

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

**Question No. 8**

**Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:**

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** I want to ask about gun crime. How many handguns have been seized by Customs in each of the last five financial years, starting with 2007-08? ...

**Mr Pezzullo:** Fully assembled, disassembled—

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** I do not care.

**Mr Pezzullo:** We will start with handguns fully assembled and then go from there. ...

**Ms Dorrington:** I have statistics for 2008-09 onwards. If I could just clarify the point about these statistics: these are undeclared detections of conventional firearms, parts and accessories, and magazines. So they are not necessarily the same as seizures because undeclared detections are detections of items that are prohibited or restricted but not declared. They are not necessarily seized because they might eventually be released after the importer meets some import requirement.

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** How many have you initially seized and how many have been handed back?

**Ms Dorrington:** Starting with whole firearms, in 2008-09 it was 72. In 2009-10 it was 121. In 2010-11 it was 97. In 2011-12 it was 76. In 2012-13, to date, it is 35.

**Mr Pezzullo:** Just to emphasise the point, if I may, we will have to come back to you if you want any more precision about handguns. These are whole firearms. Some of them might be shotguns, long-barrelled rifles and the like or they could be handguns. The second point is that it is not necessarily an illegal import at that point. As Ms Dorrington said, with undeclared detections where the paperwork has not been filled in and people have not made the appropriate declaration, after further investigation—

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** I understand that.

**Mr Pezzullo:** they might be released.

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** Do you have the figures for how many of those weapons that you just referred to were handed back?

**Mr Pezzullo:** As in released to the authorised person?

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** Yes, that is right—seized but then not retained by Customs.

**Ms Dorrington:** I do not have those figures before me, so we will have to provide that on notice.

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** Can you give me the figures for handguns specifically out of those totals and then for whole firearms and the other categories—disassembled or whatever. Give me each of the categories. Also give me how many in each of those categories were subsequently handed back to the importer. Also, please give me the figures for 2007-08. That would be useful.

**Mr Pezzullo:** We will take that on notice. ...

**Senator HUMPHRIES:** Just going back to the question on the seizure of handguns, of those figures that you are going to supply me, Ms Dorrington, could you tell me, please, how many illegal handguns seized by Customs contained no serial number or identification number? What proportion of illegal imports does that particular subset represent?

**Ms Dorrington:** Okay.

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

1. Do you have the figures for how many of those weapons that you just referred to were handed back?
2. Can you give me the figures for handguns specifically out of those totals and then for whole firearms and the other categories—disassembled or whatever. Give me each of the categories.

3. Also give me how many in each of those categories were subsequently handed back to the importer.
4. Also, please give me the figures for 2007-08. That would be useful.
5. How many illegal handguns seized by Customs contained no serial number or identification number? What proportion of illegal imports does that particular subset represent?

The following tables are provided in response to question one, two, three and four.

**Table 1: Undeclared detections of conventional firearms, their parts & accessories, & magazines, which are subsequently released to the importer.**

<i>Type / Year</i>	<i>2007-08*</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>2009-10</i>	<i>2010-11</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2012-13</i>
<i>Handguns</i>	6**	33	32	22	22	6
<i>Rifles</i>		15	36	23	25	3
<i>Shotguns</i>		4	4	14	4	2
<i>Other whole firearms</i>		1	0	0	0	0
<i>Parts &amp; Accessories</i>	33	132	327	204	278	95
<i>Magazines</i>	13	487	941	475	388	104
<b><i>TOTALS</i></b>	<b>52</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>210</b>

Figures quoted above for the 2012-13 FY are for the period up to and including 31 December 2012.

**Table 2: Undeclared detections of conventional firearms, their parts & accessories, & magazines.**

<i>Type / Year</i>	<i>2007-08*</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>2009-10</i>	<i>2010-11</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2012-13</i>
<i>Handguns</i>	48	42	64	35	33	22
<i>Rifles</i>	11	21	47	39	35	8
<i>Shotguns</i>	12	7	6	17	8	5
<i>Other whole firearms</i>	0	2	4	0	0	0
<i>Parts &amp; Accessories</i>	178	184	523	332	520	629
<i>Magazines</i>	155	766	1252	756	748	229
<b><i>TOTALS</i></b>	<b>404</b>	<b>1022</b>	<b>1896</b>	<b>1179</b>	<b>1344</b>	<b>893</b>

**Figures quoted above for the 2012-13 FY are for the period up to and including 31 December 2012.**

**Question 5:** We are not able to provide an accurate figure as the absence of a serial number is not currently reported on in our illicit firearms detections.

\* There was a significant change in statistical collection and reporting from the 2008/09 financial year onwards, with the introduction of a new national recording system – the Detained Goods Management System (DGMS). A straight data comparison between the 2007/08 and 2008/09 financial year figures would be statistically unsound as the data drawn upon is from different data sets.

\*\* Due to the way previous data was collected, we are only able to provide figures for released firearms as an aggregate. It was not until 2008-09 onwards that it was broken down in such a way.