

**DUNBLANE PRIMARY SCHOOL — SHOOTINGS — ANNIVERSARY**

*Statement*

**HON LORNA HARPER (East Metropolitan)** [6.38 pm]: I am sure that today many honourable members received the same correspondence that I did from the Western Australian Firearms Community Alliance. When I opened the email and read its contents, it brought me back to something that happened 28 years ago today. At about 8.15 am on 13 March 1996, a licensed gun owner aged 43 years was seen scraping ice off his van outside his home at Kent Road in Stirling, Scotland. He left soon afterwards and drove about five miles north to Dunblane. The licensed gun owner arrived on the grounds of Dunblane Primary School at around 9.30 am and parked his van near a telegraph pole in the school car park. He cut the telephone cables at the bottom of the telegraph pole, which served nearby houses, before making his way across the car park towards the school buildings. The licensed gun owner headed towards the north-west side of the school to a door near the toilets and the school gymnasium. After entering, he made his way to the gymnasium, armed with four legally held handguns—two nine-millimetre Browning HP pistols and two Smith & Wesson M19 .357 Magnum revolvers. The licensed gun owner was also carrying 743 ammunition cartridges.

In the gym was a class of 28 primary 1 pupils, preparing for a PE class in the presence of three adult members of staff. Before entering the gymnasium, it is believed that the licensed gun owner fired two shots into the stage of the assembly hall and toward the girls' toilets. The licensed gun owner entered the gym and started shooting rapidly and randomly. He shot PE teacher Eileen Harrild, who was injured in her arms and chest as she attempted to protect herself. She then stumbled into the open-plan store cupboard at the side of the gym, along with several injured children. Gwen Mayor, the teacher of the primary 1 class, was shot and killed instantly. The other adult present, Mary Blake, a supervisory assistant, was shot in the head and both legs but managed to make her way to the store cupboard with several of the children in front of her.

From entering the gymnasium and walking a few steps, the licensed gun owner had fired 29 shots with one of the pistols, killed one child and injured several others. Four injured children had taken shelter in the store cupboard along with the injured Harrild and Blake. The licensed gun owner then moved up the east side of the gym, firing six shots as he walked. He then fired eight shots towards the opposite end of the gym. He walked towards the centre of the gym, firing 16 shots at point-blank range at a group of children who had been incapacitated by fear from his earlier shots.

An older primary 7 pupil who was walking along the outside of the gym at the time heard loud bangs and screams and looked inside. The licensed gun owner shot in his direction and the pupil was injured by flying glass before running away. From his position in the middle of the gym, the licensed gun owner fired 24 shots in various directions. He fired shots towards a window next to the fire exit at the south-east end of the gym, possibly at somebody who was walking across the playground, and then fired four more shots in the same direction after opening the fire exit door. The licensed gun owner exited the gym briefly through the fire exit, firing another four shots towards the cloakroom of the library, striking and injuring Grace Tweddle, another member of staff at the school.

In the mobile classroom closest to the fire exit where the licensed gun owner was standing, Catherine Gordon saw him firing shots and instructed her primary 7 class to get down onto the floor before the licensed gun owner fired nine bullets into the classroom, striking books and equipment. One bullet passed through a chair where a child had been sitting only seconds before. The licensed gun owner then re-entered the gym, dropped the pistol he was using and took out one of his two revolvers. He put the barrel of the gun in his mouth, pointed it upwards, pulled the trigger and killed himself. A total of 32 people sustained gunshot wounds inflicted by the licensed gun owner over a three-to-four-minute period, 16 of whom were fatally wounded, including Gwen Mayor and 15 of her pupils. One other child died en route to hospital.

Who were the victims? Gwen was a 45-year-old Scottish primary school teacher. She was a mother of two daughters and a wife. She lived happily in the very small sleepy town of Dunblane. She taught primary 1 at Dunblane Primary School in 1996 and had 28 pupils in her class. Some of the children who died were Abigail McLellan, aged five; Victoria Clydesdale, aged five; Sophie North, aged five; Ross Irvine, aged five; Mhairi MacBeath, aged five; Melissa Currie, aged five; Megan Turner, aged five; Kevin Hassell, aged five; John Petrie, aged five; Joanna Ross, aged five; Hannah Scott, aged five; Emma Crozier, aged five; Emily Morten, aged five; David Kerr, aged five; Charlotte Dunn, aged five; and Brett McKinnon, aged six.

If we look back, 28 years later, we know that those 16 children would be in their 30s by now. They could have had their own families. Some of them could have been members of Parliament. In fact, we have members of Parliament here who are younger than the children who were killed would have been. They were all killed by a licensed gun owner who held those guns legally. Every time I am in this place on or near this date, I will stand and make sure that we never forget the names of the children who died. I will never utter the name of the licensed gun holder; however, every time I get an email talking about gun ownership, that will be my response. If saying the words “Megan Turner, aged five” does not shock you to the core and put the hairs up on the back of your neck when we

are talking about the licensed gun holder, I do not know what will. We need to make sure that we do better and better protect people. That happened in Scotland and it was followed six weeks later by a gun atrocity here in Australia. What happened in Scotland and what happened here was shocking and abhorrent. We should never forget the victims of gun violence.