



The Hon. Rick Mazza MLC
Member for the Agricultural Region
Parliament of Western Australia

Media Statement

March 25, 2019

Focus on criminals, not licensed firearms owners

Agricultural Region MLC Rick Mazza of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party WA has expressed disappointment in the Police Minister's statement that police are clamping down on licensed firearms owners in a 'tough approach' to gun ownership.

In March 24's *Sunday Times* article 'WA missing 1513 licenced guns either lost or stolen in past three years', Police Minister Michelle Roberts said police had undertaken several operations to track down, and seize, unlicensed and missing firearms and made sure licensed firearms owners correctly stored their guns.

Mr Mazza said this is fair enough, but it is disingenuous for the Police Minister to say "so much so that we have probably had more complaints from firearm owners than anything else because of the tough approach that WA police have been taking."

Mr Mazza said the vast majority of licensed firearms owners do the right thing.

"For the Minister to say police and the Government were taking a "tough approach" to gun ownership in WA is one thing, but what about getting tough on criminals?" Mr Mazza said.

"Licensed firearm owners are just as much victims of crime when they have their possessions stolen by thieves as anyone else. They should be viewed as such and not demonised as somehow being part of the problem."

A question on notice asked by Mr Mazza on November 20, 2018, and answered by the Police Minister on February 13, 2019 revealed the recovery rate of stolen firearms is very low.

The recovery rate between January 2016 and July 2018 was 239 out of 1317 firearms stolen during that period. Rifles 19%, 17% for shotguns, 7% for revolvers, 17% for pistols, 28% for antique firearms, 53% for rifle air or gas and 20% for other.

Mr Mazza said given the low recovery statistics across the board for all categories of stolen firearms, police should be spending their time targeting criminals, who don't just engage in the theft of firearms, but also in their smuggling and illegal manufacturing.

"Legislation relating to the theft of firearms should be introduced to provide for higher penalties in order to give a greater deterrent to thieves," Mr Mazza said.

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