NEWS iview listen

Gun law debate raises questions about why some own scores of firearms

By Sophia McCaughan   ABC Mid North Coast   Gun Control

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Questions are being asked about why some people own so many guns. *(AAP: Dean Lewins)*

In short:

NSW gun laws are set to be reviewed in the wake of the Bondi terror attack.

Data from NSW Police shows more than 50 people across the state currently own 100 or more registered firearms.
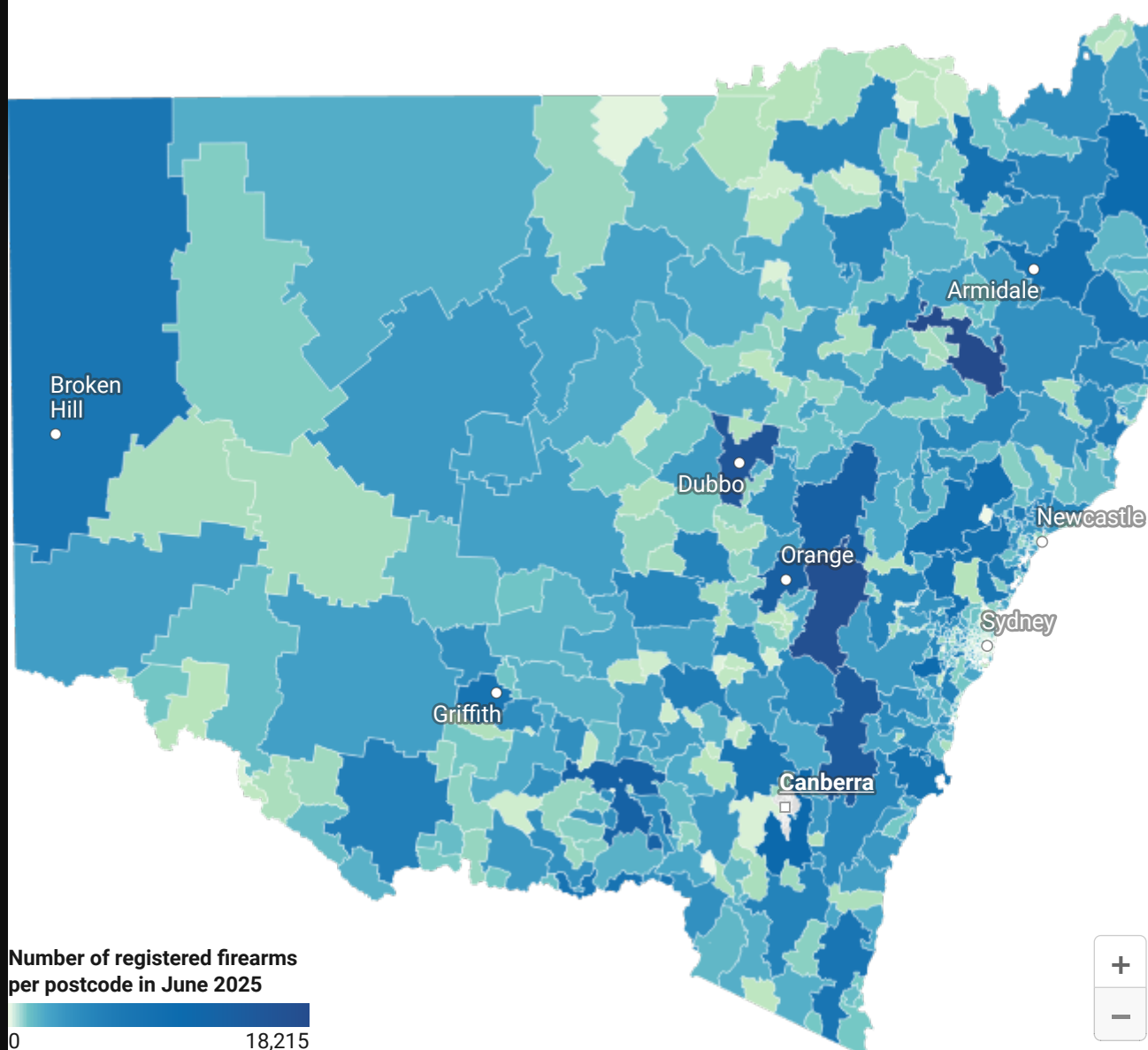
What's next?

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has announced a gun buyback scheme.

Renewed debate about gun laws in the wake of the Bondi Beach terror attack has left many people wondering why anyone would need to own scores of firearms.

NSW Police data shows that as of June this year, there were more than 50 people in the state with more than 100 registered guns.

The dataset, which excludes firearms owned by dealers and collectors, showed one person owned 298 registered firearms.

Registered firearms per postcode in NSW

Number of registered firearms per postcode in June 2025

0   18,215

Shows total farms registered per postcode and tooltip includes highest total firearms registered to an individual licence holder in June 2025 (excluding dealers and collectors).

Map: ABC News • Source: NSW Firearms Registry • Map data: Australian Bureau of Statistics

NSW Premier Chris Minns says legislation to restrict gun ownership will be introduced to state parliament on Monday.

On Friday, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced the government will fund the biggest national gun buyback scheme since 1996.

Hastings Valley Hunting Club committee member Brad Harrison said there was no need for someone to have that many firearms.

"You don't need 100 guns to do any sort of hunting or feral pest control," Mr Harrison said.

Brad Harrison and John Garvey are members of the Hastings Valley Hunting Club on the NSW mid north coast.
(ABC Mid North Coast: Sophia McCaughan)

That opinion was shared by Invasive Species Council CEO Jack Gough.

"Clearly, having hundreds [of guns] is not something that is needed for feral animal control," he said.

"Even having [more than] five, then we are really talking about other reasons that people have those firearms."

Jack Gough has raised questions about a blanket cap on guns. *(Supplied: Invasive Species Council)*

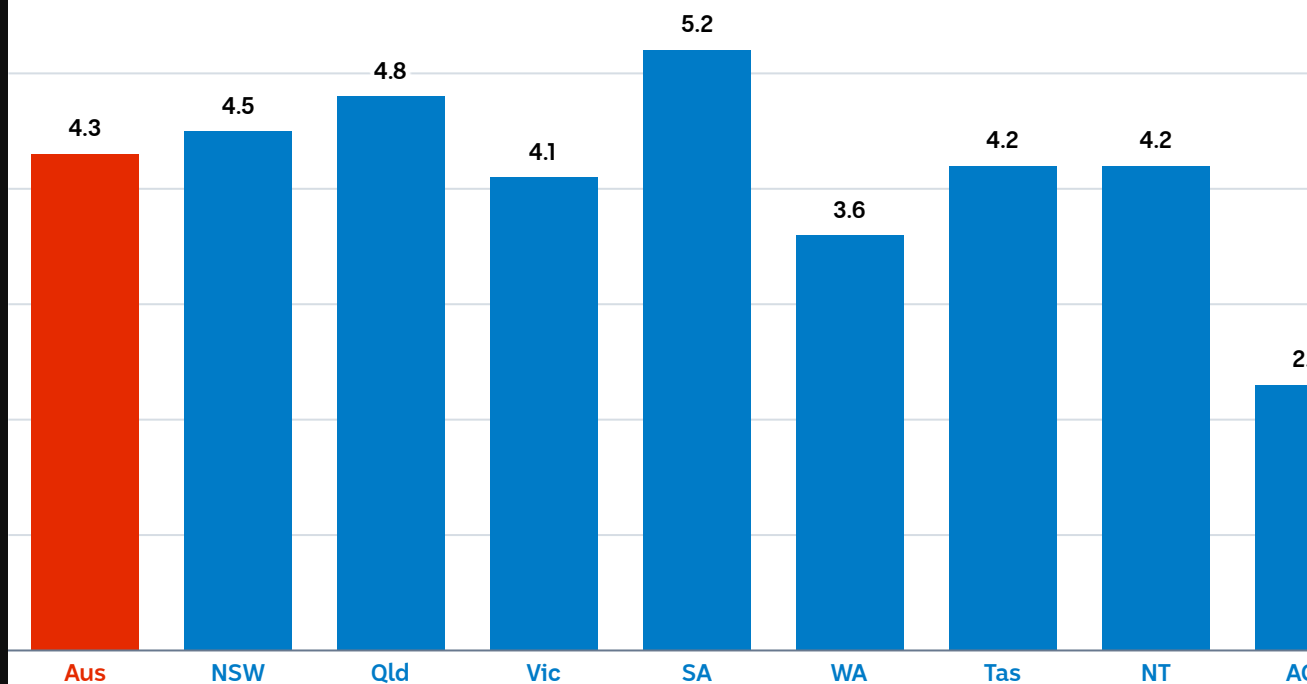Mr Gough has also questioned the need for recreational hunters to own multiple firearms.

"There really is no reason that hunters need to be having even five firearms," he said.

"That will make no difference to feral animal control if there are tighter restrictions on hunting.

"[But] we don't want there to be a blanket change, which then impacts on landholders unnecessarily or those professional operators in a way that really undermines feral animal control."

Australian gun owners have four firearms each, on average

Number of firearms owned per licence in 2024

Source: The Australia Institute / Get the data

The convenor of the Australian Gun Safety Alliance, Stephen Bendle, said there was no reason that someone should be able to own hundreds of guns.

"In fact, no-one has told me why they need more than one firearm, even if they have a legal firearm licence," Mr Bendle said.

Stephen Bendle says the government needs to act on community concern. *(Supplied: Australian Gun Safety Alliance)*

> ## "The community should be deciding what's reasonable, what's safe, and how many firearms somebody should have."

But Mr Harrison said a blanket cap on firearms for an individual could be problematic.

"If you are a collector, it is going to be problematic; if you are a person who does a lot of various shooting, they're going to sit there and go, OK, well that's a problem for me," he said.

"I don't believe capping firearms is going to solve the problem [the government] is talking about the moment."

According to NSW Police, a firearm collector licence allows for the possession of firearms only, not their use.

Guns are being stolen and sold on the black market. *(ABC News: Berge Breiland)*

Hastings Valley Hunting Club member John Garvey said many people who had a collection had a valid firearm licence so that they could use the firearm to shoot as well.

"If you want to shoot your firearm, say, once a year, you need to have a firearm licence," he explained.

"You need a genuine reason to be a gun collector, and you need a genuine reason to own a firearm and have a licence."

Member for Orange Philip Donato says restricting the number of guns will not improve public safety. *(ABC News: Tim Swanston)*

Independent Member for Orange, Philip Donato (formerly Shooters, Fishers and Farmers) said restricting the amount of firearms a license holder could legally own would do nothing to address public safety.

"It's not the firearm that kills people, it's the person behind it, operating it, and [firearm restrictions] doesn't do anything to address that," he said.

> "Restricting the number of firearms that people can own or have access to is like telling a golfer you can only play golf with two golf clubs, or a fisherman you can only go fishing with one fishing rod."

How many firearms are registered to your postcode?

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	Postcode	▼ Total firearms	Highest for an individual
1	2340	18,215	137
2	2795	17,026	107
3	2830	15,591	191
4	2580	14,471	298
5	2800	13,224	99

Shows total farms registered per postcode and highest total firearms registered to an individual licence holder in June 2025 (excluding dealers and collectors).

ABC News / Source: NSW Firearms Registry */* Get the data

Ed Saunders is a farmer based in Armidale, in the state's northern tablelands, and said it's quite common for farmers to have four to five guns when it comes to pest control.

"There are multiple tools [firearms] we need to do the job that we're doing," he said.

"The same rifle that you use to shoot a rabbit isn't really appropriate to shoot at a boar or to shoot at a fox, or to shoot at a wild dog, or to shoot at a cat."

There are discussions for firearms to be capped at five per individual. *(ABC News: Sam Clark)*

"There are a number of different species that we're targeting when we are doing pest control on our properties."

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