

FACT SHEET: FIREARMS THEFT IN AUSTRALIA

- In 1996, as part of the National Firearms Agreement (NFA), the 'safe storage' of firearms became a mandatory requirement.
- All firearms and ammunition must be locked away when not in use.
- Firearms and ammunition must be stored separately.
- Between 1 July 1994 and 30 June 2000, a total of 25,171 firearms were reported stolen.
- This equated to an average of 4,195 firearms stolen per year across the six-year period. Annually, this represented less than 1% of the total number of registered firearms in Australia.
- After air rifles, handguns were the firearm least likely to be stolen, representing just 14% of all firearms stolen.
- Since 1996–97 the number of firearms stolen in Australia has declined dramatically.
- The percentage of firearms stolen from private residential premises has also undergone notable decline.
- In 2004, out of 2 653 140 firearms registered in Australia, 0.02% were reported stolen in a six month period.
- 'Category H' firearms (handguns) were the least likely to be stolen (9%, n = 62).
- The overall risk of theft is low, and equates to around 1300 firearms per year when all sources of theft are considered.
- These figures do not provide information about the registration status or source of firearms used in crime.
- There is no current information available regarding the extent to which stolen firearms are used in crime or contribute to the "black market" in firearms.

References:

- Mouzos, J. (2002). *Firearms theft in Australia. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, 230.
- Mouzos, J. (2006). *An overview of firearms theft in Australia. Conference presentation, International Firearms Safety Seminar, Christchurch, New Zealand, 21-23 Feb.*