

Gun control in Australia

An update on firearms data and policies

Despite Australia's significant gun reforms following the 1996 Port Arthur Massacre, there are now over four million guns owned by civilians nationwide — 25% higher than in 1996. This equates to one firearm for every seven Australians. Guns are widespread in metropolitan and suburban areas, with one in three firearms in NSW located in major cities.

It is difficult, and in some states and territories impossible, to access up-to-date and detailed firearms data. All states and territories are failing to meet a range of minimum requirements for effective gun control. Most Australians support stricter gun control regulations.

Discussion paper

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Australia Institute recognises the ancestral connections and custodianship of Traditional Owners throughout Australia. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past and present.

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Contents

Figures	5
Tables.....	5
Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Methodology	1
The state of play	3
Scale of gun ownership in Australia	3
Geographic breakdown of gun ownership.....	7
New South Wales	7
Western Australia.....	9
Trends in firearm-related injuries	10
National Firearms Agreement	13
Firearm amnesty and buyback program	13
Inconsistent state and territory regulations	14
Data collection and a National Firearms Register.....	15
Gun control scorecards: How are states and territories performing?.....	17
Criteria for scorecards	17
New South Wales	22
Key statistics	22
Policies.....	23
Queensland.....	26
Key statistics	26
Policies.....	26
Victoria.....	28
Key statistics	28
Policies.....	29
South Australia	31
Key statistics	31

Policies	31
Western Australia	33
Key statistics	33
Policies	33
Tasmania.....	37
Key statistics	37
Policies	37
Northern Territory	40
Key statistics	40
Policies	40
Australian Capital Territory	42
Key statistics	42
Policies	42
Conclusion	44

Figures

Figure 1: Privately owned firearms, 1996–2024	4
Figure 2: Number of registered firearms, by state/territory, 2024	5
Figure 3: Registered firearms per 100,000 population, by state/territory, 2024	5
Figure 4: Number of registered firearms, 2016-2024, NSW and Victoria.....	6
Figure 5: Number of firearm licences by state/territory, 2024.....	6
Figure 6: Average number of firearms per licence in each state/territory, 2024.....	7
Figure 7: Number of individual firearm licences, by NSW postcode classification.....	8
Figure 8: Number of firearms registered, by NSW postcode classification	8
Figure 9: Average number of firearms per licence, by NSW postcode classification	9
Mass shootings and firearm-related deaths have decreased in Australia since the 1990s, when the annual gun-related death rate was 2.9 per 100,000 people. Research indicates that this is due to restrictions on firearm ownership.	10
Figure 16: Firearms per licence, NSW, 2016-2024	23
Figure 17: Firearms per licence, Victoria, 2016-2024.....	29
Data quality and transparency	35

Tables

Table 1: Scorecard summary	1
Table 2: Scorecard summary	21
Table 3: New South Wales scorecard	22
Table 4: Queensland scorecard	26
Table 5: Victoria scorecard	28
Table 7: South Australia scorecard	31
Table 6: Western Australia scorecard	33
Table 8: Tasmania scorecard	37
Table 9: Northern Territory scorecard	40
Table 10: Australian Capital Territory scorecard.....	42

Summary

Despite Australia's significant gun reforms following the 1996 Port Arthur Massacre, Australia has not "solved" the problem of gun control. As of 2024, there were over four million guns owned by civilians — one for every seven Australians. This is a 25% increase from the 3.2 million firearms in Australia before the Port Arthur Massacre.

NSW is the jurisdiction with the most guns, with 1,125,553 registered firearms, followed by Queensland with 1,076,140 registered firearms. Tasmania and the NT have the highest per capita firearm rates, with one firearm for every four people.

There are two individuals in inner Sydney who own over 300 firearms each. Owning this many guns is legal under firearm laws in all states and territories except WA.

Data on gun ownership is fragmented and often not publicly available. There is no obvious public source for firearms data in most states and territories. In some states and territories, it is impossible to obtain firearms data without contacting the government directly. Except for NSW, firearms data is not published with a geographic breakdown: for example, by postcode, so that members of the public can find out how many firearms are in their neighbourhood. This means that the public lacks key information to hold authorities accountable for safely managing firearms.

There is no evidence supporting the common perception that firearms are predominantly located in rural areas for farming and pest control purposes. There are large numbers of firearms in metropolitan areas, many of these used for recreational purposes. Four in ten (41%) NSW firearms licensees live in major cities, and one in three (34%) firearms in NSW are registered to individuals living in major cities. Almost half (46%) of firearms in Western Australia are located in metropolitan areas.

Most Australians support stricter firearms regulations. Seven in ten Australians (70%) think gun laws should make it harder to buy a gun. Almost two in three Australians (64%) think Australia's gun laws should be strengthened.

The Western Australian Government recently introduced limits on the number of firearms one individual can possess. Over three in four (78%) Western Australians support these firearms limits. Additionally, over three in four (77%) Australians living outside Western Australia would also support such limits being introduced in their state or territory.

The National Firearms Register, which Australian governments are currently developing, provides a key opportunity to improve the quality and transparency of firearms data. This would involve ensuring the Register is comprehensive, interoperable across jurisdictions, and provides regular updates to the public.

This report assesses Australian states and territories against six criteria for effective gun control: data transparency, consulting a range of stakeholders, firearm limits, whether they prohibit firearm use by children, policy on 3D printed firearms and unlicensed shooting. No Australian state or territory meets all six criteria. NSW meets the most criteria: three out of six. Four jurisdictions do not meet any of the criteria: Queensland, South Australia, the NT, and the ACT.

Table 1: Scorecard summary 2024

	Aus	NSW	Qld	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT ¹
STATISTICS									
Guns	4,078,746	1,125,553	1,076,140	960,693	325,896	307,078	156,626	73,752	69,868
Licences	943,274	252,531	224,833	236,609	62,177	85,338	37,128	17,495	30,617
Guns per capita	0.15	0.13	0.19	0.13	0.17	0.10	0.27	0.29	0.15
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Yes ²	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase	Decrease	Unknown	Increase	Unknown
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Yes	Increase	Increase	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	Unknown	Increase	Unknown
POLICY CRITERIA									
Data transparency	-	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Consultation standards	-	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Firearm limits	-	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Ban on under-18 firearm use	-	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
3D printed firearms	-	✓	✗	✗	✗ ³	✗	✓	✗	✗
Unlicensed shooting	-	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

¹ Data for the ACT is estimated by applying national per capita figures, because the ACT does not publish its own data.

² Increase/decrease in number of guns and increase/decrease in guns per capita for Australia as a whole was calculated by comparing the 2024 figures to the most recent published total figures before 2024, which are from 2020.

³ South Australia is currently drafting legislation banning 3D printed blueprints: Government of South Australia (nd) <https://www.premier.sa.gov.au/media-releases/news-archive/tough-penalties-for-possessing-3d-printed-firearm-blueprints-under-proposed-laws>

Introduction

Just 12 days after the 1996 Port Arthur massacre, where a man firing semi-automatic guns killed 35 people and injured 23 others, leaving some with ongoing catastrophic injuries, Australian states and territories agreed to the National Firearm Agreement (NFA). The NFA established minimum requirements for regulating firearms across the country.⁴ The NFA was reviewed in 2017, with all jurisdictions recommitting to the requirements.⁵

Despite these national standards, there have been more guns in Australia at least over the past five years than there were before the Port Arthur Massacre.⁶ Implementation of the agreement is inconsistent across state and territories, with all jurisdictions failing to meet the minimum standards outlined by the NFA. Data about firearm ownership is not readily available in most jurisdictions. Authorities and the public lack the information needed to make informed policy decisions targeted at reducing gun use and violence.

This report assesses the state of firearm ownership in Australia and evaluates how state and territories are regulating firearms.

It describes the scale of gun ownership in Australia, including data on the geography of guns and it measures how states and territories are performing against a range of key criteria for effective regulation of firearms, giving each jurisdiction a gun control “scorecard”.

METHODOLOGY

Data on firearms is not published consistently across states and territories, and there is no publicly available national database. Consequently, this report aggregates data from various government sources such as state police force annual reports, as well as third-party sources such as GunPolicy.org.⁷ NSW publishes the most comprehensive data, including breakdowns by postcode.

⁴ Australasian Police Ministers’ Council (1996) *Special Firearms Meeting*, <https://www.acic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/1996%20National%20Firearms%20Agreement.pdf>

⁵ Council of Australian Governments, *National Firearms Agreement* (2017) <https://www.abf.gov.au/prohibited-goods-subsite/files/2017-national-firearms-agreement.pdf>

⁶ Browne (2019) *Hunters and collectors*, <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/hunters-and-collectors/>

⁷ GunPolicy.org was an international gun data resource hosted by the Sydney School of Public Health at the University of Sydney and described as “the world’s most comprehensive and accessible web source for published evidence on armed violence, firearm law and gun control”. GunPolicy.org was recently transferred to a project of the Global Action on Gun Violence. Its website was under construction at the time of this report’s writing, so data was accessed using the Wayback Machine internet archive.

The Australia Institute also requested additional information through FOIs and police contact forms and received limited information in response, with the exception of data for Tasmania and Western Australia. This report uses data from every state and territory except for the ACT. Data for the ACT was unavailable and therefore calculated using national per capita averages.

Data from each state and territory was not always published at the same time (for example, NSW data is from June 2024, whereas Western Australia data is from December 2024). This report uses the most recent available data at the time of writing for each jurisdiction.

The data refers to firearms owned by civilians, not by the military or law enforcement. It also does not comment on illicit firearms, except where otherwise noted.

Population data and cause of death data is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.⁸

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024) *National, state and territory population June 2024*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/latest-release>; ABS (2024) *Causes of Death, Australia*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/causes-death-australia/latest-release>

The state of play

SCALE OF GUN OWNERSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

Based on the latest available data for each state and territory, **there are over four million registered, privately-owned firearms in Australia**, and nearly one million firearm licences.

- There is at least one licenced firearm for every seven Australians.
- About one in 30 Australians have a firearms licence.
- NSW has the most guns, with 1,125,553 registered firearms, followed by Queensland with 1,076,140 registered firearms.
- Tasmania and the NT have the highest per capita firearm rates, with one firearm for every four people.
- In every state and territory for which there is data, the average firearm licence-holder owns four firearms.

There were approximately 3.2 million firearms in 1996⁹ which means there are now more guns in Australia than before the introduction of the NFA. Following the NFA's introduction, the number of registered firearms decreased to 2.2 million in 2001, before increasing again to its present number.¹⁰ In 1996 the number of firearms per capita was 0.18, which includes illicit firearms. While this number decreased to 0.15 in 2024, a direct comparison is not possible as the 2024 figure only accounts for licenced firearms.

The proportion of licenced gun owners in the general population has decreased since the introduction of the NFA. In 1997, there were 6,500 licenced firearm owners per 100,000 people.¹¹ According to Australia Institute analysis, that number halved to 3,369 per 100,000 people by 2024 (not including ACT).

However, Australians who have gun licences now own a larger number of guns per person. There is an average of 4.4 firearms per licence across Australia. In NSW, the figure has risen from 4.0 per licence in 2016 to 4.5 in 2024; in Victoria the figure has risen from 3.6 in 2016 to 4.1 in 2024.

⁹ N.b. this figure includes both licit and illicit firearms, whereas the 2024 figure only includes licit firearms; GunPolicy.org (2023) *Australia — Gun Facts, Figures and the Law*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20221023145623/https://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/australia>.

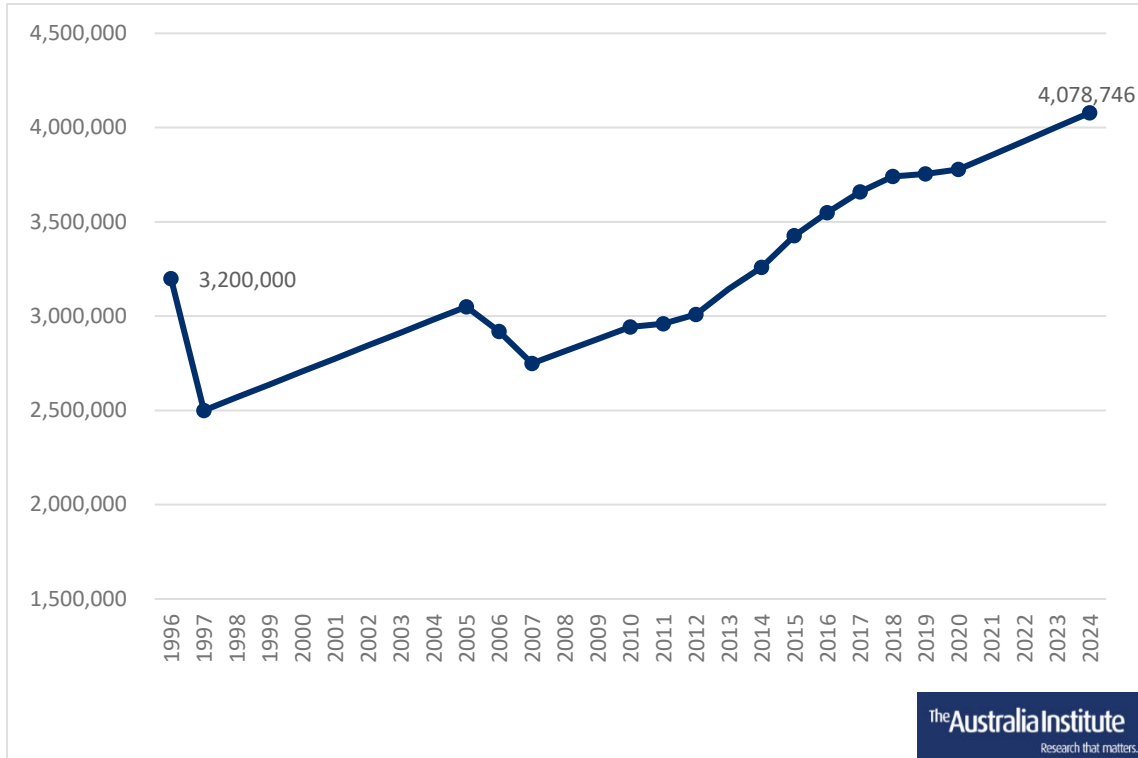
¹⁰ Ramchand & Saunders (2021) *The Effects of the 1996 National Firearms Agreement in Australia on Suicide, Homicide, and Mass Shootings*, RAND, <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/1996-national-firearms-agreement.html>

¹¹ University of Sydney (2021) *Gun ownership figures revealed 25 years on from Port Arthur massacre*, <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2021/04/28/new-gun-ownership-figures-revealed-25-years-on-from-port-arthur.html>

As of 2022, according to GunPolicy.org, Australia had the 26th largest number of privately owned guns in the world.¹²

The following figures provide a snapshot of firearm data in Australia.

Figure 1: Privately owned firearms, 1996–2024

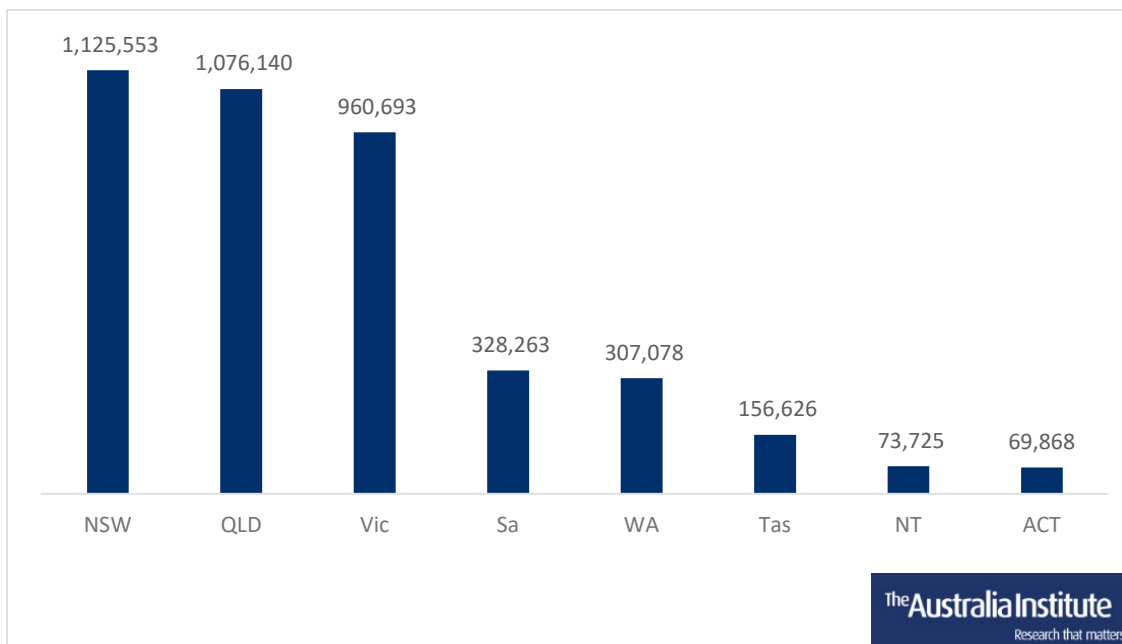


Source: GunPolicy.org (2020) *Australia — Gun Facts, Figures and the Law* for 1996–2020 data; NSW Police force, Victoria Police, Queensland Police, SA Police, Tasmania Police, Northern Territory Police, WA Police, Fire & Emergency Services for 2024 data. ACT data is estimated using national averages.

Note that the figures for 1996–2017 include both licit and illicit firearms, but the figure for 2024 only includes registered, licit firearms.

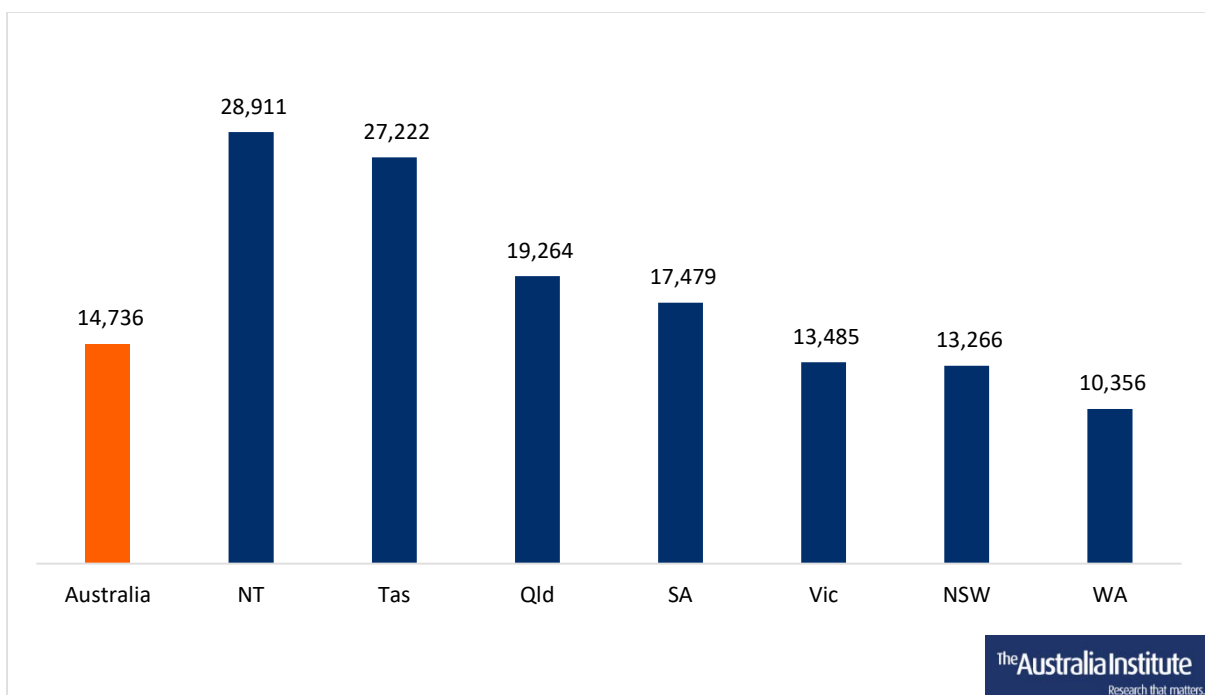
¹² GunPolicy.org. (2022) *Calculated Ranking. Estimating global civilian-held firearm numbers*, [web.archive.org/web/20221013224147/https://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/citation/quotes/15876](https://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/citation/quotes/15876)

Figure 2: Number of registered firearms, by state/territory, 2024



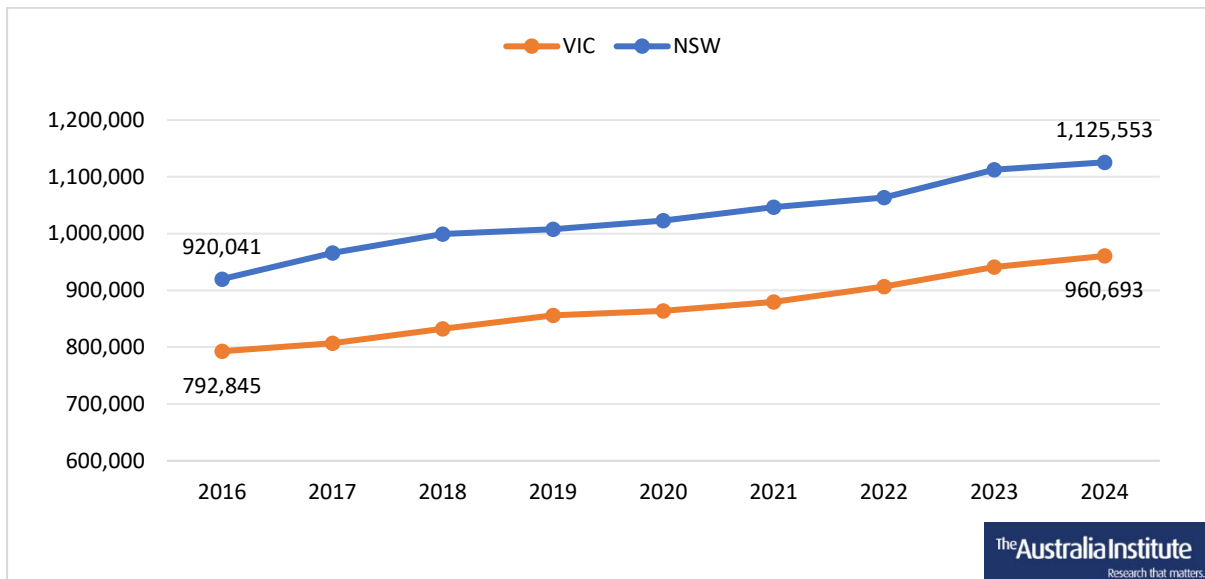
Source: NSW Police, Victoria Police, Queensland Police, SA Police, Tasmania Police, Northern Territory Police, WA Police, Fire & Emergency Services. ACT data is estimated using national averages

Figure 3: Registered firearms per 100,000 population, by state/territory, 2024



Source: NSW Police, Victoria Police, Queensland Police, SA Police, Tasmania Police, Northern Territory Police, WA Police, Fire & Emergency Services. ACT estimate is the same as the national average

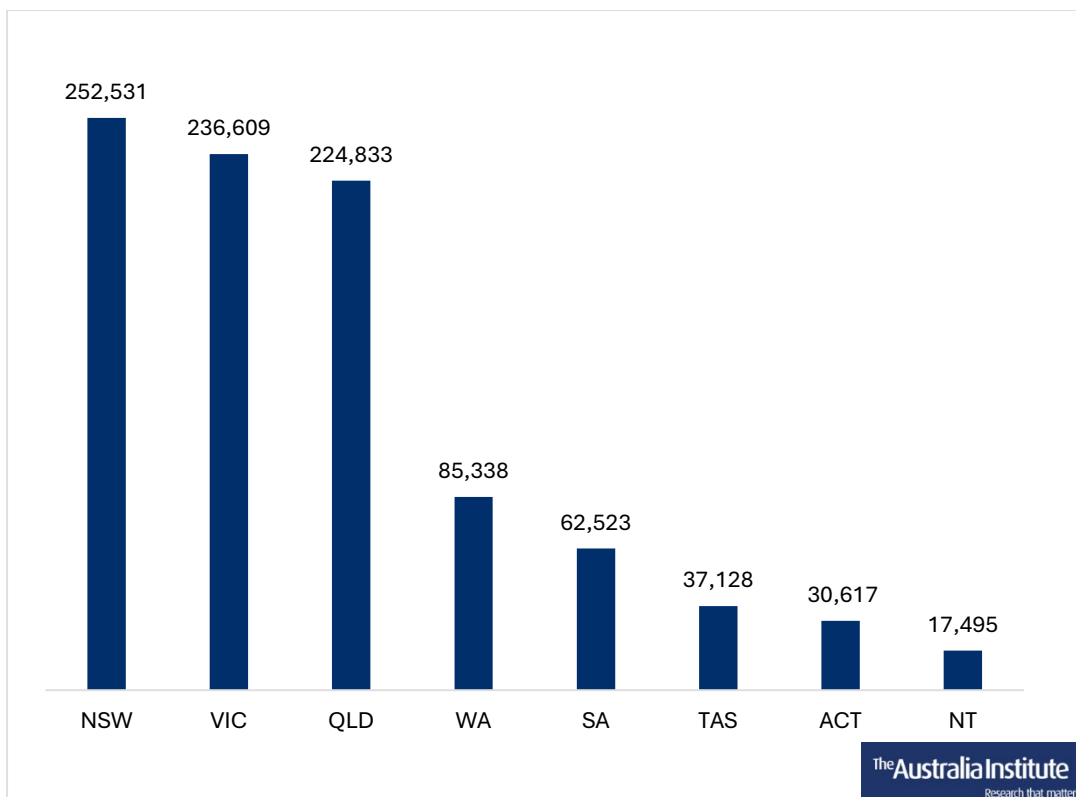
Figure 4: Number of registered firearms, 2016-2024, NSW and Victoria



Source: NSW Police, Victoria Police

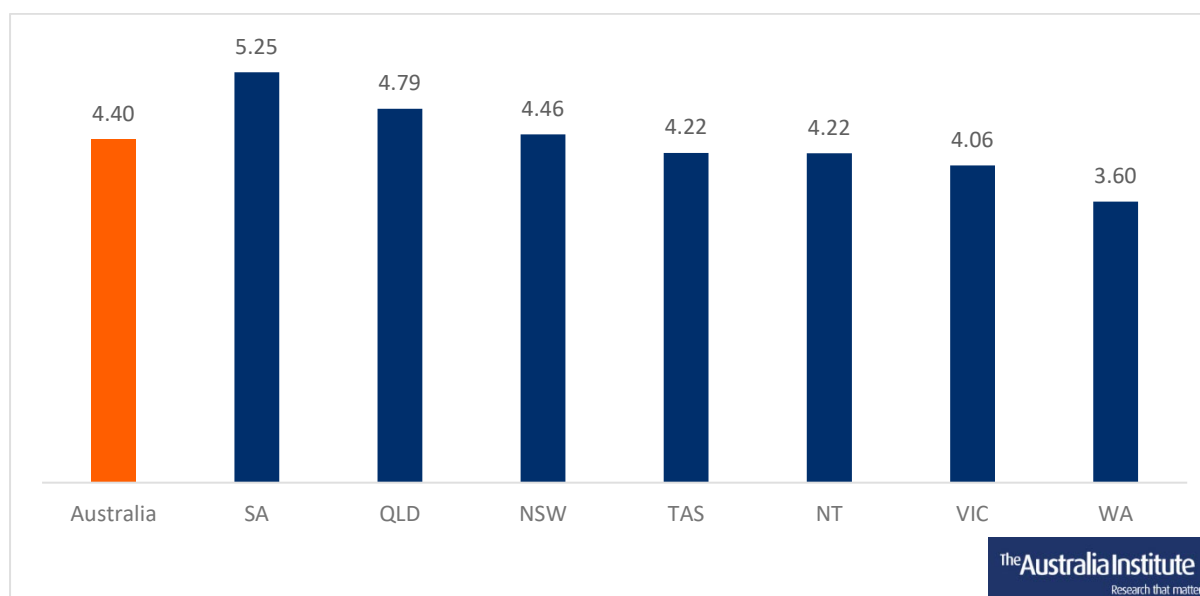
Due to limited publicly available data, it was not possible to generate a time series of firearm numbers for all states and territories.

Figure 5: Number of firearm licences by state/territory, 2024



Source: NSW Police, Victoria Police, Queensland Police, Tasmania Police, Northern Territory Police, WA Police, Fire & Emergency Services. ACT data is estimated using national averages

Figure 6: Average number of firearms per licence in each state/territory, 2024



Source: NSW Police, Victoria Police, Queensland Police, Tasmania Police, Northern Territory Police, WA Police, Fire & Emergency Services. Excluding ACT due to lack of data.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF GUN OWNERSHIP

Data on how firearms were distributed within a given state or territory was only available for NSW and Western Australia.

New South Wales

NSW Police regularly publish firearm data by postcode and police district.¹³ This data shows whether licence-holder's postcode falls in a major city, inner regional NSW, outer regional NSW, remote NSW, and very remote NSW.¹⁴

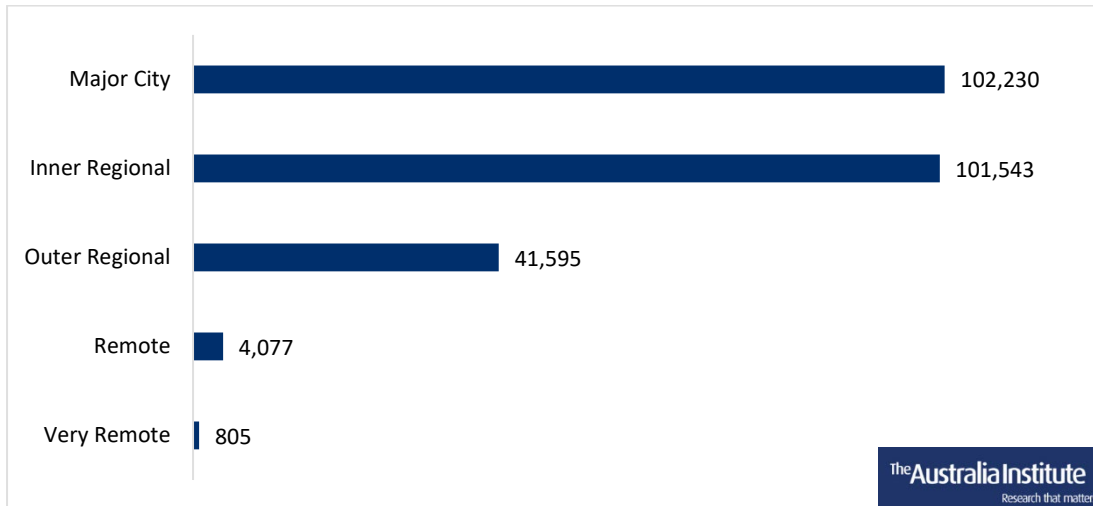
- The data shows that as of June 2024, gun ownership in NSW is not concentrated in rural areas. On the contrary, there are significant numbers of guns in major cities in NSW. This data contradicts the common perception that guns in Australia are predominantly found in rural areas for farming or pest control. Four in ten (41%) NSW firearms licensees live in major cities, and four in ten (41%) live in inner regional areas.

¹³ NSW Police (2024) *NSW Firearms Registry Licensing and Ownership Information*, https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/882988/NSW_Firearms_Licensing_and_Ownership_Information_Jun24.pdf

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) *Search Census Data*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>; ABS (2021) *ASGS Geographic Correspondences (2021) Edition 3*, <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/asgs-edition-3-2021-correspondences>

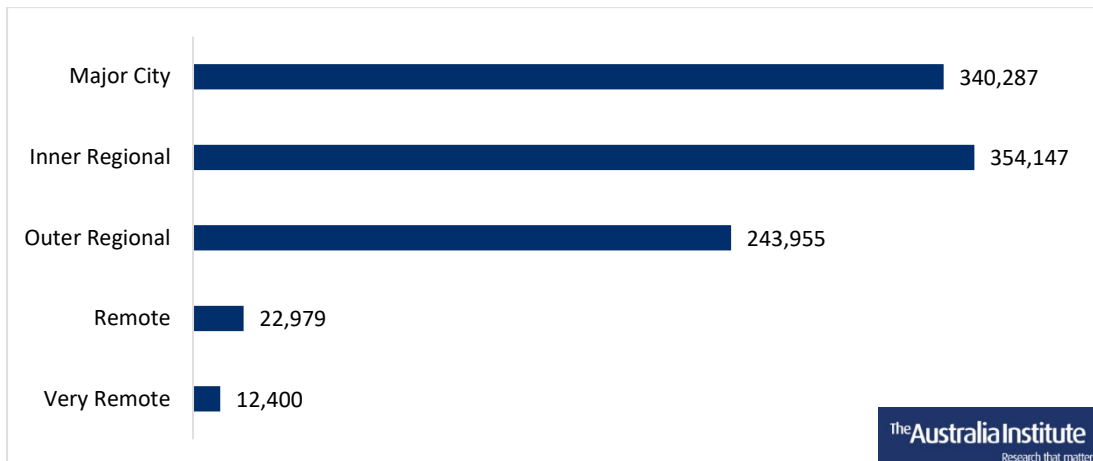
- Over one in three (34%) firearms in NSW are registered to individuals living in major cities, and over one in three (36%) are registered to individuals living in inner regional areas.
- The two individual licensees who own the highest number of guns in NSW each live in inner Sydney. They own 386 and 304 firearms respectively. Owning such a high number of guns is legal under firearm laws in all states and territories except WA.

Figure 7: Number of individual firearm licences, by NSW postcode classification



Source: NSW Police

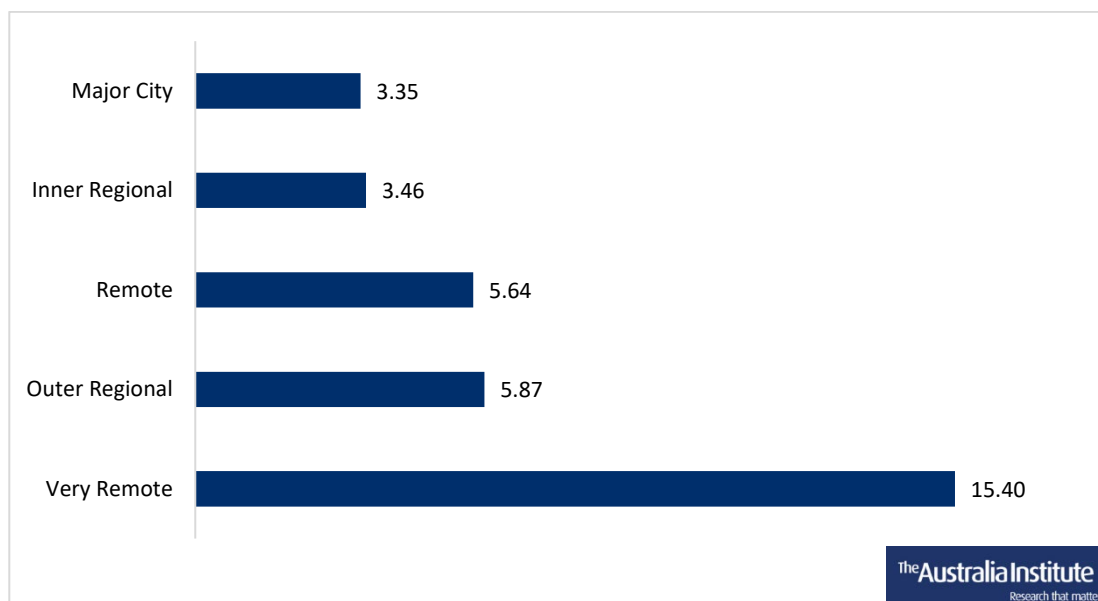
Figure 8: Number of firearms registered, by NSW postcode classification



Source: NSW Police

Individuals in regional NSW tend to own more firearms per licence than individuals in major cities. There is an average of 15 firearms per licence in very remote NSW compared to an average of three firearms per licence in major cities.

Figure 9: Average number of firearms per licence, by NSW postcode classification



Source: NSW Police

Western Australia

Responding to an email request, WA Police Force provided data showing that as of 28 May 2024, there were a total of 326,813 registered firearms in WA (excluding those held by firearms dealers), of which:

- 46% (151,404 firearms) were in metropolitan areas.
- 54% (175,409 firearms) were in regional areas.¹⁵

In 2022, when announcing its firearms reforms, the WA Government released maps to the media showing a geographic breakdown of firearms across WA.¹⁶ These maps are not publicly available following protests from gun owners who claimed the maps represented an invasion of privacy.

¹⁵ These figures are different from the WA figures used in the rest of the report, as the latest geographic data is from 28 May 2024, while the total WA figures are from 31 December 2024. Personal correspondence (28 May 2024)

¹⁶ Hastie (2022) "WA gun owners demand apology for police map showing their locations", *WAtoday*, <https://www.watoday.com.au/national/wa-gun-owners-demand-apology-for-police-map-showing-their-locations-20220324-p5a7r0.html>; McGowan & Papalia (2022) *New laws to balance legitimate gun ownership with community safety*, <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/McGowan%20Labor%20Government/New-laws-to-balance-legitimate-gun-ownership-with-community-safety-20220322>

TRENDS IN FIREARM-RELATED INJURIES

The latest statistics on firearm-related injuries and fatalities show that:

- In 2023, 206 people died in Australia from firearm-related injuries, including intentional self-harm, assault, and accidents.¹⁷
- In 2023, 97% of people who died from firearm-related injuries were men.
- From 2014 to 2023, 2,142 people have died from firearm-related injuries.

10 Mass shootings and firearm-related deaths have decreased in Australia since the 1990s, when the annual gun-related death rate was 2.9 per 100,000 people.¹⁸ Research indicates that this is due to restrictions on firearm ownership.¹⁹

From 2002–2016, the firearm-related injury rate in NSW was over 13 times higher for men than women.²⁰ Over the same period, the overall firearm-related injury rate declined from 3.4 to 1.8 per 100,000 people, largely due to declining rates of assault and accidental injuries. In 2021, frequency of firearm-related deaths increased with age, with just under half of victims aged over 65 compared to 6.6% under the age of 25.²¹

Most firearm-related deaths are caused by single shootings during interpersonal disputes.²² The perpetrators are most commonly firearm owners who, until that point, had been law-

¹⁷ ABS (2023) *Causes of Death, Australia*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/causes-death-australia/latest-release#data-downloads>

¹⁸ Australian Gun Safety Alliance (n.d.), *The stats*, <https://www.gunsafetyalliance.org.au/the-stats/>; Evershed (2019) “Strict firearm laws reduce gun deaths: here’s the evidence”, *Guardian Australia*, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2019/mar/20/strict-firearm-laws-reduce-gun-deaths-heres-the-evidence>

¹⁹ Evershed (2019), “Strict firearm laws reduce gun deaths: here’s the evidence”, *Guardian Australia*, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2019/mar/20/strict-firearm-laws-reduce-gun-deaths-heres-the-evidence>; Chapman et al (2018) “Fatal Firearm Incidents Before and After Australia’s 1996 National Firearms Agreement Banning Semiautomatic Rifles”, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M18-0503>; Lopez (2017) “The research is clear: gun control saves lives”, *Vox*, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/10/4/16418754/gun-control-washington-post>; Chapman et al (2016) “Association Between Gun Law Reforms and Intentional Firearm Deaths in Australia, 1979-2013”, *JAMA*, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2530362>; Harvard Injury Control Research Center (2011) *The Australian Gun Buyback*, https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1264/2012/10/bulletins_australia_spring_2011.pdf; Leigh & Neill (2010) *Do Gun Buybacks Save Lives? Evidence from Panel Data*, http://andrewleigh.org/pdf/GunBuyback_Panel.pdf

²⁰ Negin et al (2021) “Gun violence in Australia, 2002–2016: a cohort study”, *The Medical Journal of Australia*, https://www.mja.com.au/system/files/issues/215_09/mja251251.pdf

²¹ National Coronial Information System (2021) Fact sheets, AUS Mortality data series – Injury <https://www.ncis.org.au/fact-sheet-fs24-02-2021-aus-mortality-data-series-injury>

²² Alpers (2015) “If lawful firearm owners cause most gun deaths, what can we do?”, *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/if-lawful-firearm-owners-cause-most-gun-deaths-what-can-we-do-48567>

abiding. In 2012, Queensland Police Union president Ian Leavers stated that “Since 2000, half the police gunned down in the line of duty were killed by licenced firearms owners.”²³

Similarly, most perpetrators of mass shootings are licenced gun owners. In Australia and New Zealand, 55% of mass shooting victims between 1987 and 2015 were killed by licenced gun owners using legal firearms.²⁴ Just over half of the victims in all 15 mass-shootings in Australia between 1987 and 2022 were killed by licenced gun owners using legal firearms.²⁵ This contrasts with narratives, often propagated by firearm lobby groups, that most gun-related deaths are due to *unlicenced* firearm owners using illicit guns.²⁶

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) conservatively estimates that there were at least 200,000 illicit firearms in circulation in Australia in 2023, with about 190,000 longarms and 10,000 handguns.²⁷ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that the global illicit firearm market is equal to between 10 and 20 per cent of the licit market. Applying this calculation to Australian gun ownership, there could be between 300,000 and 600,000 illicit firearms in Australia.²⁸ The number of illicit firearms seized by police forces is very small in comparison to the size of the illicit firearms market.²⁹

Australian research suggests that criminals can access firearms on the illicit market with relative ease.³⁰ Identified means of acquiring illicit firearms include via family members and being vouched for by a mutual acquaintance.

²³ Hurst (2012) “‘More people will die’: Police Union berates gun law overhaul,” *Brisbane Times*, <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/more-people-will-die-police-union-berates-gun-law-overhaul-20120827-24vdz.html>

²⁴ Alpers (2015) “If lawful firearm owners cause most gun deaths, what can we do?” <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2015/10/07/if-lawful-firearm-owners-cause-most-gun-deaths--what-can-we-do-1.html>

²⁵ Australian Gun Safety Alliance Submission (2023) *National Firearms Register Public Consultation Submission*, https://consultations.ag.gov.au/crime/national-firearms-register-consultation/consultation/view_respondent?_b_index=60&uuld=992559870

²⁶ Alpers (2015) “If lawful firearm owners cause most gun deaths, what can we do?”; Filler (2013) “Filler: The law-abiding gun owners aren't the problem”, *Newsday*, <https://www.newsday.com/opinion/columnists/lane-filler/the-law-abiding-gun-owners-aren-t-the-problem-lane-filler-x17913>

²⁷ Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (2023) *Media statement: Illicit firearms in Australia*, <https://www.acic.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases-and-statements/media-statement-illicit-firearms-australia-0>

²⁸ Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (2016) *Illicit Firearms in Australia*, https://www.acic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/illicit_firearms_in_australia.pdf

²⁹ Boaz (2022) “Research suggests it is easier than ever for criminals to get guns illegally in Australia”, *ABC*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-04/illegal-firearms-shooting-police-gun-crime/101306628>

³⁰ Bright (2022) “‘I Know a Guy and He’s Got Guns Galore’: Accessing Crime Guns in the Australian Illicit Firearms Market”, *Deviant Behaviour*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01639625.2022.2086838>

More recently, police around Australia have warned that they are seizing increasing numbers of home-made illicit firearms across Australia, and that these privately made firearms (PMFs) pose a significant emerging threat to public safety.³¹

³¹ Cunningham (2024) "Police fear explosion in home-made guns poses huge threat to public safety", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/police-fear-explosion-in-home-made-guns-poses-huge-threat-to-public-safety-20241016-p5kinz.html>

National Firearms Agreement

All states and territories agreed to the National Firearms Agreement in 1996 in response to the Port Arthur massacre.³² The NFA sets out minimum requirements for firearm regulation without preventing states and territories from adopting additional, more restrictive regulations.

One of the fundamental components of the NFA is the premise that firearm possession and use is a privilege conditional on the state's responsibility to ensure public safety. The NFA establishes minimum requirements for:

- restrictions on certain types of firearms
- categories of firearms
- firearm registration and appropriate licensing of firearm users
- requiring individuals to have a "Genuine Reason" and a "Genuine Need" to acquire and use a firearm
- the safe storage of firearms and ammunition
- recording of all firearm sales and transfers, and
- the sale and transport of firearms.

It also outlines that jurisdictions should establish or maintain substantial penalties for the illegal possession of a firearm.

In 2017, all jurisdictions reviewed and re-committed to the NFA.³³ This updated agreement reinforced and clarified existing regulations, rather than making substantial changes to the original 1996 framework.

Firearm amnesty and buyback program

Governments have implemented various firearm amnesty and/or buyback programs under the NFA. These aim to improve public safety by allowing individuals to hand in unregistered or unwanted firearms without penalty or prosecution.

³² Alpers & Rossetti (2017) *Firearm legislation in Australia 21 years after the National Firearms Agreement*, <https://www.gunpolicy.org/documents/6936-firearm-legislation-in-australia-21-years-after-the-national-firearms-agreement/file>

³³ Council of Australian Governments (2017) *National Firearms Agreement*, <https://www.ag.gov.au/crime/publications/2017-national-firearms-agreement>

Such schemes decrease the size of the “grey” firearms market: the sale of firearms which should have been handed in or registered following the 1996 firearm reforms.³⁴ When a grey market firearm is lost or stolen, the owner is less likely to report it, fearing legal repercussions for having possessed an unregistered firearm.³⁵ Amnesties reduce the number of firearms on the grey market by giving people an opportunity to return unlicensed weapons without fear of prosecution.

There have been two temporary firearms amnesties at the national level, as well as several temporary and permanent amnesties at state and territory levels. Between 1996 and 2015, about one third of the national stockpile of privately owned firearms (at least one million firearms) was surrendered or seized.³⁶ The first national amnesty was the 1996–97 buyback scheme, in which 659,940 shotguns and semi-automatic rifles were surrendered or purchased from their owners.³⁷ The second temporary national amnesty ran for three months in 2017 following the Lindt Café shooting in Sydney, with 57,324 items handed in.³⁸ A Permanent National Firearms Amnesty was introduced in 2021, which allows individuals to surrender unwanted, unregistered or illegally held firearms on an ongoing basis. From July 2021 to June 2023, over 29,000 firearms and weapons were surrendered under this scheme.³⁹

INCONSISTENT STATE AND TERRITORY REGULATIONS

When it was established, the NFA marked a significant step forward in Australian gun control policy. In subsequent years, however, the various resolutions contained within the NFA have been inconsistently implemented across state and territories and no jurisdiction

³⁴ Attorney-General Department (n.d.), *National Firearms Register Public Consultation, Submission (Australian gun safety alliance)*, p 6, https://consultations.ag.gov.au/crime/national-firearms-register-consultation/consultation/view_respondent?_b_index=60&uuld=992559870

³⁵ Australian Border Force (n.d.) *National Firearms Amnesty 2017*, <https://www.abf.gov.au/prohibited-goods-subsite/files/national-firearms-amnesty-2017-report.pdf>

³⁶ Alpers and Ghazarian (2019) “The ‘perfect storm’ of gun control: From policy inertia to world leader”, in *Successful Public Policy Lessons from Australia and New Zealand*, The Australian National University, p 209, <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n5314/pdf/ch09.pdf>

³⁷ Ramchand & Saunders (2021) *The Effects of the 1996 National Firearms Agreement in Australia on Suicide, Homicide, and Mass Shootings*, RAND, <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/1996-national-firearms-agreement.html>

³⁸ Australian Border Force (n.d.) *National Firearms Amnesty 2017*, <https://www.abf.gov.au/prohibited-goods-subsite/files/national-firearms-amnesty-2017-report.pdf>

³⁹ Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department (2024), *Permanent National Firearms Amnesty Annual Report 2022-23*, <https://www.ag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-03/permanent-national-firearms-amnesty-annual-report-2022-23.pdf>; Knaus (2023) *Over 17,000 weapons surrendered in first year of Australian firearms amnesty*, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/jan/21/over-17000-weapons-surrendered-in-first-year-of-australian-firearms-amnesty>

has fully complied with the NFA’s resolutions, and that in some cases, legislation has been watered down to undermine the NFA.⁴⁰

Regulatory consistency is particularly important in Australia due to the country’s large, unmonitored state borders. Australian Federal Police Association president Alex Caruana has said that “[i]f you’ve got softer laws in one state, that weakens the laws in the other states.”⁴¹ Inconsistent regulations, or inadequate enforcement of legislation, can make it feasible for firearms owners to take firearms acquired under more relaxed regulations in one jurisdiction, and illegally use them in other jurisdictions.⁴² This poses a risk to community safety. In some situations, it also puts the owners in legal peril, perhaps unknowingly.

In addition to the importance of regulatory consistency, more frequent reviews of the NFA would allow it to reflect best-practice gun control policy. Clause 4 of the NFA provides that:

The Council of Australian Governments and its subordinate bodies will periodically consider emerging issues relating to this Agreement, including, for example, improvements and advancements in firearm technologies.⁴³

The NFA is rarely reviewed, and there have only been minor changes since its inception. This does not seem consistent with Clause 4. For example, the NFA has yet to be amended to recognise pump-action rifles, which are now available in some states and territories but not others.⁴⁴

Data collection and a National Firearms Register

The NFA stipulates the creation of a “national information-sharing hub”.⁴⁵ However, no register has been created. State and territory data on firearms is collected and disclosed in inconsistent ways. The existing Australian Firearms Information Network operated by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission provides information on individual firearms, not firearm licences and licence-holders. It does not provide real-time data and has data gaps because not all jurisdictions use or contribute data to the network.⁴⁶ Queensland Police

⁴⁰ Alpers & Rossetti (2017) *Firearm legislation in Australia 21 years after the National Firearms Agreement*

⁴¹ Probyn & Edwards “Lethal, legal and locally made: Howard joins police push to restrict this gun nationwide”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/lethal-legal-and-locally-made-howard-joins-police-push-to-restrict-this-gun-nationwide-20240110-p5ew7c.html>

⁴² Probyn & Edwards “Lethal, legal and locally made: Howard joins police push to restrict this gun nationwide”

⁴³ Council of Australian Governments (2017) *National Firearms Agreement*, p 2

⁴⁴ Probyn & Edwards “Lethal, legal and locally made: Howard joins police push to restrict this gun nationwide”

⁴⁵ Council of Australian Governments (2017) *National Firearms Agreement*, p 7

⁴⁶ Farrall (2023) Status of the National Firearms Register, Parliamentary Library, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/Research/FIagPost/2023/October/National_firearms_register; McLeod (2023) “Police ministers begin work on national

Union president Ian Leavers described the database in 2022 as "chunky and cumbersome".⁴⁷

There were renewed calls for a national firearms register following a shooting in Wieambilla, Queensland in 2022. Before the shooting, law enforcement in different states allegedly did not share data, allowing one of the perpetrators to purchase ammunition in Queensland despite having a suspended licence in NSW.⁴⁸

In December 2023, the National Cabinet agreed to implement a National Firearms Register within four years.⁴⁹ Some gun control advocates have criticised this timeline as too lengthy.⁵⁰ The register is expected to enhance the existing Australian Firearms Information Network. States and territories would be required to upgrade existing registries to meet a common national standard, with the national register to be developed by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. In April 2024, the Federal Government committed over \$160 million to implement the register.⁵¹

The register is intended to provide police with near real-time information. It would enhance cooperation between state and territory authorities in regulating firearms and combatting firearm theft. It could potentially allow police to track the movements of firearms across jurisdictions and be linked to individuals' criminal history.

firearms register after Wieambilla shooting", *news.com.au*,
<https://www.news.com.au/national/queensland/crime/police-ministers-begin-work-on-national-firearms-register-after-wieambilla-shooting/news-story/2f8626d7daf767cad692308ed796624>

⁴⁷ Black (2022) "Australia already has a national gun database – so why has a police shooting prompted calls for a new one?", *ABC*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-24/australia-guns-national-register-police-shooting/101798486>

⁴⁸ Farrall (2023) Status of the National Firearms Register; Bovill (2024) "Federal government commits \$160 million for creation of national firearms register", *ABC*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-27/federal-government-commits-funding-for-firearms-register/103774904>

⁴⁹ Attorney-General's Department (n.d.) *National Firearms Register*, <https://www.ag.gov.au/crime/drugs-and-firearms/firearms/national-firearms-register>

⁵⁰ Probyn & Edwards (2024) "Lethal, legal and locally made: Howard joins police push to restrict this gun nationwide", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/lethal-legal-and-locally-made-howard-joins-police-push-to-restrict-this-gun-nationwide-20240110-p5ew7c.html>

⁵¹ Bovill (2024) "Federal government commits \$160 million for creation of national firearms register"

Gun control scorecards: How are states and territories performing?

CRITERIA FOR SCORECARDS

This section provides scorecards for each state and territory that rate how they are performing on gun safety policy. Each scorecard first provides an overview of firearm statistics for the jurisdiction including:

1. **number of guns**
2. **number of gun licences**
3. **number of guns per capita**
4. **have the number of guns increased or decreased in the previous year?**
5. **have the number of guns per capita increased or decreased in the previous year?**

The scorecard then assesses the jurisdiction's regulatory framework against a set of criteria for effective gun control. There are two broad approaches to measuring state and territory gun safety policies. First, it is possible to assess whether jurisdictions have implemented the various components of the NFA. Gun Control Australia published comprehensive research into this topic in 2017, finding that all states and territories are failing to fully comply with the NFA.⁵²

Second, the scorecard considers regulations that would enhance safety but that are *not* included in the NFA. The criteria have been devised based on discussions with the Australian Gun Safety Alliance and Gun Control Australia and consideration of Australia history of firearm regulation.

1. **Data quality and transparency:** *Can the public get accurate information on the number of guns in their state or territory, including geographic data, with a web search and maximum three clicks?*
 - The ongoing development of the National Firearms Register (see section: "Data collection and a National Firearms Register") presents an opportunity to ensure that all states and territories meet these high data transparency standards.
 - Several jurisdictions publish firearms data in their police force annual reports. This does not reach the threshold for easily accessible data.

⁵² Alpers & Rossetti (2017) *Firearm legislation in Australia 21 years after the National Firearms Agreement*

2. **Consultation processes and transparency:** *Is consultation on government policy related to firearms conducted regularly, using a formal consultation body with a transparent governance structure, and does this consultation include community safety advocates at the same level as other stakeholders?*
 - Consultation on firearm policy, legislation and regulation has been the sole domain of the firearm industry in several states and territories. This vastly underrepresents the views of the more than 95% of Australians who do not own firearms.
 - Consultation with a broader range of groups would help to balance the commercial interests of the firearm industry. There is no other public health issue where policy and legislation are determined after consultation only with the interested commercial industry.

3. **Firearm ownership limits:** *Are there limits on the maximum number of firearms that one person can own?*
 - Australia Institute polling shows that three in four Australians support a limit of ten firearms per individual.⁵³

4. **Regulation of minors' use of firearms:** *Can minors legally use firearms?*
 - The NFA stipulates that all applicants for gun licences be at least 18 years old. However, all states and territories allow minors to shoot guns, for instance by allowing children to use firearms under the supervision of a licenced firearm owner or putting in place a junior permit system.

5. **Regulation of 3D-printed firearms:** *Is the possession of digital blueprints for 3D-printed firearms banned?*
 - Additive manufacturing technology (3D printing) is increasingly cheap and accessible. It poses a significant threat to firearm regulation because unlicensed individuals can bypass regulatory channels by manufacturing their own firearms at home, using computer-aided design files found on the dark web ("blueprints").⁵⁴ Such guns (known as "ghost guns") can then be traded on the black market. They can be just as lethal as traditional firearms.⁵⁵ 3D-

⁵³ TK

⁵⁴ Daly et al (2019) "3D printing, policing and crime", *Policing and Society*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10439463.2020.1730835>; Daly & Mann (2018) *3D printing, policing and crime (QUT Crime, Justice and Social Democracy Research Centre, Briefing Paper 1)*, Queensland University of Technology, https://eprints.qut.edu.au/215483/1/CJRC_FINAL.pdf

⁵⁵ South Australia Police (n.d.) *Legislation - 3D Blueprints*, <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/firearms-and-weapons/consultation-3d-blueprints>; The Australian National University (2021) *Glock ghost guns up for grabs on the dark web*, <https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/glock-ghost-guns-up-for-grabs-on-the-dark-web>

printed guns are mostly made of plastics, which means they can escape metal detectors and are easily dismantled and destroyed.⁵⁶

- There is evidence that 3D-printed guns are increasingly prevalent in Australia. Police seize them from households with increasing frequency.⁵⁷ In October 2024, police from across Australia convened to discuss privately made firearms under the nationwide Operation Athena.⁵⁸ Police described privately made firearms as a significant growing threat to public safety in Australia, with hundreds of privately made firearms and firearm parts seized by police across Australia.⁵⁹ Based on police seizures over the past year, the most common 3D-printed gun in Australia is the FGC-9, a semi-automatic weapon that can fire up to 30 rounds without reloading.⁶⁰
- Like other firearms, 3D-printed firearms and firearm components require a licence and must be registered. However, there is scope for additional regulation to restrict the capacity to manufacture firearms, for instance by banning the possession and sharing of digital blueprints for 3D-printed firearms.⁶¹
- Other measures could include additional safety requirements on 3D printers sold in Australia or through moderation and blocking of harmful online content.⁶²

6. Regulation of unlicensed shooting, such as at shooting ranges: *Is access to firearms exclusively managed by police, rather than devolved to private industry for recreational purposes?*

⁵⁶ Bright and Mann (2022) “3D-printed guns are on the rise in Australia. How can we prevent them being made?”, *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/3d-printed-guns-are-on-the-rise-in-australia-how-can-we-prevent-them-being-made-193936>

⁵⁷ Cunningham (2024) “Police fear explosion in home-made guns poses huge threat to public safety”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

⁵⁸ NSW Police (2024) *Operation Athena symposium concludes in Melbourne as police from across Australia focus on privately-made firearms*, https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/news/news_article?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHBzJTnBJTJGJTJGZWJpenByZC5wb2xpY2UubnN3Lmdvdi5hdSUyRm1lZGlhJTJGMTE0NmZLmh0bWwmYWxsPTE%3D

⁵⁹ Cunningham (2024) “Police fear explosion in home-made guns poses huge threat to public safety”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

⁶⁰ Thomas-Sam (2024) “3D-printed guns on rise in Australia, with seizures of lethal firearms up across nation”, *ABC*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-11-04/3d-printed-guns-rising-australia-semi-automatic/104538082>

⁶¹ Thomas-Sam (2024) “3D-printed guns on rise in Australia, with seizures of lethal firearms up across nation”; Alannah & Madeline Foundation (2024) *No longer an emerging issue: the rising threat of 3D-printed and privately made firearms*, <https://www.alannahandmadeline.org.au/news/no-longer-an-emerging-issue-the-rising-threat-of-3d-printed-and-privately-made-firearms>

⁶² Bright and Mann (2022) “3D-printed guns are on the rise in Australia. How can we prevent them being made?”

- “Come and try” services are available in all states and territories, where individuals can use firearms for recreational purposes at shooting ranges without possessing a firearms licence.
- This contradicts the NFA, which “affirms that firearms possession and use is a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety.”⁶³
- “Come and try” services have been connected to harmful events. For example, in 2010 a woman with schizophrenia stole a gun and used it to murder a family member.⁶⁴ In 2015, the ABC reported that eight people had committed suicide in shooting ranges since 2002.⁶⁵

⁶³ Council of Australian Governments (2017) *National Firearms Agreement*, p 2

⁶⁴ R v Fernando (2011), <https://www.caselaw.nsw.gov.au/decision/54a636503004de94513d9272>

⁶⁵ Knowles & Tietzel (2015) “Widow of man who killed himself at Sydney shooting range calls for tighter gun controls in NSW”, ABC, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-17/widow-calls-for-tighter-gun-laws-after-shooting-range-suicides/6327284>

Table 2: Scorecard summary

	Aus	NSW	Qld	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT ⁶⁶
STATISTICS									
Guns	4,078,746	1,125,553	1,076,140	960,693	328,263	307,078	156,626	73,752	69,868
Licences	943,274	252,531	224,833	236,609	62,523	85,338	37,128	17,495	30,617
Guns per capita	0.15	0.13	0.19	0.13	0.17	0.10	0.27	0.29	0.15
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Yes ⁶⁷	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase	Decrease	Unknown	Increase	Unknown
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Yes	Increase	Increase	Decrease	Decrease	Decrease	Unknown	Increase	Unknown
POLICY CRITERIA									
Data transparency	-	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Consultation standards	-	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Firearm limits	-	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Ban on under-18 firearm use	-	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
3D printed firearms	-	✓	✗	✗	✗ ⁶⁸	✗	✓	✗	✗
Unlicensed shooting	-	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

⁶⁶ Data for the ACT is estimated by applying national per capita figures, because the ACT does not publish its own data.

⁶⁷ Increase/decrease in number of guns and increase/decrease in guns per capita for Australia as a whole was calculated by comparing the 2024 figures to the most recent published total figures before 2024, which are from 2020.

⁶⁸ South Australia is currently drafting legislation banning 3D printed blueprints,

NEW SOUTH WALES

Table 3: New South Wales scorecard

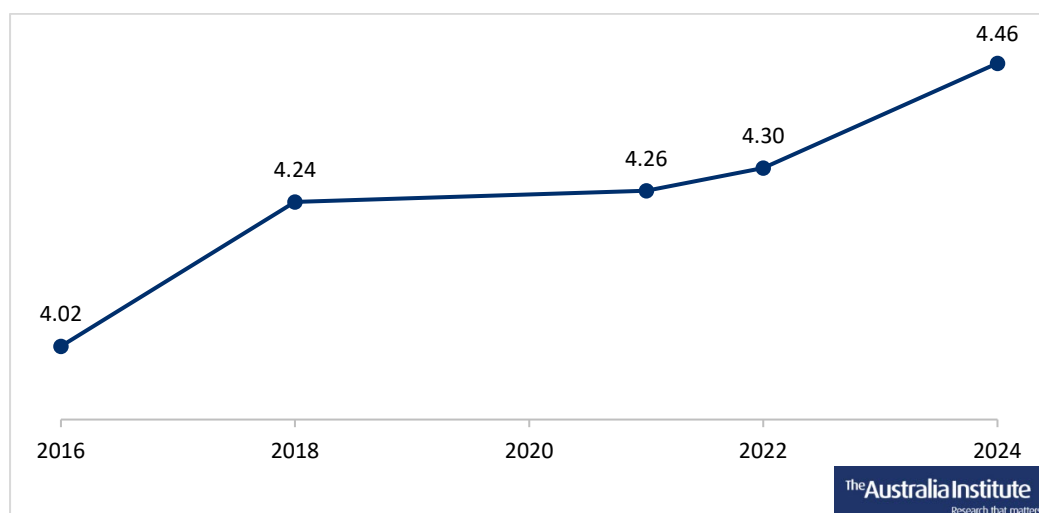
New South Wales	
Guns	1,125,553
Licences	252,531
Guns per capita	0.13
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Increase
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Increase
Data transparency	✓
Consultation standards	✓
Limit on firearm number	✗
Ban on under-18 firearm use	✗
Prohibition on 3D printed firearms	✓
Unlicensed shooting permitted	✗

Key statistics

- As of 30 June 2024, there were 1,125,553 registered firearms and 252,531 firearm licences in NSW.⁶⁹
- There were 0.13 firearms per capita, or more than one firearm for every seven people.
- Licensees owned an average of over 4 firearms per licence.
- About one in 33 people in NSW had a firearm licence.
- The number of firearms per licence had increased from 4.0 in 2016 to 4.5 in 2024.

⁶⁹ NSW Police Force (2024) *NSW Firearms Registry Licensing and Ownership Information*, https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/882988/NSW_Firearms_Licensing_and_Ownership_Information_Jun24.pdf

Figure 11: Firearms per licence, NSW, 2016-2024



Source: NSW Police

Policies

Relevant NSW legislation

- *Firearms Act 1996* (NSW)⁷⁰
- *Firearms Regulation 2017* (NSW)⁷¹
- *Weapons Prohibition Act 1998* (NSW)⁷²
- *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (NSW)⁷³

Data quality and transparency

NSW publishes the most comprehensive and easily accessible data of any state or territory.

This includes:

- monthly data on firearms licences, permits to acquire, amnesty transactions, and dealer transactions
- comprehensive biannual data on firearms licensing and ownership, including data broken down by postcode
- biannual data on firearm and weapon prohibition orders.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ *Firearms Act 1996 No 46* (NSW), <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1996-046>

⁷¹ *Firearms Regulation 2017* (NSW), <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0442>

⁷² *Weapons Prohibition Act 1998 No 127* (NSW), <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1998-127>

⁷³ *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 No 103* (NSW), <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2002-103>

⁷⁴ NSW Police (2024) *Firearms data*, https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/about_us/information_of_interest_to_the_community/firearms_data

The NSW Firearms Registry publishes this data because it identifies it as “in the public interest to be made publicly available”.⁷⁵ This decision is made in line with Section 7 (3) of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act), which requires that “all government agencies give consideration, at regular intervals, to identifying categories of information that should be released to the public proactively.”⁷⁶ NSW discloses much more information about gun ownership than other states.⁷⁷

Consultation processes

NSW conducts consultation through the NSW Firearm Registry Consultation Council. The council holds regular scheduled meetings and consults with two community safety advocates as well as one firearm-safety researcher.

Limit on firearm number

None.

Regulation of minors' use of firearms

Children between 12 and 18 years old can apply to possess and use firearms under supervision, for the purposes of instruction at target shooting events.⁷⁸

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

It is an offence to manufacture firearms without authorisation.⁷⁹ It is also an offence to possess digital blueprints for manufacturing a firearm, such as through a 3D printer, without authorisation.⁸⁰

Unlicensed shooting permitted

A person can use firearms on an approved shooting range without a licence for the purposes of trying the sport or undertaking firearms safety training, as long as they are directly supervised and have completed a declaration form.⁸¹ NSW and non-NSW residents, including overseas tourists, can participate in unlicensed shooting. For example, the Sydney

⁷⁵ NSW Police (2024), *Licensing and Ownership Information*, p 2

⁷⁶ NSW Police (2024), *Licensing and Ownership Information*, p 2

⁷⁷ Chung and Singhal (2021) “Instruments designed to kill’: The suburbs where NSW keeps a million firearms in private arsenals”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/instruments-designed-to-kill-the-suburbs-where-nsw-keeps-a-million-firearms-in-private-arsenals-20210426-p57md4.html>

⁷⁸ NSW Police (n.d.) *Minors*, https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/online_services/firearms/permits/firearms_permits/minors

⁷⁹ *Firearms Act 1996 No 46* (NSW), s50A

⁸⁰ *Firearms Act 1996 No 46* (NSW), s51; South Australia Police (2024) *Legislation – 3D Blueprints*, <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/firearms-and-weapons/consultation-3d-blueprints>

⁸¹ NSW Police (n.d.) *Frequently Asked Questions on the P650 Process*, https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/online_services/firearms/clubs/firearms_safety_training_instructor/frequently_asked_questions_on_the_p650_process#A1; NSW Police (2022) *P650 Declaration - Range Use by Unlicensed Persons*, https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/142125/FACT_SHEET_P650_Declaration.pdf

International Shooting Centre’s “Try Shooting” program allows customers to shoot 50 rounds of ammunition.⁸²

The screening of unlicensed people is delegated to the shooting club or range, which has a commercial interest in recruiting new members. This means that firearm use is not exclusively overseen by NSW Police but is instead delegated to commercial bodies. This contravenes the *Firearms Act 1996* (NSW), which states that:

(1) The underlying principles of this Act are—

(a) to confirm firearm possession and use as being a privilege that is conditional on the overriding need to ensure public safety, and

(b) to improve public safety—

(i) by imposing strict controls on the possession and use of firearms⁸³

The Act also states that:

(2) The objects of this Act are as follows—...

(d) to provide strict requirements that must be satisfied in relation to licensing of firearms and the acquisition and supply of firearms⁸⁴

The use of firearms for “try shooting” programs does not have a public safety benefit. In 2021, the NSW State Coroner recommended that the NSW Government revoke the declaration form.⁸⁵ An approach that would mitigate the risk of unlicensed people operating firearms would be to require anyone wishing to try shooting to apply to the NSW Firearm Registry for a permit. This would mean that applicants are screened by police, not shooting clubs.

⁸² NSW Government (n.d.) *Sydney International Shooting Centre*, <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/shootingcentre>

⁸³ *Firearms Act 1996* (NSW), s 3, <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/pdf/inforce/2024-11-28/act-1996-046>

⁸⁴ *Firearms Act 1996* (NSW), s 3

⁸⁵ NSW State Coroner (2021) *Inquest into the deaths of John, Jack and Jennifer EDWARDS*, https://coroners.nsw.gov.au/coroners-court/download.html/documents/findings/2021/Inquest_into_the_deaths_of_John_Jack_and_Jennifer_Edwards_-_findings_of_State_Coroner_dated_7_April_2021.pdf

QUEENSLAND

Table 4: Queensland scorecard

Queensland	
Guns	1,076,140
Licences	224,833
Guns per capita	0.19
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Yes
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Yes
Data transparency	×
Consultation standards	×
Limit on firearm number	×
Ban on under-18 firearm use	×
Prohibition of 3D printed firearms	×
Unlicensed shooting permitted	×

Key statistics

- As of 6 October 2024, there were 224,833 weapons licences⁸⁶ and 1,076,140 registered weapons in Queensland.⁸⁷
- There are 0.19 firearms per capita, or approximately one firearm for every six people.
- Licensees owned an average of over four weapons per licence.
- One in 24 Queenslanders had a weapons licence.

Policies

Relevant Queensland legislation

- *Weapons Act 1990* (Qld)⁸⁸
- *Weapons Categories Regulation 1997* (Qld)⁸⁹
- *Weapons Regulation 2016* (Qld)⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Queensland records data on “weapons licences”, but correspondence with Queensland Police confirmed that this refers to firearms only.

⁸⁷ Queensland Police (2024) *Weapons Licensing*, <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/units/weapons-licensing>

⁸⁸ *Weapons Act 1990* (Qld), <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1990-071>

⁸⁹ *Weapons Categories Regulation 1997* (Qld), <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/inforce/current/sl-1997-wcr>

⁹⁰ *Weapons Regulation 2016* (Qld), <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0131>

Data quality and transparency

Queensland Police reports on the number of licensees, issued licences and total number of registered firearms.⁹¹ The information is easily accessible and updated monthly. However, there is limited detail.

Queensland Police also discloses annual data on new and renewal applications. In 2022–2023, it received more than 19,900 new applications for a weapons licence, 23,700 weapons licence renewals and 69,500 permits to acquire weapons.⁹²

Consultation processes

Queensland conducts consultation through the Ministers Firearm Advisory Council. The council holds ad hoc meetings, usually with very short notice, has unclear membership, rarely has dial-in facilities and no terms of reference.⁹³

Limit on firearm number

None.

Regulation of minors' use of firearms

Queensland issues firearms licences for minors aged 11–17.⁹⁴ These licences can be for sports or target shooting, or for work as a primary producer or rural employee. Minors' licences cannot be issued for recreational shooting or military re-enactment. Minors' licences allow possession and use of rifles, shotguns and pistols.⁹⁵

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

No regulation of digital blueprints for 3D printed firearms.

Unlicensed shooting permitted

Unlicensed shooting is allowed for individuals 11 years or older at shooting ranges upon signed approval from a range officer.⁹⁶ Unlicensed shooting is also permitted for the purposes of primary production when a primary producer who is a licensee gives consent to an employee or family member to use the weapon.

Other

Queensland is the only jurisdiction that does not prohibit or categorise gel blasters as firearms. This means gel blasters bought legitimately in Queensland can move interstate.

⁹¹ Queensland Police (2024) *Weapons Licensing*

⁹² Queensland Police (2023) *Weapons Licensing Regulator Performance Framework Report 2022-23*, <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/weapon-licensing/weapons-licensing-regulator-performance-framework-report-2022-23>

⁹³ Correspondence with Gun Safety Alliance, 20 January 2025

⁹⁴ Queensland Police (2020) *Minor's licence supporting documents*, <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/weapon-licensing/minors-licence-supporting-documents>

⁹⁵ Queensland Rifle Association Inc (n.d.) *Firearms Licensing*, <https://qldrifle.com/firearms-licensing/>

⁹⁶ *Weapons Act 1990* (Qld), s53, s55

VICTORIA

Table 5: Victoria scorecard

Victoria	
Guns	960,693
Licences	236,609
Guns per capita	0.13
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Increase
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Decrease
Data transparency	×
Consultation standards	✓
Limit on firearm number	×
Ban on under-18 firearm use	×
Prohibition on 3D printed firearms	×
Unlicensed shooting permitted	×

Key statistics

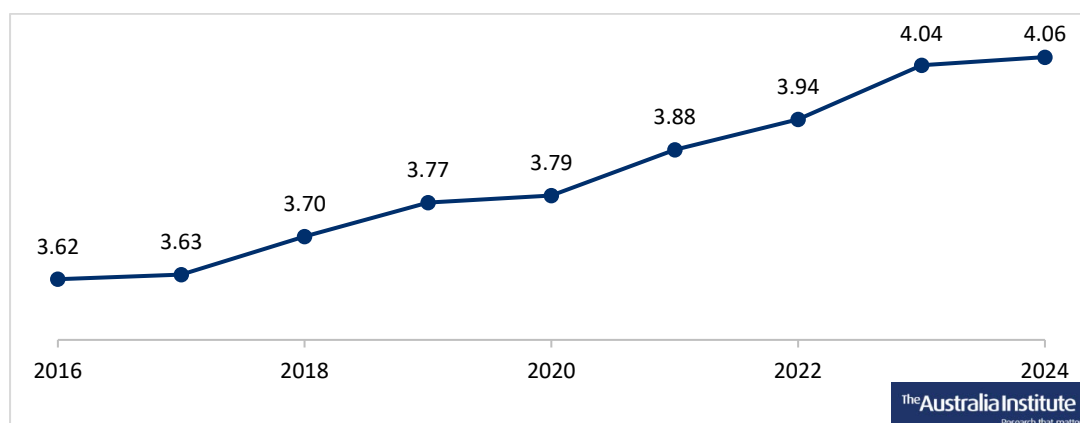
- As of 30 June 2024, there were 236,609 firearms licences and 960,693 registered firearms in Victoria.⁹⁷
- There were 0.13 firearms per capita, or approximately one firearm for every eight people.
- Licensees owned an average of four firearms per licence.
- About one in 30 Victorians had a firearm licence.
- The number of firearms per licence had increased from 3.6 in 2016 to 4.1 in 2024.

Victoria Police denied an FOI request for firearm data broken down by postcode.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Victoria Police (2024) *Victoria Police Annual Report 2023-24*, <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/victoria-police-annual-report-2023-24>

⁹⁸ Correspondence with Victoria Police, 24 September 2024

Figure 12: Firearms per licence, Victoria, 2016-2024



Source: Victoria Police

Policies

Relevant Victorian legislation

- *Firearms Act 1996 (Vic)*⁹⁹
- *Firearms Regulations 2018 (Vic)*¹⁰⁰

Data quality and transparency

Victoria Police publishes firearm data in its annual report on total numbers of firearms, licences and new licences.¹⁰¹ This data is not easily accessible. The 2023-24 annual report states that Victoria Police is working to integrate the National Firearms Register into their systems alongside other states and territories.

Consultation processes

Victoria conducts consultation through the Victorian Firearms Consultation Committee. The committee holds regular scheduled meetings and consults with one community safety advocate.

Firearm limits

None.

⁹⁹ *Firearms Act 1996 (Vic)*, <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/firearms-act-1996/099>

¹⁰⁰ *Firearms Regulations 2018 (Vic)*, <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/firearms-regulations-2018/001>

¹⁰¹ Victoria Police (2024) *Annual Report 2023-24*, <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-10/Victoria-Police-Annual-Report-2023-24-Accessible.pdf>

Regulation of minors' use of firearms

Victoria allows for Junior Firearm Licences. These licences grant minors aged 12 to 18 permission to use shotguns under adult supervision, or to receive instruction or engage in sport or target shooting. Minors are not allowed to own or store firearms.¹⁰²

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

No regulation of digital blueprints for 3D printed firearms.

Unlicensed shooting

Victoria allows individuals to use firearms without a licence for the purposes of trying sport shooting by completing a Notification of Receiving Instruction.¹⁰³ This must occur under supervision at an approved shooting club. Individuals cannot apply for more than 13 Notifications of Receiving Instruction.

¹⁰² Victoria Police (2024) *Junior firearm licence*, <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/junior-firearm-licences>

¹⁰³ Victoria Police (2024) *Sport target shooters, clubs, collectors and hunters*, <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sport-target-shooters-clubs-collectors-and-hunters>

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Table 6: South Australia scorecard

South Australia	
Guns	328,263
Licences	62,523
Guns per capita	0.17
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Increase
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Decrease
Data transparency	×
Consultation standards	×
Limit on firearm numbers	×
Ban on under-18 firearm use	×
Prohibition on 3D printed firearms	×
Unlicensed shooting permitted	×

Key statistics

- As of June 2024, there were 62,523 firearms licences and 328,263 registered firearms in South Australia.¹⁰⁴
- There were 0.17 firearms per capita, or approximately one firearm for every six people.
- Licensees owned an average of five firearms per licence.
- About one in 30 South Australians had a firearm licence.

Policies

Relevant South Australian legislation:

- *Firearms Act 2015*¹⁰⁵
- *Firearms Regulations 2017*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ South Australia Police (2023) *Annual Report 2022–23*, <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/about-us/annual-reporting/annual-report-2022-23>

¹⁰⁵ *Firearms Act 2015* (SA), <https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/lz/path=%2FC%2FA%2FFIREARMS%20ACT%202015>

¹⁰⁶ *Firearms Regulations 2017* (SA), <https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/lz/path=%2FC%2FR%2FFirearms%20Regulations%202017>

Data quality and transparency

South Australia discloses firearm data in annual reports available on its website.¹⁰⁷ The data is provided in limited detail, with licence and firearm totals provided, but not broken down by postcode or presented in a time series.

Consultation processes

South Australia has no formal consultation process. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation has been engaged on an irregular basis.

Limit on firearm number

None.

Regulation of minors' use of firearms

South Australia allows young people aged 12 and over to apply for a “shooting club” licence if they are required to participate in a competition in another jurisdiction.¹⁰⁸ Young people aged 15 and over can apply for a primary producer category of licence, which allows firearm use for the purposes of a primary production business.¹⁰⁹

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

It is an offence for someone in South Australia to 3D print a firearm without a licence. However, it is not an offence to possess the blueprints for 3D printing a firearm. As of October 2024, the Firearms (Digital Blueprints for 3D Printing) Amendment Bill 2024 proposes to create a new offence for possessing digital blueprints for 3D printed firearms.¹¹⁰ The SA Government has received public submissions and is preparing a report for Cabinet.

Unlicensed shooting prohibited

Unlicensed shooting is allowed at authorised shooting ranges, galleries or clubs under supervision.¹¹¹ Minors between the ages of ten and eighteen are able to shoot without a licence at shooting clubs, provided they are club members and are under supervision.

¹⁰⁷ South Australia Police (2023) *Annual Report 2022–23*, <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/about-us/annual-reporting/annual-report-2022-23>

¹⁰⁸ *Firearms Regulations 2017* (SA)

¹⁰⁹ Australian Business Licence and Information Service (n.d.) *Firearms Licence – South Australia*, <https://ablis.business.gov.au/service/sa/firearms-licence/537>; South Australia Police (n.d.) *Do I need a firearms licence*, <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/firearms-and-weapons/do-i-need-a-firearms-licence>; *Firearms Regulations 2017* (SA)

¹¹⁰ South Australia Police (2024) *Legislation - 3D Blueprints*, <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/firearms-and-weapons/consultation-3d-blueprints>

¹¹¹ *Firearms Act 2015* (SA), s8

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Table 7: Western Australia scorecard

Western Australia	
Guns	307,078
Licences	85,338
Guns per capita	0.10
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Decrease
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Decrease
Data transparency	×
Consultation standards	✓
Limit on firearm number	✓
Ban on under-18 firearm use	×
Prohibition on 3D printed firearms	×
Unlicenced shooting permitted	×

Key statistics

WA Police does not disclose firearm data on their website. However, they provided firearms data upon email request, which showed:

- As of December 2024, there were 85,338 firearms licences and 307,078 registered firearms in Western Australia.¹¹²
- Licensees owned an average of at least three firearms per licence.
- About one in 35 Western Australians had a firearm licence.

Policies

Relevant Western Australian legislation

- *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)*¹¹³
 - The Firearms Bill 2024 (WA) has passed the WA Parliament, but large sections are yet to come into force¹¹⁴; proclamation will determine when that happens.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Personal correspondence (10 January 2025)

¹¹³ *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)*,

[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_47469.pdf/\\$FILE/Firearms%20Act%202024%20-%20%5B00-a0-01%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_47469.pdf/$FILE/Firearms%20Act%202024%20-%20%5B00-a0-01%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

¹¹⁴ *Firearms Bill 2024 (WA)*,

<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=EB595277534C5BFD48258ACA000A0914>

¹¹⁵ *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)*, s 2

- The new *Firearms Regulations 2024* were published in December 2024.¹¹⁶

New legislation

In June 2024, the WA Parliament passed the *Firearms Act 2024* (replacing the *Firearms Act 1973*), described by the WA Government as the “strictest gun laws in the nation”.¹¹⁷ The new legislation introduced:

- Limits on firearm numbers per person, including maximum five firearms for hunting, ten for competition shooting, and ten for primary producers.¹¹⁸
- Mandatory Disqualifying Offences and Orders which remove guns from people under restraining orders or accused of domestic violence.¹¹⁹
- Mandatory training and regular health checks for licence holders, including mental health checks.¹²⁰
 - GPs will conduct the mental and physical checks, and firearm owners will have to repeat them regularly.¹²¹
 - According to WA Police, mental health issues were a factor in at least 50% of the 20 firearm-related deaths in 2022 in the state.¹²²
- Stricter storage and authorisation requirements for licence holders.
- An overhaul of the “property letter” system for recreational shooters.
- Banning a wide range of firearms.
- Tightened conditions for collector licences in 2024, requiring licensees to be members of a historical society.¹²³

¹¹⁶ *Firearms Regulations 2024*,

https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/law_s54842.html&view=asmade

¹¹⁷ WA Government (2024) *Australia's toughest firearms laws pass WA Parliament*,

<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook-Labor-Government/Australia%27s-toughest-firearms-laws-pass-WA-Parliament-20240619>

¹¹⁸ WA Government (2024) *REFORM numerical limits - frequently asked questions*,

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/western-australia-police-force/reform-numerical-limits-frequently-asked-questions>

¹¹⁹ Bourke (2024) “WA gun owners accused of domestic violence to lose weapons in wake of Floreat shooting murders”, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-06-02/wa-gun-law-family-violence-reform/103924750>

¹²⁰ Hastie (2024) “WA’s 90,000 gun owners will soon have to answer this suite of questions. Here’s what you need to know”, *WAtoday*, <https://www.watoday.com.au/politics/western-australia/wa-s-90-000-gun-owners-will-soon-have-to-answer-this-suite-of-questions-here-s-what-you-need-to-know-20240320-p5fe1z.html>

¹²¹ Wisbey (2024) “Updated gun laws will place ‘unrealistic burdens’ on GPs”, *newsGP*,

<https://www1.racgp.org.au/newsgp/clinical/updated-gun-laws-will-place-unrealistic-burdens-on>

¹²² Papalia (2023) *Firearms Crackdown to Include Mandatory Mental Health Checks*

<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/McGowan-Labor-Government/Firearms-Crackdown-to-Include-Mandatory-Mental-Health-Checks-20230205>

¹²³ Hastie (2024) “How WA’s new gun laws might have applied to the Floreat murderer”, *WAtoday*

<https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/how-wa-s-new-gun-laws-might-have-applied-to-the-floreat-murderer-20240527-p5jh1g.html>

A voluntary buyback scheme ran in WA until 31 August 2024, with 38,442 weapons handed back by more than 20,500 licence holders.¹²⁴

This new legislation appears to represent the strongest firearms legislation and regulations introduced in Australia since the NFA in 1996. It establishes a new benchmark for public safety.

Polling

Western Australians show strong support for the new firearms limits introduced by the Western Australian government. The 2024 poll conducted by The Australia Institute found 78% of Western Australians support the firearms limits, with 52% strongly supporting them.

13 Data quality and transparency

The WA Government does not publish firearms data transparently to the general public. However, data was provided upon email request.

Consultation processes

Western Australia has no formal ongoing consultation process. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation and the Australian Gun Safety Alliance have been regularly engaged during their recent reform process.

Limit on firearm number

WA is the first jurisdiction in Australia to limit the number of firearms an individual can own, under its new legislation passed in 2024.

- Primary producers and competition shooters can have up to ten firearms.
- Recreational hunters can have up to five firearms.

These limits are still well above the two firearms per person limit proposed by Gun Control Australia in 2019 for NSW.¹²⁵

Regulation of minors' use of firearms

Firearm licensees can supervise the use of firearms by people between the ages of 12 and 18 years old.¹²⁶ Additionally, a firearm licence issued for work as a primary producer

¹²⁴ Cook & Papalia (2024) *Cook Government voluntary gun buyback success*,
<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook-Labor-Government/Cook-Government-voluntary-gun-buyback-success-20240911>

¹²⁵ Gun Control Australia (2019) *Report Card New South Wales*,
<https://assets.nationbuilder.com/guncontrolparty/pages/105/attachments/original/1552025584/GCA-NSW-Report-Card-2019.pdf?1552025584>

¹²⁶ Firearms Bill 2024 (WA),
[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Bills.nsf/EB595277534C5BFD48258ACA000A0914/\\$File/Bill%2B150-2.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Bills.nsf/EB595277534C5BFD48258ACA000A0914/$File/Bill%2B150-2.pdf)

authorises children of the licensee to use a firearm with permission and under supervision.¹²⁷

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

No regulation of digital blueprints for 3D printed firearms.

Unlicensed shooting permitted

Individuals can use firearms under supervision at shooting clubs or ranges “for the purposes of competition shooting, target shooting or firearms training”.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Firearms Bill 2024 (WA)

¹²⁸ Firearms Bill 2024 (WA)

TASMANIA

Table 8: Tasmania scorecard

Tasmania	
Guns	156,626
Licences	37,128
Guns per capita	0.27
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Unknown ¹²⁹
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Unknown
Data transparency	×
Consultation standards	×
Limit on firearm number	×
Ban on under-18 firearm use	×
Prohibition on 3D printed firearms	✓
Unlicensed shooting permitted	×

Key statistics

- As of August 2024, there were 37,128 firearm licences and 156,626 registered firearms in Tasmania.¹³⁰
- There were 0.27 firearms per capita, or approximately one firearm for every four people.
- Licensees owned an average of four firearms per licence.
- There is one firearm for every four people in Tasmania.
- About 1 in 16 Tasmanians had a firearm licence.

In its 2023-24 and 2022-23 Annual Reports, Tasmania Police discloses firearm licence and registration fees and reports a “greater than anticipated revenue relating to firearms fees”.¹³¹

Policies

Relevant Tasmanian legislation:

- *Firearms Act 1996 (Tas)*¹³²

¹²⁹ Firearms data was not available for previous years.

¹³⁰ Email communication with Tasmania Police, 22 August 2024

¹³¹ Tasmania Police (2024) *Annual Report 2023-2024*, p 121, <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/DPFEM10113-Annual-Report-2023-24-WEB-OP.pdf>; Tasmania Police (2023) *Annual Report 2022-2023*, p 117, <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/about-us/corporate-documents/annual-report/>

¹³² *Firearms Act 1996 (Tas)*, <https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1996-023>

- *Firearms Regulations 2016 (Tas)*¹³³

Data quality and transparency

Tasmania does not publish firearm data in a manner available to the general public. However, data for this report was provided by Tasmania Police upon email request from The Australia Institute.¹³⁴

Tasmania Police does operate a firearms database called the Firearms and Weapons Data System. However, this is only available to authorised personnel.¹³⁵

Consultation processes

Tasmania has no firearms consultation body. A parliamentary inquiry recommended that “the Tasmanian Government increases engagement with all stakeholders, including both the proponents of firearm safety and firearm users”.¹³⁶ The Government usually contacts the Alannah and Madeline Foundation as a stakeholder regarding changes to firearm policy.

Limit on firearm number

None.

Regulation of minors’ use of firearms

Tasmania allows minors’ permits for young people aged 12-13 to use a firearm on an approved range under supervision.¹³⁷ Young people aged 14-17 can apply for permits to use a firearm in the field and on a firearms range. When in the field, young people must be supervised by full firearms licence holders. All young people are required to complete a safety course before shooting in the field. Minors’ permits do not allow young people to purchase and acquire a firearm, but instead to borrow one from a licence holder or club.¹³⁸

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

It is an offence to possess digital blueprints for manufacturing firearms, such as through 3D printers, unless they are authorised to do so.¹³⁹

¹³³ *Firearms Regulations 2016 (Tas)*, <https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/2024-07-10/sr-2016-084>

¹³⁴ Email communication with Tasmania Police, 22 August 2024

¹³⁵ Tasmania Police (2013) *New Firearms Database*, <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/news-events/media-releases/new-firearms-database/>

¹³⁶ Parliament of Tasmania (2019) *House of Assembly Select Committee on Firearms Legislation and Policy Final Report*, p 16, https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/59341/final20report20-20select20committee20on20firearms20legislation20and20policy.pdf

¹³⁷ Tasmania Police (n.d.) *Minors’ permits*, <https://fas.police.tas.gov.au/obtaining-a-licence/minors-permits/>

¹³⁸ Tasmania Police Firearms Services (n.d.) *Forms & reference info*, <https://fas.police.tas.gov.au/forms-reference-info/>

¹³⁹ Tasmania Police (2024) “Digital blueprints of 3D firearms” <https://fas.police.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/64-Digital-blueprints-of-firearms-and-firearm-parts.pdf>

Unlicensed shooting

Individuals can apply for exemptions from the Firearms Act to possess or use a firearm or ammunition at an approved rifle club, pistol shooting club or range.¹⁴⁰ This exemption entitles the individual to use a firearm “for the purpose of participating in one shooting activity on one day at that club or range”.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Tasmania Police (n.d.) *Exemption to participate in a club or range shooting activity*, <https://fas.police.tas.gov.au/exemptions/exemption-participate-club-range-shooting-activity/>

¹⁴¹ *Firearms Act 1996* (Tas), s155

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Table 9: Northern Territory scorecard

Northern Territory	
Guns	73,752
Licences	17,495
Guns per capita	0.29
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Increase
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Increase
Data transparency	✘
Consultation standards	✘
Limit on firearm number	✘
Ban on under-18 firearm use	✘
Prohibition of 3D printed firearms	✘
Unlicensed shooting permitted	✘

Key statistics

- As of June 2024, there were 17,495 firearm licenses and 73,752 registered firearms in the Northern Territory.¹⁴²
- There were 0.29 firearms per capita, or approximately one firearm for every four people.
- Licensees owned an average of at least four firearms per licence.
- There was one firearm for every four people in the NT.
- One in 15 people in the Northern Territory had a firearm licence.
- Registered firearms increased from 41,226 in 2005-06 to 73,752 in 2023-24. Data is not consistently available from year to year over this period.¹⁴³
- There has been a general increase in the number of firearms per licence, from 2.9 firearms per licence in 2006-07 to 4.2 firearms per licence in 2023-24.

Policies

Relevant Northern Territory legislation

- *Firearms Act 1997* (NT)¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Northern Territory Police (2024) *Annual Report 2023-24*, https://pfes.nt.gov.au/sites/default/files/uploads/files/2024/FINAL_NTPFES_ANNUAL_REPORT_18102024.pdf

¹⁴³ Northern Territory Police (2006), *2006 Annual Report*, <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/sites/default/files/uploads/files/2019/NTPFES%20Annual%20Report%202005-06.pdf>; Northern Territory Police (2024) *Annual Report 2023-24*

¹⁴⁴ *Firearms Act 1997* (NT), <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/FIREARMS-ACT-1997>

- *Firearms Regulations 1997* (NT)¹⁴⁵
- *Weapons Control Act 2001* (NT)¹⁴⁶

Data quality and transparency

The Northern Territory Police discloses firearm data in annual reports available on its website.¹⁴⁷ The data is provided in limited detail, with licence and firearm totals provided, but not broken down by postcode or presented in a time series.

Consultation processes

The Northern Territory has no formal consultation process and does not engage with community safety advocates.

Limit on firearm number

None.

Regulation of minors' use of firearms

The NT issues Junior Club Licences for young people aged 12–18.¹⁴⁸ These allow young people who are members of firearm clubs to use firearms for sport shooting. The licence allows for use of rifles or handguns. They can only use the firearm under the supervision of a licence holder or when receiving instruction on safe firearm use.

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

No regulation of digital blueprints for 3D printed firearms.

Unlicensed shooting

The Commissioner of Police can allow individuals to use firearms at shooting galleries.¹⁴⁹

Other

The maximum penalty for unlawfully possessing a firearm is significantly lower than other states: one to two years in prison, compared to 14 years in NSW and up to 20 years in the ACT.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ *Firearms Regulations 1997* (NT), <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/FIREARMS-REGULATIONS-1997>

¹⁴⁶ *Weapons Control Act 2001* (NT), <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/WEAPONS-CONTROL-ACT-2001>

¹⁴⁷ Northern Territory Police, Fire & Emergency Services (n.d.) *Corporate Publications*, <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/corporate/publications#FreedomofInformation>

¹⁴⁸ Northern Territory Police Force (n.d.) *Licence and Permit Applications and Information*, <https://pfes.nt.gov.au/police/firearmsweapons/licence-and-permit-information>

¹⁴⁹ *Firearms Act 1997* (NT), s4

¹⁵⁰ Levy (2024), "How do Australia's gun ownership laws differ between states and territories?", ABC, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-06-22/australia-gun-laws-by-state-qld-wa-sa-nsw-nt-act-tas-vic/104007836>

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Table 10: Australian Capital Territory scorecard

Australian Capital Territory	
Guns	69,868
Licences	30,617
Guns per capita	0.15
Increase/decrease in number of guns?	Unknown
Increase/decrease in guns per capita	Unknown
Data transparency	×
Consultation standards	×
Limit on firearm number	×
Ban on under-18 firearm use	×
Prohibition of 3D printed firearms	×
Unlicensed shooting permitted	×

Key statistics

Firearms data for the ACT is not available. The figures above are an estimate of how many firearms and licences would be in the ACT if the ownership rates were in line with the national average.

Policies

Relevant ACT legislation

- *Firearms Act 1996* (ACT)¹⁵¹
- *Prohibited Weapons Act 1996* (ACT)¹⁵²
- *Firearms Regulations 2008* (ACT)¹⁵³

Data quality and transparency

The ACT police does not make firearm ownership data available. Information was requested under the FOI Act 1982. In response, the Australian Federal Police stated that “no existing documents relating to your request have been located in the possession of the AFP” and that trying to find the data would “unreasonably divert the resources of the agency” as it is “either not available or not easily able to be obtained”.¹⁵⁴ The response also “acknowledges the limitations of the current registry” and states that the AFP is working on a new digital registry with “enhanced data and reporting capabilities”.

¹⁵¹ *Firearms Act 1996* (ACT), <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1996-74/>

¹⁵² *Prohibited Weapons Act 1996* (ACT), <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1996-75/default.asp>

¹⁵³ *Firearms Regulation 2008* (ACT), <https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/sl/2008-55/default.asp>

¹⁵⁴ Email correspondence with AFP, 30 September 2024

According to the Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA), firearm registry systems differ between the ACT and NSW, so that they cannot be cross-checked without “either verbally checking with the New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) or being alerted via intelligence from NSWPF”, which is resource-intensive and incurs delays.¹⁵⁵

Consultation processes

The ACT has a Firearms Consultation Committee, however, the committee does not consult with community safety advocates. Its two criteria for membership are being able to provide advice to the Minister and representing the firearm industry.¹⁵⁶

Firearm limits

None.

Regulation of minors' use of firearms

The ACT issues licences for minors aged 12–18, provided they complete a firearms training course, are a member of an approved shooting club, and their parents are licence holders.¹⁵⁷

Regulation of 3D printed firearms

None.

Unlicensed shooting

Unlicensed shooting is permitted at shooting ranges.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Attorney-General Department (n.d.), *National Firearms Register Public Consultation, Submission (Australian Federal Police Association)*, p 6, https://consultations.ag.gov.au/crime/national-firearms-register-consultation/consultation/view_respondent?uuld=313407989

¹⁵⁶ Personal correspondence (24 August 2024)

¹⁵⁷ ACT Policing (n.d.) *Types of licences*, <https://police.act.gov.au/community-safety/firearms/firearms-licences/types-of-licences>

¹⁵⁸ SSAA ACT Inc (n.d.) *SSAA ACT Conditions of Entry and Range Rules*, <https://www.ssaaact.org.au/range-rules/>; Majura Park Gun Club (n.d.) *Corporate Groups*, <https://majuraparkgunclub.com.au/booking/package/?date=2024-12-12&time=1000>

Conclusion

Australia's efforts at addressing gun control since the 1996 Port Arthur Massacre are a work in progress. While the reforms substantially improved public safety, the number of registered firearms is now 25% higher than it was nearly three decades ago and continuing to rise. The lack of comprehensive data on illicit firearms, including emerging threats like 3D-printed guns, exacerbates the challenge.

The discrepancies in firearm regulations across states and territories — coupled with Australia's porous interstate borders and ease of travel — further heighten the risk of dangerous incidents, as demonstrated by the tragic shooting in Wieambilla.

In addition, the public's limited access to detailed, up-to-date firearms data, particularly on the prevalence of firearms within their community, underscores the need for greater transparency. The long-awaited establishment of the National Firearms Register presents a critical opportunity to address this gap.

Currently NSW is leading the way on data transparency and WA's approach to limiting the number of firearms shows that reform is possible. The scorecards in this report show that there is room for improvement from each of our states and territories.

Despite strong public support for stricter gun control, there remains a significant disparity between this sentiment and the inconsistent enforcement of effective gun laws across the country. The firearm industry seems out of step with the expectations of the community as they often do not recognise the principle that firearm use is a privilege rather than a right.

To safeguard the Australian public and prevent future tragedies, a unified national approach to both regulation and data collection is essential. This is especially important in light of emerging technologies, such as 3D printing, which are reshaping the landscape of firearm production and distribution.