

SSANZ News July & August 2016

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Your Firearms are in their sights

Of the 97 submissions made to the Select Committee Inquiry into Illegal Firearm Possession 19 proposed tougher restrictions for YOU firearm owners, including registration of ALL guns, re-classification or banning of semi autos and banning online sales.

The NZ Police are also reviewing all aspects of the Arms Act and its administration, you can bet your bottom dollar that there will be more restrictions and costs imposed on you as a result of this.

In order to effectively fight these threats we need more members - sign up a mate.

SSANZ and the Enquiry in to the Criminal Possession of Firearms- We have made a submission responding to these basic questions, in brief we said:

•**How widespread firearm possession is among criminals, including gangs.**

It would appear that not even the Police have accurate data on the types of firearm seized from criminal activity and stolen. We believe the recent figures quoted for seized firearms are over inflated due to changes in the way this data is collected. Data released by Police on 20 May show that overall firearm offending is trending downwards, but firearms stolen in burglaries are on the increase (776 stolen in 2014/15).

•**How criminals, gangs, and those who do not have a licence come into possession of firearms.**

These fall into two groups; black - those held by criminals and grey -those held without a licence but without criminal intent. Black guns obtained by theft, illegal imports, and legal purchase and on selling by sympathisers, deception and manufacture. Pointing out that Licensed firearm owners are not the cause of this problem, but rather too often the victims. Grey guns are those held as family heirlooms, people who have failed to renew their licence, found in sheds, guns held by licence holders without the correct endorsement, etc.

•**What changes, if any, to the current situation might further restrict the flow of firearms to criminals, gangs, and those who do not have a licence?**

We recommend stronger penalties for theft of a firearm and using a firearm in the execution of a criminal act. More resources for Police to properly administer firearms and solve firearm theft, as well as more resources for Customs to combat smuggled firearms. Since most criminal activity involving firearms is drug related, this should be the focus of further review.

We recommended that existing firearms legislation **should not be changed** as this will only affect law abiding licence holders and will not impact on criminal activity.

Support from the Gun Trade -We would like to thank Dave Mingins of Serious Shooters shop in Rotorua for supporting us by encouraging his customers to join SSANZ. Not forgetting the outstanding recruiting job undertaken by Alec Melville of I- Guns in Dargaville back in March. If you can show your appreciation for these retailers who actively support SSANZ by buying your shooting needs from them that would be great. We hope to soon enlist the support of some of the Auckland retailers too.

Perhaps you can also respectfully suggest to your local gun shop that it would be in their best business interest to support organizations such as SSANZ. You can point out to them that it would demonstrate to their customers that they care about the interests of the shooting public.

Mountain Safety Council – Volunteer Services No Longer Required

In a series of Road Show presentations around the country the Mountain Safety Council (MSC) executive announce the end of the Firearms Safety Programme as we know it, telling the volunteer instructors that their services are no longer required.

The delivery of the firearms safety message and test, required by new Firearm Licence applicants, that has been provided by around 480 volunteer instructors at 150 locations ranging from city police stations to private dwelling in rural locations is to be replaced by a new model.

By the end of the year the thousands combined years of hunting and shooting experience of the volunteers will be replaced by a new model. Three models are being considered:

- A. 40 part time paid instructors covering 50 locations,
- B. 5 full time paid instructors covering 50 locations ,
- C. 15 Part time paid & 72 Volunteers covering 50 Locations.

As an example the 12 volunteer instructors who presently cover Whangarei will be replaced by one, in whatever option is chosen.

MSC are publicly stating they have a signed agreement with NZ Police to change the current system into one of these three options. However it is understood that the Police Officer who sits on the MSC Board is also the same Officer who pays MSC and is also responsible for the current Police Firearm Review, could this be a conflict of interest and is he trying to shape the future of firearm ownership to his own model?

MSC **justify the change by** claiming the new model will provide consistency of delivery across the country with opportunity for assessment and moderation of performance and course content. However MSC were unable to provide evidence **to the volunteers, when questioned**, as how the current system is failing in this respect. MSC have ignored the fact that a system of instructor assessment and formal qualification was put in place as recently as 2011 which, with the firing of the programme manager last year, has been allowed to lapse.

MSC volunteers have been delivering the Firearms Safety Programme for the past 30 years and its success can be measured by the steady decline in the number of unintentional shooting incidents. What MSC executives have failed to realise is that the volunteers provide much more than the basic lecturing. A large pool of instructors allows for more time to be devoted to those with reading or learning difficulties. Since most are embedded in their local firearms community they are able to introduce new applicants to sources of practical training and advice, and monitor the behaviour and safety standards of their fellow shooters. They have the safety of their local community at heart, something that 5 full time paid instructors will be unable to provide.

SSANZ is concerned that no longer will any firearms safety education be available to schools, scouts or businesses as there will be no volunteers to deliver it and paid staff will only be focused on licensing. The fear in the community is that more people will ultimately die as a result of these unprovoked changes. Especially children. It will be harder for rural people to get firearms licences as the opportunity to do so is taken away and hence they will eventually be criminalised for it.

Lead Shot Ban for sub calibres -We have been advised that the Conservation Minister Maggie Barry has instructed Fish & Game Council to extend the lead shot ban to all sub calibre gauges for water fowl. We are presently awaiting a reply from the Minister to an Official Information Act request asking for the evidence that support such a ban and who she consulted with.

Help Make SSANZ Stronger and More Effective

Be proactive – encourage your mates to join SSANZ