

SSANZ Newsletter February 2015

In early December at a meeting of the Police Firearms Advisory Forum, members were told that Police intended to apply charges for 'Permits to Procure' and 'Permits to import firearms'. In mid January it was brought to our attention that a new Bill, (Policing Cost Recovery Bill), had already had its first reading in Parliament and was now before the Law and Order Select Committee with submissions closing on the 5 February.



Was it too much of a coincidence that these two pieces of information were related? The firearms community went in to overdrive encouraging its members to prepare submissions opposing this new Bill.

When they heard about our efforts Police advised Forum members that the new Bill does not apply to the Arms Act since there is **already legislative provision under section 74 (f) of the Arms Act for regulations to be made for the fixing of fees payable in respect of any license, application, or other matter under that Act.**

It was nice to have this cleared up – but while it may not be the intention of this new bill to directly impact on firearm ownership, it is still our right as tax payers to object to the new Bill. Policing is a fundamental function of the State and it is important that any services they provide are freely accessible to all citizens.

The positive thing was to see that the Firearms community immediately rallied at the threat and many people took an interest in this new bill.

Whangarei District Council threat on shooting ranges nationwide.

We have been banging on for some time now that the threat to our sport is not just from legislation passed by Parliament, but from a whole raft of rules and restrictions put in place by local government and other agencies such as Police, Customs and airlines to mention a few.

In mid December Whangarei District Council announced Plan Change 110 to their District Plan, which introduces new rules for noise and vibration. These new rules limit the noise at the boundary to any shooting range to 50 dB and also limit the time when the range may be open from 0900 to 1700, thus precluding evening shooting. They make no allowance for the location of the range nor the type or caliber of firearm to be used.

At the same time the WDC exempts all other forms of outdoor sport from these rules. In addition the Military are given an allowance of 90 dB and 0700 to 1900 time frame for shooting with two night time shoots per month, even though there are no Military ranges in the district, work that out.

SSANZ has robustly objected to this plan change and asked all our members to do so as well. The submission period closed on 3 February.

The point to consider is that if WDC can get away with this direct attack on the sport of shooting then other councils could follow their lead.

However, there is some good news from overseas when it comes to fighting 'back door legislation':

The Norwegian parliament voted on the 3 February and resolved by 79 votes to 16 to reintroduce lead shot for live quarry hunting outside wetlands. The decision follows a lengthy campaign by the Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers – the *Jegernes Interesseorganisasjon* (JI).

Alan Jarrett (chairman of a sister organization in the UK, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation) has welcomed the move by the Norwegian parliamentary committee responsible, saying: “BASC firmly believes that all legislative decisions on ammunition should be based on sound science and this underpins our policy on lead ammunition of “no sound evidence, no change.”

In spite of their optimism over the latest vote, the JI remains conscious that the lead shot issue is still a live one. It said: “The case is probably not over, even though parliament now chooses to lift the ban. The pressures from those who want to ban all lead based ammunition are most likely maintained and they will probably try to find new ways to succeed. They already have their focus towards a ban for lead based rifle bullets. We as dedicated hunters, shooters and professionals must keep up the commitment that our victory is to be a permanent one.”

Another legal threat to the continued use of lead ammunition has been derailed in the USA by the dismissal of a court case.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld the dismissal of the latest lawsuit brought by anti-[hunting](#) groups who have been petitioning the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to issue regulations banning traditional ammunition with lead components. This is a victory for more than simply hunters. The suit sought to ban all outdoor lead ammunition use. That would have affected hunters, plinkers and [target](#) shooters. ‘Traditional’ lead ammunition represents 95 percent of the U.S. market and is the staple [ammunition](#) for target shooters, hunters and law enforcement with more than 14 billion rounds sold annually.

Non Intentional Shooting Incidents

While shooters must never get complacent about firearms safety it is encouraging to see from the latest figures released by Mountain Safety Council that incidents of non intentional shootings for the past year are down on previous years. Only 5 incidents have been reported with just one fatality. Two involved center fire rifles while deer hunting, two involved shotguns while duck shooting and the last was a .22 used to put down calves on a farm. Sadly the fatality was a case of a deer hunter failing to correctly identify the target, and the second hunting incident, while not fatal, resulted in serious injury and was due to the hunter’s failure to consider the firing zone having separated from his hunting companion. Neither of the shotgun incidents appear to have resulted in serious injury to the victim and both occurred on opening day of duck season, although the exact cause is not known. The farm incident resulted in a self inflicted injury to the leg of the shooter as a result of handling both animals and a poorly maintained firearm at the same time.

Apology and Retraction:

In the last two NZG & H issues, SSANZ commented on the presumed lead poisoning of a herd cows in Southland. (These cows had been grazed on a gun club paddock). There was confusion over other cattle health issues from other cattle fodder crops. Another error was around the use of the term Genetically Modified, when we should have said Genetic Selection. This led to unintentional inaccuracies in the comments, and in particular SSANZ wished to apologize unreservedly to the farming community for implying that genetically modified crops may have been involved.

It is pleasing to note that SSANZ appears to be the only one finger-pointing and trying to transfer blame. The Ministry for Primary Industry, Environment Southland, Federated Farmers and Fonterra all appear to have got on with sensible quarantine and testing procedures, and are reviewing land use near gun clubs to ensure it does not happen again. We stand corrected.

Signed – The SSANZ Committee.