

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CRIME COMMISSION

Question No. 91

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

In relation to Sylvania Waters Post Office seizure:

1. What is the potential impact on gun crime, shootings and retaliatory shootings by the importation of 220 Glock pistols that as far as has been publically determined up to 218 remain in circulation in Australia after Customs failed to detect them?
2. How many guns does the ACC either know or believe were illegally imported into Australia have subsequently been used or are suspected of having been used in shootings in Sydney?

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

1. Any firearm within the illicit market is a serious threat.
2. Firearms enter the illicit market through a variety of methods, including from the existing pool of registered firearms, the 'grey market', theft and illegal importation.¹

In June 2012, Ministers agreed to the mandatory referral of information of all data on unregistered and registered stolen firearms to the ACC for tracing and analytical purposes. The ACC also assists law enforcement by maintaining a national tracing capability. Of the 3186 firearm traces the ACC has conducted since 2004, where the method of diversion could be identified, the grey market was established as the method of diversion in 44.6 per cent of traces, followed by theft, stolen or suspected staged theft, which accounted for 12.7 per cent, and illegal importation accounted for 0.5 per cent of the total. The method of diversion could not be identified in 33.5 per cent of traces due to insufficient information, including the frame or receiver serial number of the firearm being defaced, or the non-existence of records relating to firearms sales due to the manufacturer having left the industry.

It is not possible to estimate the number of firearms illegally imported into Australia that have subsequently been used in shooting incidents in Sydney.

¹ The grey market is part of the illicit market and comprises long-arms that were not registered in accordance with the 1996 Firearms Agreement.