

Firstly, it must be made clear that 'gun related' violence in the community is in fact almost entirely due to drug related issues, as well as the tendency of today's youth towards violence and disrespect.

Existing laws are more than adequate to deal with illegally obtained firearms whether imported or stolen, although there seems to be a reluctance by police to prosecute anybody except legal owners who commit minor and usually accidental infringements, while unlicensed criminals who shoot people with an unregistered firearm under a CCTV camera get off scott free. How is that possible? Penalising legal and responsible owners will not help. It is blatantly clear and demonstrated by history over and over again that as firearms regulations are tightened, firearms crime increases.

Storage requirements differ slightly from State to State although as most firearms safes are manufactured in the Eastern States and regulations there specify construction materials and methods, it matters little. Regulations in SA specify that a safe must be bolted to the building structure is less than 150kg, which simply means that a criminal would threaten the owner's life to have it opened - or worse, his wife or child's life and of course with no licence they would be unable to open it under any circumstances. All this violence and possibly death would be occurring before an alarm could be raised and even if it were possible, no police response would be forthcoming until way too late and no private security company would confront possibly armed offenders in or leaving a house. Many owners I know have monitored alarms and they have been useless.

While it is possible that a criminal could remove a firearm from a properly locked and secure safe, they are much more likely to steal a car, pick up a knife anywhere or as is the trend these days, to punch an innocent victim from behind. Organised criminals will still obtain firearms no matter what changes are made to laws. Far more effective would be to tackle the problem at the source - the drug trade, both supply and use.

Yours Faithfully,
Greg Kessell