

FIREARMS ACT 1973 — HANDGUN IMPORTATION

7. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to a Smith and Wesson handgun posted in accordance with the Firearms Act 1973 to a licensed Western Australian dealer by a licensed Victorian importer. The handgun was reported to WA Police, commonwealth police and Australia Post as missing when it was not delivered to the dealer in August 2015.

- (1) Can the minister please explain —
 - (a) on what grounds the firearm was seized from Australia Post by WA Police;
 - (b) why neither the importer nor the dealer was informed that it had been seized when it was seized;
 - (c) why the dealer was not informed that it had been seized when he reported it missing; and
 - (d) why it took five months for WA Police to inform the dealer that it had been seized?
- (2) Can the minister advise how the dealer is being compensated for loss of earnings and the impact on his reputation as a reputable supplier?
- (3) On 26 January 2016, WA Police advised the dealer by email that the firearm would be returned to the importer. As of yesterday, 15 February, the importer had not received it. Will the minister advise the current location of the firearm?

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:

On behalf of the Minister for Police, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)
 - (a) The firearm was seized during an operation to identify illicit items arriving in the state through the mail system and it was mistakenly believed to have been illegally sent through the mail.
 - (b) Inquiries on this firearm were not completed in a timely manner or appropriately by the inquiry officer and a supervisor identified the oversight and made the necessary inquiries into the firearm.
 - (c) The firearm was seized during an operation with other illicit commodities and all were listed on a single report. Although the commodities were not related to the firearm or the parties involved in the firearm's movement, the person taking the report for the firearm mistakenly believed it was connected to other offences. This mistaken belief resulted in the non-release of information pertaining to the operation for security reasons.
 - (d) See the answer at (b).
- (2) Should compensation be sought for loss of earnings, the loss would need to be quantified and then communicated to WA Police for its consideration. The purchaser of the firearm has been asked to quantify any costs that he has incurred so this can be properly assessed.
- (3) The firearm is being processed for release and return to the original dealer. WA Police will ensure that the firearm is shipped in a secure manner this week.