

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Output 2.1

Question No. 40

Senator Brown asked the following question at the hearing on 23 May 2007:

- (a) How many handguns are available in Australia?
- (b) In which jurisdictions is it legal for someone under the age of 18 to have access to a handgun?

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

(a) Figures on the number of handguns registered in Australian jurisdictions are held by States and Territories. The following figures, provided by State and Territory Firearms Registries in June 2007, include handguns registered for private purposes, for example handguns held by sports shooters, primary producers, and security businesses, and for government purposes, for example handguns held by government departments and police.

Victoria – 36,229.

Queensland – 40,770.

Northern Territory – 4,697.

South Australia – 42,081.

Western Australia – approximately 24,236.

Tasmania – 7,877.

Australian Capital Territory – 5,387

New South Wales is yet to respond.

(b) It is a general requirement in all jurisdictions that an applicant for a firearms licence be over 18 years of age. However, all States and Territories allow minors, under certain conditions, to use a handgun for participation in handgun target shooting. In all jurisdictions, except Western Australia, the use of handguns by a minor for target shooting must be under the personal supervision of a handgun licence holder or an approved range officer.

Western Australia and Queensland, under certain conditions, also allow a minor who is an employee of a primary producer to use a handgun if assisting in the business of primary production. In Queensland this exemption extends to members of the immediate family of a primary producer and only applies when the minor is under the direction and control of the primary producer.