

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Water



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ILLEGAL FIREARMS TARGETED BY NEW DEDICATED POLICE UNIT

A new Illicit Firearms Unit (IFU) within Victoria Police has been set up to prevent firearms getting into the wrong hands and protect communities from serious and organised crime.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville today joined Acting Deputy Commissioner Robert Hill and Detective Inspector Michael Daly to launch the new unit, which includes a team of 22 experienced investigators focused on deterring and disrupting firearm related crime.

The unit will focus on investigating the manufacturing and trafficking of illicit firearms, and work to proactively stop this criminal activity in its tracks, including that linked to organised crime groups and gangs.

Additionally, Victoria Police will continue to focus on the risk that illegal firearms pose in the community in relation to homicides, shootings, drugs and family violence.

The team will work closely with enforcement agencies across Australia and monitor a range of investigations and incidents to help stop the manufacturing and trafficking of illegal firearms into the state.

In 2017, 10 dedicated detectives were allocated to the Firearms Investigation Teams within the Victoria Police's Armed Crime Squad, with a current annual investment of \$1.5 million. An additional 12 positions have been added to enable the establishment of this dedicated Illicit Firearms Unit, led by a Detective Inspector and Detective Senior Sergeant.

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission estimates that there are more than 260,000 firearms in the illicit firearms market across Australia.

In 2020, there were nine fatal shootings and 41 non-fatal shootings resulting in injury. Last year, police across Victoria also seized more than 770 firearms.

Since May 2018, Victoria Police has served 669 Firearms Prohibitions Orders that are currently active.

Victoria Police is continuing to recruit extra police following a record \$3 billion Andrews Labor Government investment that has already seen almost 1,900 of 3,135 new police deployed or committed to communities across the state. It is expected that by April 2021, more than 2,700 new police will have been deployed across Victoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"We're continually looking at ways we can deter and disrupt the manufacturing, trafficking and use of illegal firearms to keep Victorian communities safe."

"The new and highly trained unit will build on the work of previous specialist teams with invaluable intelligence that will enable us to put a stop to illicit firearms."