



## House of Assembly

Extract from Hansard

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### Gun Amnesty

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (14:13): Can the Attorney-General please provide the house with a summary of the recent gun amnesty which ended yesterday?

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:13): I thank the honourable member for his question. Members might recall that on 1 August this year we announced a three-month gun-amnesty period. That amnesty period coincided with the introduction of new firearms legislation in South Australia, which will mean that people involved in firearms offences, particularly those involved in violent offences and involving firearms that are illegal or unregistered, will face very stiff penalties, almost invariably involving a term of imprisonment.

Those two things—that is, the offences and the amnesty—were announced simultaneously, and I am delighted to report that this year's amnesty was the most successful amnesty ever conducted in South Australia. In fact, as of 30 October, in excess of 2,783 firearms were surrendered to South Australia Police. Indeed, the count as of today put it almost at the 3,000 mark. This is more than 1,000 above the numbers recovered from any previous amnesty. This means that that number of nearly 3,000 firearms are now off our streets. It also means that those 3,000 firearms, which might have been laying around someone's home not properly secured and therefore available to be stolen and used by people in criminal activities, are no longer there to be stolen or used for those purposes.

This group included 146 handguns; it included 2,193 class A or B firearms—and, before you ask me, the answer is, air rifles, single or double-barrelled shotguns, revolving-chamber rifles and centre-fire rifles; and 93 class C or D firearms, which includes such things as self-loading shotguns, pump-action shotguns and self-loading rim-fire rifles. As mentioned, this total of nearly 3,000 firearms have been delivered to various police stations across the state. These firearms will now be destroyed by SAPOL.

The government thanks the owners of these unregistered firearms for doing the right thing and taking advantage of this three-month amnesty period. As I said before, this amnesty goes on top of recently introduced laws to combat firearm-related violence here in South Australia. Just to reiterate some of the consequences of those changes, we

now have penalties for possessing an unregistered or illegal firearm of up to \$50,000 or imprisonment for up to 10 years.

The laws also address community concern that police officers' lives have been endangered by people who are willing to fire guns at them. We now have a specific offence concerning shooting a firearm at a police officer. A person who harms a police officer with a firearm, whether intentionally or recklessly, is looking at a maximum penalty of up to 25 years' imprisonment.

Additionally, in cases where the harm is particularly serious, the court can exceed the maximum penalty, and there is no need to establish that the defendant actually intended to cause serious injury or harm to the police officer. If the shot does not hit a police officer, firing a shot at an officer, whether intentionally or recklessly, now attracts a maximum penalty of up to 10 years. I would like to acknowledge the great work of SAPOL in conducting this firearms amnesty for 2012 and their commitment to reducing crime here in South Australia.