

SSANZ News July & August 2015

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Review of Firearm Safety in the Outdoors

Following two fatal shooting accidents in mid May the Associate Conservation Minister Peter Dunne has called for a review of firearm safety and illegal use (such as poaching) in the outdoors to be conducted by the Game Animal Council. We note that the Game Animal Council is comprised of experienced deer and pig hunters, so we hope that they will also consult with the Fish and Game Council who represent bird hunters and also Mountain Safety Council who are responsible for firearms safety training. While some may question the need for this review it may have the effect of diverting the attention of the anti gun brigade who invariably call for stricter gun controls each time an incident occurs.



As you will see from the table below the trend of accidental shootings has been steadily downwards for the past 14 years, this weekend was just a glitch as was the high road toll the same weekend. We hope that Mr Dunne and all politicians will be persuaded that you cannot legislate for people who are foolish enough to ignore the 7 basic rules of firearm safety. If you don't know what these are then find out before you pick up a gun again. And if you happen to be supervising a young unlicensed person then you must be close enough to take control of the firearm and not be carrying one yourself. Finally shooting on any property without the owners' permission is illegal and endangers the safety of others.

Unintentional firearm casualties

Year	total casualties	deaths	injuries	Mean population	Casualty rate per 100,000 population	fatality rate per 100,000 population
2000	17	4	13	3860100	0.44	0.10
2001	14	4	10	3887000	0.36	0.10
2002	4	0	4	3951200	0.10	0.00
2003	18	6	12	4027700	0.45	0.15
2004	6	1	5	4088700	0.15	0.02
2005	9	1	8	4136000	0.22	0.02
2006	11	1	10	4186900	0.26	0.02
2007	8	1	7	4230700	0.18	0.02
2008	10	3	7	4271100	0.23	0.07
2009	11	4	7	4310000	0.26	0.09
2010	12	1	11	4367800	0.27	0.02
2011	11	4	7	4405200	0.25	0.09
2012	9	3	6	4433000	0.20	0.07
2013	5	1	4	4470800	0.11	0.02
2014	5	1	4	4510000	0.11	0.02

Sources: NZMSC
and NZ Police
data 2000 - 2014

Here follows 5 examples of how firearm owners in NZ are being shafted by government agencies and other corporate bodies. Do you care about this?

Taranaki Loses its Last Remaining Full Bore Range

Fonterra has closed the Hawera Full Bore Rifle Range that had been in existence for over a 100 years. When the Defence Dept. range in Hawera was sold to a farmer some 25 years ago the land owner allowed shooting to continue, as did Fonterra when they bought the farm to expand their operation in the neighbourhood. However, Fonterra has since allowed other users access to the property and walkers and other users now make shooting on the range unsafe and it has been closed..

How many more ranges must be closed, before target shooting becomes a thing of the past? It is not only Politicians and legislation that threatens the sport of shooting but all kinds of institutions bent on projecting a “clean green” image.

Which leads us to the next story.

Environment Southland Seeking Data on Southland Gun Clubs

Senior Pollution Prevention Officer, Environment Southland is seeking to compile a list of all Southland shooting clubs and ranges (shotgun, pistol and rifle) with their locations and is asking each club what type of shot they use. This is to establish a database of all hazardous sites and to assess what impact they have on the environment. This approach is a direct result of the alleged lead poisoning of cattle grazing on a Southland gun club property last year.

After a detailed consultation process a **Food Safety & Animal Welfare Code of Practice** document has been initiated to assist those involved in the management and operation of clay target ranges in New Zealand. An awareness of the possibility of lead contamination within the food chain is apparent and the guidelines offered have been compiled to protect those operating such sites. This **Code of Practice** is available on the NZCTA website.

However, many Southland shooters are sceptical of this data gathering exercise, especially now that it has been revealed that hundreds of Southland cows have died over the past year through eating modified Swedes.

Whangarei District Council Plan Change on Noise

A total of 42 submissions were made by shooters opposing the new noise levels and hours of operation for shooting ranges, these were supported by a further 9 submitters at the second round.

In a report issued prior to taking oral submissions the council has rejected calls for a higher noise limit than the one already specified of 50 dBL_{AFmax} but made a small concession of one hour in the operating time of 0900 to 1800. No concession has been made for small bore and air gun ranges operating indoors.

SSANZ successfully challenged the latest council recommendations at the Oral Hearing on the 15 June, winning an extension of operating hours to 2200 for ranges that meet a reduced noise limit of 40dBL_{AFmax} which caters for airgun, smallbore and indoor ranges. It should be noted that these new rules only apply to new ranges.

DOC Angers Ruahine Recreational Hunters

We have been advised that DOC has increased the operating hours for Wild Animal Recovery Operators (WARO) in the Ruahine Ranges, without consulting recreational hunters. This will mean more helicopter deer hunting which is detrimental to the enjoyment of recreational hunters.

Why is NZ Police under Resourced?

SSANZ would like to know why currently NZ Police are so under resourced in the firearms department, that local Arms Officer do not have time to forward requests for permits to import firearms, and applications for new firearms licences are taking longer than six weeks to process at Police National HQ..