, which is a modelling framework that captures interactions across the economy and provides a consistent measure of changes in output, income and welfare.

The CGE modelling allows for estimation of:

- impacts on Gross State Product (GSP);
- sectoral output and employment effects; and
- changes in real income and economic welfare.

5.3.1 What we did

The CGE modelling assesses the broader economic impacts of the buyback under alternative funding and industry impact scenarios. In the first two simulations, where the policy is funded either entirely by Tasmania or shared with the Commonwealth, the results show that the buyback imposes a net contractionary effect on the Tasmanian economy. This reflects the diversion of resources from general consumption and investment into a policy that does not generate offsetting productivity or output gains. Where the fiscal burden is borne entirely by Tasmania, the negative impacts are more pronounced, with reductions in real consumption, output and welfare. Sharing the funding with the Commonwealth moderates these effects at the state level, but does not eliminate them, as the underlying economic mechanism remains one of resource reallocation rather than value creation.

The third and fourth simulations extend the analysis by incorporating impacts on the firearm supply chain, including reduced future sales, lower margins and associated downstream activity. These scenarios amplify the negative economic effects, as they capture not only the fiscal shock but also the contraction in a specific, albeit relatively small, sector of the economy. The reduction in industry activity leads to further declines in output, employment and investment in affected sectors, with flow-on effects through supply chains. Taken together, the CGE results reinforce the findings of the CBA: the buyback does not act as a productivity-enhancing reform, but rather imposes a net economic cost, with the magnitude of the impact depending on the funding structure and the extent to which industry effects are taken into account.

5.3.2 Economic modelling results

5.3.2.1 Fiscal impact only

Table 5-2 presents the CGE results for the buyback under two funding scenarios, excluding impacts on the firearm supply chain. The results isolate the effect of the fiscal shock on the Tasmanian and national economy before we introduce the supply chain impacts.

- Under full Tasmanian funding, Tasmanian GSP declines by \$30.7 million in NPV terms over the four-years and Australian GDP by a further \$10.7 million (i.e. three-quarters of the GSP/GDP impact is in Tasmania), employment falls by 112 FTEs in Tasmania in Year-1 (Rest of Australia by a further 31 FTEs), and private expenditure declines by \$5.9 million in Tasmania in Year-1 and a further \$30.6 million in the Rest of Australia.
- Under a 50/50 Gun Buyback funding split, which reflects the offer made by the Commonwealth Government to the States and Territories, the impact on Tasmania is smaller (-\$16.1 million in Tasmanian GSP and -\$55.5 million in Australia); -56 FTEs in Tasmania and -105 FTEs in ROA; -\$3.9 million private expenditure in Year-1 in Tasmania and -\$56.6 million consumption in Year-1 in the ROA).

Table 5-2 Impacts on Tasmania, 2026-27 to 2029-30, no supply-chain impact

Impact NPV (7%, 4 yrs)	GSP/GDP (\$m)	Employment (FTE) Year-1 impact	Private expenditure (\$m) Year-1 impact
Scheme 100% funded by Tasmania			
<i>Impacts on Tasmanian economy</i>	-30.7	-112	-5.9
<i>Impacts on RoA</i>	-10.7	-31	-30.6
Total Impact	-41.2	-143	-36.5
Scheme jointly funded (50/50) by Tasmania and Commonwealth			
<i>Impact on Tasmania</i>	-16.1	-56	-3.9
<i>Impact on Rest of Australia</i>	-55.5	-105	-56.6
Total impact	-71.7	-161	-60.4

Source: Tulipwood Economics and Qaive's CGE model.

5.3.2.2 Fiscal impact plus supply chain effects

Table 5-3 (below) extends the analysis to include supply-chain effects, capturing reductions in firearm-related industry activity and downstream (retail) impacts.

- Under full Tasmanian Government funding with supply-chain impacts, Tasmanian GSP declines by \$39.5 million and GDP in the Rest of Australia by \$12.6 million over the four years, employment falls by 119 FTEs in Tasmania and 35 FTEs in the Rest of Australia, and private expenditure declines by \$10.4 million in Tasmania and a further \$38.1 million in the Rest of Australia.
- Under a 50/50 funding split, Tasmania experiences a \$25.4 million reduction in GSP with a further \$66.9 million reduction in Australian GDP, 64 FTE job losses in Tasmania with a further 119 FTEs in the Rest of Australia, and a \$8.6 million fall in private expenditure in Tasmania and a further \$72.1 million fall in the Rest of Australia (Table 5.3).

Including supply-chain effects materially amplifies the economic cost, demonstrating that the buyback reduces both public and private economic activity.

Table 5-3 Impacts on Tasmania and the Rest of Australia, 2026-27 to 2029-30, including supply-chain impact

Impact NPV (7%, 4 yrs)	GSP/GDP (\$m)	Employment (FTE) Year-1 impact	Private expenditure (\$m) Year-1 impact
Scheme 100% funded by Tasmania			
<i>Impacts on Tasmanian economy</i>	-39.5	-119	-10.4
<i>Impacts on RoA</i>	-12.6	-35	-38.1
Total Impact	-52.1	-154	-48.5
Scheme jointly funded (50/50) by Tasmania and Commonwealth			
<i>Impact on Tasmania</i>	-25.4	-64	-8.6
<i>Impact on Rest of Australia</i>	-66.9	-119	-72.1
Total impact	-92.3	-183	-80.7

Source: Tulipwood Economics and Qaive's CGE model.

5.4 Reclassification only

5.4.1 Indicative fiscal impact

The direct budgetary outlay is estimated at approximately \$3.5 million, comprising \$3.0 million in compensation and \$0.5 million in administration and implementation expenditure. Applying a 30 per cent marginal excess burden of taxation produces an additional economic cost of approximately \$1.0 million. The total fiscal and associated taxation burden is therefore estimated at approximately \$4.3 million.⁴¹

Table 5-4 Indicative fiscal impact of the Reclassification-only scheme

Fiscal component	\$ million, nominal
Compensation: 1,500 firearms × \$2,000	3.0
Administration and implementation	0.5
Budgetary outlay	3.5
<i>Deadweight cost of taxation</i>	<i>1.1</i>
Total fiscal and taxation burden	4.6

Source: Tulipwood Economics estimates.

5.4.2 Indicative economy-wide impacts

We have scaled the economic impacts of the Reclassification-only scenario to the 20 per cent buyback scenario to maintain internal consistency across the scenarios. A one-twentieth scaling of the jointly funded CGE scenario indicates that the reclassification could reduce Tasmanian GSP by approximately \$1.3 million over the four-year forward estimates period, in net-present-value terms. Output in the Rest of Australia would decline by a further \$3.3 million, producing a total national output loss of approximately \$4.6 million. In the first year, employment would be approximately three full-time-equivalent jobs lower in Tasmania and six jobs lower in the Rest of Australia, while private expenditure would fall by approximately \$0.4 million in Tasmania and \$3.6 million elsewhere in Australia.

These estimates should be treated as lower-bound, order-of-magnitude results. Compensation at 1.5 times market value and the fixed component of administration costs mean that the fiscal shock may exceed a strict one-twentieth scaling.

Table 5: Indicative CGE impacts of a jointly funded reclassification scheme

Impact	GSP/GDP (\$m), NPV over four years	Employment (FTE), Year 1	Private expenditure (\$m), Year 1
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⁴¹ The deadweight cost is an economic cost arising from the taxation required to finance the scheme; it is not a program expenditure item that would ordinarily appear in the Tasmanian Budget.

Tasmania	-1.3	-3	-0.4
Rest of Australia	-3.3	-6	-3.6
Total Australia	-4.6	-9	-4.0

Source: Tulipwood Economics estimates, based on proportional scaling of Qaive CGE modelling for the 20 per cent buyback scenario.

5.5 Conclusion

The fiscal and economic analysis confirms that the proposed reforms are not costless regulatory changes. A 20 per cent buyback would involve approximately \$62.2 million in compensation payments and \$4.9 million in administration and compliance expenditure. Including the estimated deadweight cost of raising the required taxation, the total fiscal and associated taxation burden is approximately \$87.2 million over four years. Commonwealth cost-sharing would reduce the amount financed directly by Tasmania, but it would merely transfer part of the burden to taxpayers elsewhere in Australia rather than eliminate it.

The broader economic effects are also negative. Under the central jointly funded scenario, including disruption to the firearms-related supply chain, Tasmanian GSP is estimated to decline by \$25.4 million over four years, while total Australian output falls by approximately \$92.3 million. In the first year, employment declines by an estimated 64 full-time-equivalent positions in Tasmania and 183 nationally, while private expenditure falls by approximately \$8.6 million in Tasmania and \$80.7 million across Australia. These results demonstrate that the scheme would reduce output, employment and household spending rather than operate as a neutral transfer between taxpayers and firearm owners.

The reclassification-only scenario would have smaller aggregate effects because it is expected to affect approximately 1,500 firearms rather than around 31,100 under the broader buyback. The indicative estimates nevertheless suggest a budgetary cost of approximately \$3.3 million, rising to around \$4.3 million once the deadweight cost of taxation is included.

We estimate a reduction in Tasmanian GSP of \$1.3 million and a further \$4.6 million in national output, together with approximately three Tasmanian and nine national full-time-equivalent job losses in the first year. These estimates should be regarded as indicative and potentially conservative, as administrative costs are unlikely to decline fully in proportion to the number of affected firearms.

The central conclusion is therefore unchanged: while reclassification is less costly than a broad ownership cap and buyback, it still consumes public resources and disrupts lawful economic activity without a demonstrated offsetting economic or public-safety benefit.

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Appendix A Genuine reasons for firearm licences, and firearm classification in Tasmania

This Appendix sets out the genuine reasons to possess firearms in Tasmania and firearm classifications as at 15 July 2026.

Under the *Firearms Act 1996* (Tas):

37. Genuine reasons

(1) A genuine reason to possess or use a firearm is any of the following:

- (a) sport or target shooting;
- (b) recreational hunting or vermin control;
- (c) primary production;
- (d) animal population control;
- (e) animal welfare;
- (f) business or employment as a firearms dealer, security agent or security guard;
- (fa) [*\[Section 37 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 14 of 2015, s. 21, Applied:04 Nov 2015\]*](#) fishing for commercial purposes within the meaning of the [Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995](#) ;
- (fb) [*\[Section 37 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 14 of 2015, s. 21, Applied:04 Nov 2015\]*](#) conducting a paintball business within the meaning of [Part 6A](#) ;
- (g) firearms collection;
- (h) show or exhibition.

(2) A person does not have a genuine reason for possessing or using a firearm if the person intends to possess or use the firearm for –

- (a) the person's personal protection or the protection of his or her family; or
- (b) the general protection of property, other than the protection of property in the course of carrying out the functions of a security agent or security guard.

14. Category A firearms license

(1) A Category A firearms license applies to any –

- (a) air rifle; and
- (b) rim-fire rifle, other than self-loading; and
- (c) [*\[Section 14 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 39 of 2023, s. 6, Applied:01 Dec 2024\]*](#) shotgun, other than pump action, lever action or self-loading; and
- (d) shotgun and rim-fire rifle combinations.

(2) A Category A firearms license authorises the holder to possess or use only a firearm referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) for the particular purpose specified in the license.

15. Category B firearms license

(1) A Category B firearms license applies to any –

- (a) muzzle-loading firearm; and
- (b) centre-fire rifle, other than self-loading; and
- (ba) [\[Section 15 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 39 of 2023, s. 7, Applied: 01 Dec 2024\]](#) lever action shotgun with a magazine capacity of no more than 5 rounds of ammunition; and
- (c) shotgun and centre-fire rifle combinations.

(2) A Category B firearms license authorises the holder to possess or use only a firearm referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) for the particular purpose specified in the license.

16. Category C firearms license

(1) A Category C firearms license applies to any –

- (a) [\[Section 16 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 43 of 2007, s. 9, Applied: 13 Nov 2007\]](#) self-loading rim-fire rifle with a magazine capacity of no more than 10 rounds of ammunition; and
- (b) [\[Section 16 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 43 of 2007, s. 9, Applied: 13 Nov 2007\]](#) self-loading shotgun with a magazine capacity of no more than 5 rounds of ammunition; and
- (c) [\[Section 16 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 43 of 2007, s. 9, Applied: 13 Nov 2007\]](#) pump action shotgun with a magazine capacity of no more than 5 rounds of ammunition.

(2) A Category C firearms license authorises the holder to possess or use only one firearm referred to in [subsection \(1\) \(a\)](#) and one firearm referred to in [subsection \(1\) \(b\)](#) or [\(c\)](#) specified in the license for the particular purpose specified in the license.

(3) [\[Section 16 Subsection \(3\) inserted by No. 14 of 2015, s. 9, Applied: 17 Aug 2016\]](#) [Subsection \(2\)](#) does not apply in respect of a Category C firearms license that is specified as being issued only for the genuine reason of firearms collection.

17. Category D firearms license

(1) A Category D firearms license applies to any –

- (a) self-loading centre-fire rifle; and
- (b) [\[Section 17 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 43 of 2007, s. 10, Applied: 13 Nov 2007\]](#) self-loading shotgun with a capacity of more than 5 rounds of ammunition; and
- (c) [\[Section 17 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 43 of 2007, s. 10, Applied: 13 Nov 2007\]](#) [\[Section 17 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 39 of 2023, s. 8, Applied: 01 Dec 2024\]](#) pump action, or lever action, shotgun with a capacity of more than 5 rounds of ammunition; and
- (d) [\[Section 17 Subsection \(1\) amended by No. 43 of 2007, s. 10, Applied: 13 Nov 2007\]](#) self-loading rim-fire rifle with a magazine capacity of more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

(2) A Category D firearms license authorises the holder to possess or use only a firearm referred to in [subsection \(1\)](#) that is specified in the license for the particular purpose specified in the license.

(3) [\[Section 17 Subsection \(3\) inserted by No. 14 of 2015, s. 10. Applied: 17 Aug 2016\]](#) Subsection (2) does not apply in respect of a Category D firearms license that is specified as being issued only for the genuine reason of firearms collection.

Appendix B Econometric and statistical analysis

New econometric and statistical analysis

For this study, we undertook new econometric and statistical analysis to determine whether there is any evidence that the stock of firearms in Australia influences the frequency of mass shootings or the number of firearm-related homicides.

For mass shootings, we examined 30 years of pre-1996 and 29 years of post-1996 data. For other deaths, we have used data from 1968 to 2024 sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The starting point of 1968 was selected to be consistent with Leigh and Neill (2010), given that study is the only one to date to specifically consider reductions in firearm stock.

Mass shootings

Mass shootings are rare events and exhibit considerable volatility over time. This presents immediate challenges for statistical inference. As shown below, once the data are carefully analysed using standard regression and other statistical and econometric techniques, there is no evidence of a statistically meaningful relationship between firearm prevalence and mass shooting deaths.

The analysis uses annual data for mass shootings (defined as four or more deaths, not including the perpetrator) and the stock of firearms over the period 1966 to 2024. For pre-1996 data, estimated firearm stock includes both registered and unregistered firearms (given that some states had registration schemes and some did not). For post-1996, registered only are included. To account for population growth, both series are defined as a proportion of the population.

The dependent variable is: MS_t = mass shooting deaths per 100,000 population

The key explanatory variable is: G_t = stock of firearms per 100 people

The following regression is estimated over the full sample:

$$MS_t = \alpha + \beta G_t + \varepsilon_t$$

This specification tests whether variation in firearm stocks explains variation in mass shooting deaths over time.

Results of mass shootings analysis

The results of the analysis are clear. There is no statistically significant relationship between the stock of firearms and mass shootings in Australia.

The estimated regression:

$$MS_t = -0.00054 + 0.00070G_t$$

The coefficient on firearm stock is positive but extremely small. But, crucially, the coefficient is not statistically significant:

- T = 0.71
- P = 0.478

Furthermore, the 95 per cent confidence interval spans both negative and positive values:

[-0.00126, 0.00266]

This indicates that the true effect could be negative, positive, or zero.

Table B-1 Regression results, Mass Shooting homicides and stock of firearms, 1968 to 2024

Test	Sample	Coefficient (β)	T-stat	P=value	R-squared	Interpretation
Levels	1968-2024	0.00070	0.71	0.478	0.009	No statistically significant relationship

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis.

The explanatory power of the model is effectively zero: $R^2 = 0.009$

This means that less than 1 per cent of the variation in mass shooting deaths is explained by variation in firearm stocks. The F-statistic for the model is also not statistically significant:

- $F = 0.51$
- $p = 0.478$

Taken together, these results indicate that the model has no meaningful explanatory power.

Interpretation and implications

The results of the regression provide no evidence of a statistically significant relationship between firearm prevalence and mass shooting deaths in Australia.

- The coefficient is small, imprecisely estimated, and statistically indistinguishable from zero. The model explains virtually none of the variation in the dependent variable.

This outcome is consistent with the underlying statistical properties of mass shooting data. Mass shootings are rare, discrete events, often clustered in time and driven by idiosyncratic factors. As a result, aggregate time-series regressions are unlikely to identify stable relationships between mass shooting outcomes and broad explanatory variables such as firearm stocks.

These results have important implications for the use of econometric evidence in evaluating firearm policy.

The econometric evidence presented in this section shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between the stock of firearms and mass shooting deaths in Australia over the period 1966 to 2024.

The regression provides no basis for predicting how changes in firearm stocks would affect mass shooting outcomes. The estimated coefficient is not statistically significant and is highly uncertain. Using this model to simulate the impact of policies such as gun buybacks would therefore be unreliable.

More broadly, the absence of any detectable relationship suggests that mass shooting events are not well explained by aggregate measures of firearm prevalence. Policy analysis in this area must therefore rely on alternative approaches, including case-based analysis (i.e., in-depth examination of individual incidents), institutional factors (i.e., social, economic, and other factors), and behavioural drivers (i.e., what motivates mass shootings), rather than simple time-series correlations.

Firearm homicides

We now examine whether variation in the stock of firearms in Australia explains variation in firearm homicide rates. National data is used for this analysis due to the lack of pre-1996 data for Tasmania specifically. We examined Tasmania-specific data in Sections 2 and 3 of the report. However, we undertook the econometric analysis based on the national firearms by homicide database because the sample size is much larger and, therefore, any conclusions drawn from the analysis are more credible.

The hypothesis is straightforward:

If firearm prevalence is a key determinant of firearm homicide, then increases (or decreases) in the stock of firearms should be associated with corresponding movements in firearm homicide rates.

A simple statistical regression comparing per capita levels of firearm ownership and firearm homicides initially appears to support this proposition, producing a strong positive and statistically significant relationship over the period 1968 to 2024. However, once standard econometric techniques are applied to address issues related to time trends and structural instability, the statistical relationship disappears. The weight of evidence indicates that the apparent relationship is spurious.

The analysis uses annual data for Australia over the period 1968 to 2024.

- Firearm homicide data is derived from the ABS Causes of Death, Australia publications.
- Firearms stock data is derived from various sources, including surveys and previous studies.

We are testing whether firearm homicides is dependent on the number of firearms in Australia.

The dependent variable is:

$$H_t = \text{firearm homicides per 100,000 population}$$

The key explanatory variable is:

$$G_t = \text{stock of firearms per 100 people}$$

The firearm stock series includes both registered and (for pre-1996 periods) an estimate of unregistered firearms. Estimates are drawn from various sources including surveys and previous studies.⁴² All variables are expressed in per capita terms to ensure comparability over time — that is, to account for Australia's rising population.

Three complementary specifications are estimated:

- i) Levels regression using the full sample (1968–2024); that is, a comparison of the raw data series.

$$H_t = \alpha + \beta G_t + \varepsilon_t$$

- ii) First-differences regression, which removes common time trends (such as rising incomes, increased funding for policing and other crime prevention policies).

$$\Delta H_t = \alpha + \beta \Delta G_t + \varepsilon_t$$

⁴² A data appendix provides all of the data necessary to replicate our results.

- iii) Split-sample regressions, estimated separately for pre- and post-1996 periods.

Summary of results and interpretation

Levels Regression

The full-sample regression produces the following estimate:

$$H_t = 0.00094 + 0.02855G_t$$

The coefficient on firearm stock is positive and highly statistically significant ($t = 7.75$, $p < 0.001$), and the model explains approximately 52 per cent of the variation in firearm homicide rates.

Taken at face value, this suggests a strong relationship between firearm prevalence and firearm homicide. However, this interpretation relies on the assumption that the regression is not driven by common time trends; that is trends in both firearm ownership and firearm homicides are caused by similar factors over time. In long historical time series, this assumption is often violated.

Factors common to both series over time include:

- Overall economic conditions, reflected in rising income levels, which would be expected to increase the rate of firearm ownership (given that represents largely discretionary spending), as well as growth in expenditure on measures such as social programs and income support, which would be expected to decrease the rate of firearm homicides (and homicides more generally).
- Changing regulatory environment, which may increase the availability of sporting or recreational shooting options for some individuals while decreasing legal firearm access for others (e.g., persons who are not 'fit and proper').
- Increased or better quality policing which may reduce overall crime rates, and firearm homicides in particular.

First-Differences Regression to remove autocorrelation bias (i.e. common trends)

To address this issue, the data are transformed into first differences:

$$\Delta H_t = \alpha + \beta \Delta G_t + \varepsilon_t$$

The estimated coefficient becomes small, negative and statistically insignificant:

$$\beta = -0.03964 \quad (t = -1.00; p = 0.321)$$

Once first differences are introduced, the explanatory power of the model collapses, with R^2 falling from 0.52 to 0.018.

This result indicates that changes in firearm stocks do not explain changes in firearm homicide rates. The disappearance of the relationship once trends are removed is strong evidence that the levels result is driven by spurious correlation.

Split-Sample Regressions

To test whether the relationship is stable over time, the sample is split into two periods:

- a) Pre-1996: 1968–1995
- b) Post-1997: 1998–2024

Note that the years 1996 and 1997 were removed to ‘see through’ the period of rapid policy change with the Port Arthur massacre in April 1996 and the subsequent Howard government led Gun Buyback.

The estimated coefficients are:

Pre-period: $\beta = -0.0093$ ($t = -0.46$; $p = 0.647$)

Post-period: $\beta = 0.0051$ ($t = -0.23$; $p = 0.823$)

In both periods, the coefficient is statistically insignificant and economically negligible. The sign of the coefficient also reverses between periods. In other words, in the first period, estimated gun ownership was increasing and so were firearm homicides. In the second period, gun ownership was increasing but firearm homicides were decreasing. However, in both periods, this relationship was not statistically significant, meaning that many factors other than gun ownership are likely to explain variations in firearm homicides. This instability is inconsistent with a meaningful structural relationship between firearm prevalence and firearm homicide. If such a relationship existed, one would expect some consistency in sign and magnitude across sub-periods. Instead, the results indicate that firearm stock explains virtually none of the variation in firearm homicide in either period.

Interpretation and implications

The combined results provide a consistent econometric narrative.

Table 4-2 (below) reports the results of the four regressions undertaken. The table shows that while there is a strong relationship between the stock of firearms and firearm-related homicides, on closer examination it is spurious and driven by common factors related to time trends (which we cover in chapters 1 and 2).

Table B-0-1 Regressions undertaken

Test	Sample	Coefficient (β)	T-stat	P-value	R-squared	Interpretation
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Levels	1968-2024	0.0285	7.75	<0.001	0.522	Strong positive association in levels
First differences	1969-2024	-0.0396	-1.00	0.321	0.018	No statistically significant relationship in differences
Split (pre-1996)	1968-1995	-0.0093	-0.46	0.647	0.008	No statistically significant relationship for the period 1968 to 1995
Split (post-1996)	1998-2024	0.0051	0.23	0.823	0.002	No statistically significant relationship for the period 1998 to 2024

Source: Tulipwood Economics analysis.

The levels regression suggests a strong relationship between firearm prevalence and firearm homicide. However, this relationship disappears when the data are expressed in first differences and when the sample is examined in separate sub-periods. The coefficient becomes statistically insignificant, economically trivial, and unstable in sign. This outcome is also consistent with past research that has found no statistically significant impact of the 1996 gun law changes on firearm homicides.

This pattern is characteristic of spurious correlation arising from common time trends. Over the sample period, firearm homicide rates declined significantly, while firearm prevalence followed a different long-run trajectory. When these series are regressed in levels, the shared time dimension generates a strong statistical association, even in the absence of a causal link.

Once this common trend is removed—either by differencing or by examining sub-periods—the relationship disappears. These findings have important implications for policy evaluation.

- The levels regression cannot be used to infer the effect of changes in firearm stocks on firearm homicide. It does not represent a stable or causal relationship. Any attempt to use that coefficient to predict the impact of policies such as gun buybacks or firearm reductions would therefore be misleading.
- Instead, the more robust specifications indicate that changes in firearm prevalence have no statistically detectable effect on firearm homicide rates in this dataset. This suggests that other factors—such as policing, demographics, and broader social and economic conditions—are more important drivers of long-run trends in firearm homicide.

The econometric evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that the apparent relationship between firearm stocks and firearm homicide in Australia is not robust, and that

in the post-1996 period there is in fact a negative (although not statistically significant) relationship. While a simple regression in levels produces a strong and statistically significant result, that relationship disappears once standard techniques are used to account for time trends and structural instability.

The most reasonable conclusion is that the observed correlation between the stock of firearms and firearm-related homicides (i.e. the levels of the two variables) is spurious, driven by factors and trends that have been in place since the mid-1980s. As such, the apparent relationship should not be used as a basis for causal inference or policy prediction.

Appendix C Value of life and injury

This appendix sets out the evidence on the value of life and injury that is commonly used in cost benefit analysis in Australia.

Avoided firearm-related death and injury from suicides and accidents

Table C-1 (below) shows firearm suicide and homicide data for 2024⁴³ for Australia (all states) and Tasmania specifically. Table C-2 shows Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL).⁴⁴

- YPLL is a measure of premature mortality which weights age at death to gain an estimate of how many years a person would have lived had they not died prematurely.
- Causes of death with a younger median age at death will have a higher number of YPLL.
- The ABS defines a "premature death" as one, where the person was aged between 1-78 years at the time of death (ABS, 2025).

YPLL varies across type of death and firearm (Table C-2). Nationally, the firearm and death type with the lowest YPLL per death was rifle/shotgun suicide. The highest was handgun homicide. This is an important distinction, because (a) restrictions on the type and number of longarms owned are unlikely to affect suicides, which require only one shot from one firearm, and (b) restrictions on legally owned longarms are likely to have very limited impact on homicides, given the percentage of homicides that involve handguns/illegally owned firearms in general.

From this, an average dollar value, using Value of a Statistical Life (VSL), can be assigned per death.

Table C-1 Firearm homicide and suicide, 2024⁴⁵

	Australia	Tasmania
Suicide	161 deaths 157 (97.5%) males 20 (12.4%) handgun 114 (70.8%) rifle or shotgun	10 deaths 10 (100%) males 3 (30%) handgun 4 (40%) rifle or shotgun

⁴³ This is the most recent available data, and Australia-wide figures have undergone one round of revision. Numbers may change following revisions by the ABS in subsequent years.

⁴⁴ Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) are calculated by the ABS using the estimated resident population of specific groups as at 30 June of the relevant year.

⁴⁵ This is the total for male and female deaths.

	27 (16.8%) other or unspecified firearms	3 (30%) other or unspecified firearms
Homicide	25 deaths 18 (72%) males 7 (28%) handgun 8 (32%) rifle or shotgun 10 (40%) other or unspecified firearms	2 deaths 2 (100%) males 0 (0%) handgun 2 (100%) rifle or shotgun 0 (0%) other or unspecified firearms

Source: ABS (2025). Note: n.p: not published.

Table C-2 Years of potential life lost (YPLL)

	Australia			Tasmania		
	Handgun	Rifle/ Shotgun	Other/ unspecified	Handgun	Rifle/ Shotgun	Other/ unspecified
Suicide						
YPLL (total)	466	2157	578	n.p	n.p	n.p
Years per death	23.3	18.9	21.4			
Homicide						
YPLL (total)	293	324	404	-	n.p	-
Years per death	41.9	40.5	40.4			

Source: ABS (2025). Note: n.p: not published.