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Latest Government Gun Figures Lack Credibility CrimTrac Data Require Explanation

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University of Sydney gun policy expert, [Associate Professor Philip Alpers](#) has questioned the accuracy of registered firearms data published by CrimTrac, the federal agency responsible for counting gun owners and their firearms.

In Table 2.23 at page 63 of its [2015-16 Annual Report](#), the following conclusions seem to lack credibility:

- An increase of 1.2 million registered firearms in Australia in the past three years
- A sudden decrease of 900,000 registered firearms from 2012-13 to 2013-14
- A sudden increase of 1.4 million registered firearms from 2013-14 to 2014-15

The 4.6 million 'Total number of firearms' registered in Australia in 2012-13 is also out of line with the 2.75 million figure quoted by the [Australian Crime Commission](#) for the same year, and the tally it gave to the same Senate hearing of a million fewer gun owners than gun licenses.

CrimTrac reports in Table 2.23 that only 711,215 firearms were added to firearm registries from 2014-15 to 2015-16. If true, this suggests that last financial year, both firearm registrations and [gun imports](#) reversed their [upward climb](#) and plunged suddenly by 50 per cent.

It could be misleading to quote CrimTrac without considering at least these variables:

A licensed gun owner can have several firearm licenses, each for a different category of weapon. CrimTrac's 'Total Number of Licences' cannot be assumed to indicate the number of individuals permitted to possess a firearm.

In at least one state, the official count of registered guns includes "[lost, missing and stolen firearms](#)." When [Prime Minister John Howard returned](#) from the Port Arthur funerals he [pressed the states](#) for a reliable, national registry of firearms. Twenty years later, despite the best efforts of CrimTrac and its predecessors, states and territories with inaccurate registries, incompatible systems, persistent inter-agency rivalries and obstructive management [continue to defeat that aim](#).

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