

FIREARM SAFETY & TRAINING COUNCIL - SAFETY TIP No.1

Treat every
firearm as
being
loaded

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New era begins for target shooting with launch of Australian Target Shooters Club

The Australian Target Shooters Club (ATSC), an initiative grown from lengthy planning and co-operation of the peak bodies of target shooting in NSW, officially launches on 24 August with a major TV and press advertising campaign.

Gary Bryant, General Manager of the ATSC, said, "This is a multi-discipline club that will provide training and competition for members in the various different disciplines of target shooting, from those in the Olympics and Commonwealth Games - Clay Target, Smallbore, Full Bore, Pistol, Air Rifle and Air Pistol - as well as Muzzle Loading and Field & Game."

"A recent comprehensive research study shows that many Australians have a strong, latent interest in target shooting and would like to try it," said Bryant. "The Australian Target Shooters Club now provides the opportunity to turn that interest into participation."

The ATSC offers a well-structured pathway for members to try all of the different disciplines of target shooting at an affordable membership fee in a responsible, safe and legal environment where they receive expert advice, training and target range experience before choosing the discipline most suitable for them.

This means an interested person can now decide which discipline they prefer, without first having to make a prior commitment to purchase the necessary firearm and mandatory storage facilities required.

The commitment of the peak bodies enabled the development of a reciprocal rights program for ATSC members to visit over 300 clubs throughout NSW to try target shooting

at a convenient location using a firearm supplied by the club under the supervision and tuition of experienced, qualified club members and officers from the Firearm Safety & Training Council. This will also provide opportunities for those individual clubs to attract increased participation and range fees at their clubs.

Competitions in all disciplines will be held on a regular basis and ATSC intends to be the stimulus that attracts more participants to enjoy the sporting challenge of target shooting and develop their skills. "We believe," said Bryant, "that this will lead to the inevitable emergence of more Australian men and women who will go on to represent their clubs and their country at all levels."



L-R: Dennis Martin, Dick Willis, Emma McLean at the ATSC film shoot, Sydney International Shooting Centre

Suzy Balogh and Russell Mark star in ATSC TV spots – “Now everyone can give it a shot”

Olympic Gold medallists Suzy Balogh (Athens 2004) and Russell Mark (Atlanta 1996) joined the Firecracker Films crew at Sydney International Shooting Centre to try some competition shooting of a different kind. The results will be seen in the new TV commercials that launch the Australian Target Shooters Club from August 24.

Australia's success in international target shooting competitions has created wide interest in the sport-loving Australian community (see story p2). This campaign will use the theme “Now everyone can give it a shot” to inform interested people how the ATSC can let them try different target shooting disciplines in a responsible, safe and affordable environment.

Assisting as extras on the shoot were Emma McLean (shotgun and pistol), Peter Vella, John Cunningham, Joshua Daly, Alex Comino and John Guberina (shotgun), Dick Willis and Dennis Martin (pistol), Tom Ryan and Warren Potent (smallbore).



Left Foreground: Suzy Balogh on camera; background: John Guberina, Peter Vella, John Cunningham, Alex Comino, Joshua Daly and Emma McLean. *Right* Camera crew with Russell Mark on location at Sydney International Shooting Centre.

ONE OF THE SAFEST SPORTS OF ALL

A surprise to many people outside the sport is that target shooting is one of the safest sports of all. The NSW Shooting Association, peak body for shooting in NSW, is a member of the NSW Sporting Injuries Insurance Scheme. The scheme was established in 1978 and there has never been a claim for any injury at any NSW target shooting range in the history of the scheme.

By contrast, over \$12 million dollars in claims have been made since the inception of the scheme. Since 1996 more than \$1.5 million in claims have been made each year for injuries sustained in other sports.

In *NSW Sports Shooting Injuries Report - Aug 2000*, the authors found that “competitive sports shooting is a remarkably safe sport compared to

sports generally and that competition sports shooting is significantly safer than the general use of firearms.” Only one minor injury was reported in this study and that was caused by a flagstaff hitting a competitor on the nose. It was not caused by a firearm.

Target shooting clubs in Australia are responsible, legitimate sporting clubs that provide training and competition in a variety of challenging disciplines that are enjoyed by men and women of all ages, and minors from age 12.

Like all other clubs, the Australian Target Shooters Club enforces a strict policy of safety first. All shoots are monitored and supervised by qualified and experienced Range Officers, and conducted under the regulations of the NSW Government.



Olympic and Commonwealth Games successes create new interest in sport of Target Shooting

Australia's successes in international target shooting competitions reflect that unique aspect of Australian achievement typified by our invariably high ratio of sporting success from a relatively small population compared with other countries.

The Atlanta Olympics saw Russell Mark and Michael Diamond win gold for Australia. At the Sydney Olympics Michael and Russell returned with gold and silver. At Athens in 2004 the Australian public discovered this was a sport for both men and women when Suzie Balogh won the Gold Medal in Trap Shooting and Michael Vella won Bronze.

In Manchester in 2002, the Australian target shooting team won 31 of the 207 total medals won by Australia, exceeded only by Swimming with 50 medals and ahead of Athletics with 28.

Our successes ranged across smallbore, pistol and clay target and training is now well under way for prospective members of the Australian Team for the 2006 Games in Melbourne next March, where the medal tally is realistically expected to exceed 50.

Establishment of the ATSC marks a new beginning for target shooting in Australia as it opens the opportunity for more participants to

enjoy the sporting challenge of target shooting and develop their skills. This will lead to the inevitable emergence of more Australian men and women who will go on to represent their clubs and their country at all levels.



Suzie Balogh, Russell Mark and Joshua Daly

Strong balance of business and shooting experience in members of new ATSC Board

Members of the board of the new club bring a wealth of business and target shooting experience, at both the shooting range and administration level, to the new organisation to ensure its success.

Board members are Charles Copeman AM, Company Director and Chairman Firearm Safety & Training Council; Lieut-General Laurie

O'Donnell AC, Chairman National Rifle Association, former Chief of Army; David Hollister, Company Director, Former Olympian, Smallbore Rifle Mexico and Moscow; Fred Rapley, Chairman Clay Target Association Southern Zone, Director NSW Shooting Association; John Fitzgerald, Chairman NSW Rifle Association, Councillor National Rifle Association; Suzie Balogh, Agricultural Protection Officer NSW, reigning Olympic Champion Womens Trap.

General Manager of the ATSC is Gary Bryant, former Army officer, General Manager Firearm Safety & Training Council and EO NSW Shooting Association.

Membership Fees

| Discipline | Firearm Type | Membership Category | NSW Licence Category | Membership Fee |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--|
| Clay Target | Shotgun | A | A | \$30* |
| Small Bore incl Air Rifle | Rifle - Rimfire | A | A | |
| Full Bore | Rifle - Centre Fire | B | B | |
| Pistol incl Air Pistol | Pistol | H | H | |
| Collector | Collectible | G | G | |
| Muzzle Loading | Shotgun | A | A | |
| Muzzle Loading | Rifle | B | B | |
| Muzzle Loading | Pistol | H | H | |
| Field & Game** | Shotgun | A | A | \$30* + \$10 additional insurance levy |
| Recreational Hunting/ Vermin Control# | Rifle - Rimfire Shotgun | A | A | |
| Recreational Hunting/ Vermin Control# | Rifle - Centre Fire | B | B | |

* All members of the ATSC carry public liability and member insurance as required under the NSW Firearms Act and Regulations

** Simulated mechanical/inanimate targets

Recreational Hunting/Vermin Control is the category name in Regulations that covers the "Genuine Reason" to have a shooters licence for people who require a firearm for vermin control. This includes National Parks and Wildlife Officers, Pest Control Officers and farmers. ATSC membership helps ensure attainment of the "marksmanship" skills to ensure a safe and humane environment.

Benefits of membership in the ATSC

Members of the ATSC are able to "try before they buy" and use firearms provided by the club to help the member decide which target shooting discipline they want to take up. Each discipline requires different skills and techniques and it takes more than one session to be confident about which is most suitable.

One of the main reasons the ATSC has been established is that the firearms required for target shooting can cost from several hundred to several thousand dollars depending on the discipline and type of firearm selected. In addition, the licence holder is legally required to store his or her firearms in a secure container, which cost from \$200-\$300 to around \$1000.

Membership of the ATSC means that the license holder can try the sport before making the financial commitment to the equipment that is needed.

Members enjoy reciprocal rights at over 300 participating shooting clubs throughout NSW. Wherever they live, there's a good chance for a club with their chosen discipline to be within reach.

Training and sound advice is provided by skilled, experienced target shooters including Firearm Safety and Training Officers. Members will also find that champions are happy to share their experience too.

Membership of the ATSC includes public liability and member insurance as required under the NSW Firearms Act and Regulations.

