



**The Lead Education and Abatement Design Group Incorporated**  
Working to eliminate lead poisoning globally and to protect the  
environment from lead in all its uses: past, current and new uses  
ABN 25 819 463 114

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## **Leaded petrol, lead poisoning and violent crime**

The LEAD Group has last night published [LEAD Action News vol 13 no 2](#) - showing the strong links between the use of leaded petrol, the lead poisoning of billions of people last century, and violent crime. Yet millions are still being lead poisoned by lead petrol still today!

So what's an Australian environmental health charity's interest in whether leaded petrol is phased out globally in 2013 or not?

LEAD Group President Elizabeth O'Brien says "ever since discovering my children were lead poisoned in 1991 and founding The Lead Education and Abatement Design (LEAD) Group, I've had a vision that leaded petrol, the cause of perhaps 90% of global lead exposure at that time, would be the first toxic chemical to be banned worldwide.

"As at June 2011, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, we've achieved lead petrol phase-outs in over 200 countries and there are only 6 or 7 countries to go. Yet it is still possible, if action were taken today, to achieve global phase-out in FY 2013."

Dr Ann Wroe of the *Economist* listed the countries as: "Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Myanmar, North Korea, Sierra Leone, Yemen. None is a happy place. All are afflicted by violence, and three by long-running wars."

The LEAD Group's latest newsletter reports that: "Gasoline lead may explain as much as 90 percent of the rise and fall of violent crime over the past half century" and that Australian lead may still be contributing to that "crime" of adding lead to petrol.

As a citizen of Australia, the world's biggest lead exporter, O'Brien asks "could Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard personally undertake to ensure that Australian lead is not being made into leaded petrol anymore? Will Minister for Justice Jason Clare organise blood lead and bone lead research in violent criminals?"

The LEAD Group calls for research into whether the lead exposure of shooters (mainly from the use of lead primers which explode to force the bullet out of the gun barrel) also contributes to violent criminal behaviour, such as shooting crimes. Practically everyone on the planet who is old enough to fire a gun has been lead exposed as a child of the leaded petrol era, so they're already at increased risk of violent behaviour. Let's protect them from further increased risks.

"After we finalise the end of leaded petrol globally, and while we continue to assist other countries to ban the addition of lead to all paints and inks, it has become clear that the next thing we should call on the world to do is eliminate lead primers in ammunition."

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