



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 24, 2023

Australia's Gun-buyback Program Is a Bust

Australia's attorney general (AG) tried to put the best face possible on the disastrous results of its [latest gun-buyback program](#) that began in February of 2022:

The first year of the National Permanent Firearms Amnesty was a successful event.... With just under 18,000 firearms and weapons surrendered in its first year, the permanent amnesty has provided an ongoing and robust framework for a reduction in the overall number of firearms ... and has promoted public safety.



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First, to put things in perspective, there are reportedly between 260,000 and 600,000 "illegal" (i.e., unregistered) firearms in Australia, and 18,000 of them were "surrendered" in the 12 months ending last July. That's either seven percent or three percent of the targeted firearms privately owned.

Second, half of them were useless, nonworking, or just simply relics inherited from a previous generation. Slightly more than one percent were given up by persons seeking amnesty for their possession.

The AG put lipstick on that pig:

The report released today found Australians who surrendered their firearms ... were primarily motivated to do so out of a sense of responsibility or because *they did not require them*. [Emphasis added.]

Third, private gun ownership in Australia has actually *increased* since Australia's experiment with gun control began. As [guns.com noted](#), more than 1.16 million firearms have been imported into the island nation since the first buyback in 1996, resulting in some 816,000 Aussies currently owning nearly three million registered firearms.

And that number only counts those "above ground." The black market (i.e., free market) in firearms continues to thrive. In a study released last June by Deakin University in Melbourne, criminology professor David Bright said that there is a "large pool" of illegal firearms that criminals can easily access. But police are able to "recover" only tiny fractions of them through buybacks in any given year.

Wrote Bright:

Our research found that the black market for illegal firearms is closed to the general population, but if you are well connected ... it is surprisingly easy to get your hands on a gun....



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Many [prison inmates who were interviewed] told us they could get a gun within a matter of hours after leaving jail — it was just that quick and easy for those who are well connected.

Australia's AG ignored these inconvenient facts, adding that the "permanent amnesty ... protect[s] the public from harm."

However, there is no proof that such gun buybacks have any statistically significant impact on gun violence, despite many efforts to find it. A study done for the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia concluded that the country's buyback program "did not have any large effects on reducing firearm homicide or suicide rates."

Although data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, going back to 1980, show a steady decline in both of those rates, a study of that data resulted in those authors also concluding that there is "little evidence to suggest that [the buyback program] had any significant effects on firearm homicides or suicides."

This conclusion was confirmed by another study done in the U.S. by the National Bureau of Economic Research out of Cambridge, Massachusetts:

Our estimates provide compelling evidence that GBPs [gun-buyback programs] have done little to reduce gun-related crime or mortality in the United States....

GBPs have no observable effect on gun-related crime.

Still another study, this one published in the *Annals of Surgery*, summed up the results from 19 different studies in both Australia and the United States, and concluded that "evidence suggests that there may be a small, improved impact on suicide prevention in older, white males, but *no effect* on interpersonal gun violence or homicides." (Emphasis added.)

But governments in Australia and the United States continue their quest to disarm their citizens. All they do, however, is prove that it's "show business" for politicians trying to claim they're doing something about gun violence.



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