

SSANZ News September & October 2016

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Select Committee Inquiry into Illegal Possession of Firearms

Oral submissions took place in Wellington on 10 & 17 August. We reinforced our written submission and challenged some of the comments made by others and answered questions put by committee members. Questions put to SSANZ revolved around internet sales, registration and micro chipping of all guns, MSSAs and deterrent sentencing. You can read the SSANZ submissions on our website [Article page](#). Our case was well supported by others including COLFO, NZSRA, PNZ, NZAHAA, and RWNZ. Feedback from people attending suggests our submissions were well received.

The Future for Semi Autos

We are hearing a lot of concern from firearm owners about the Police stated intention to push for all semi auto rifles to be re-classed as MSSAs on E Cat. Licence.

SSANZ will oppose this for the following reasons:

1. The whole concept of E Cat and the definition of an MSSA are flawed because it is based largely on cosmetic appearance rather than function.
2. Through the dubious legislation of 1992 and Police handling of semi-automatic rifle matters since then, any changes to the legislation relating to self-loading firearms would be a nightmare for owners and Police Arms Officers who are already overburdened.
3. It would be unfair on all those people who have legally acquired A Cat semi autos to be faced with this additional cost and inconvenience.
4. It may also impact on current E Cat owners who may have their magazines restricted to the same as A Cat. otherwise all A Cats would then be able to fit a 20 or 30 round Mag.
5. Also we doubt that there would be 100% compliance, so more semi autos could be driven on to the illegal black market, which would be detrimental to public safety.
6. There is no justification for such a change.

Lead Shot Issues

In reply to our OIA request DOC have stated that they have not instructed the Fish & Game Council to extend the lead shot ban to Sub calibre gauges, but rather asked them why it should not be extended to these gauges. An OIA request to Customs has shown that there is no increasing trend in the importation of sub calibre shot shells, to indicate that these are being used more in preference to 12 gauge, by water fowling attempting to circumvent the lead shot ban. This was also backed up by an informal survey of spent shot cases left behind by duck shooters at mai- mais.

Meanwhile in the UK the government has rejected a call to ban all lead ammunition, claiming that there is insufficient evidence to support such a ban. And a lead shot ban for the next Olympics has also been rejected.

In New Zealand the Wellington Regional Council is causing problems for clay target clubs, claiming lead shot is a toxic contaminant despite it being a common element in the ground, that must be dealt with before the range may be granted consent to operate.

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Gun Safes

We have heard several stories of some recently imported gun safes not meeting the specification required by Police. Before you buy one check that it has Police approval, apparently police are insisting that gun safes are certified by a qualified engineer, we believe that this should be the importers responsibility in order for it to be fit for purpose.

We have been advised that existing safes that have been approved in the past will be honoured by Police.

Permit Issues

Import Permits: In spite of Police employing new staff at Police National HQ we are still hearing reports of long delays (up to 3 months) for import permits. In one case this was simply to reissue permits that had expired due to the often long delays in shipments held up by all the red tape in exporting and transit countries.

We have to ask are these delays caused by genuine administrative reasons or is it a deliberate move by Police to discourage importers and to slow down the flow of firearms into the country.

Mail Order Permits: Initial reports indicated that the new mail order process, instituted by Police following the fraudulent mail order purchase of a rifle by TV 3 present Heather du Plessis Allan, was working well. We have since received reports that some customers have been getting the run around from Police staff, partly we suspect because counter staff are not always familiar with the process, added to that many local Police stations are un-manned. If you need a mail order permit we recommend you make a point of visiting your District Arms Officer where any issues can be resolved face to face.

Lawful Behaviour Draws Armed Response from Police

A man lawfully walking along a Christchurch street with a gun in a carry case was pounced on by armed police and forced to lie on the ground while police approached with loaded weapons pointing at him. A Police spokesperson stated afterwards that while the man was doing nothing illegal Police wanted to encourage people “not to carry firearms in public like that”.

SSANZ comment: If we are not encourage to carry firearms in public in a gun case how are we meant to carry them, when we need to take them to or from a gun shop, the police station, or on public transport?

Is this a sign that our police are getting extremely jumpy around firearms and how long before their inadequate firearms training gets another innocent person shot?

We have voiced our concerns to the Commissioner of Police and received a comprehensive reply which stated that Police responded to a report received by a concerned member of the public and on very limited information had to assess the situation as to whether a crime was being committed and at the same time safeguard public safety. In conclusion Police stated:

“Licensed firearm owners across New Zealand mostly apply excellent judgement when it comes to carrying and transporting firearms, especially in public.

I want to assure you that police did not over react to this one incident and we do not over react to the lawful carriage of firearms by fit and proper people who have a lawful, sufficient and proper purpose for carrying a firearm.

We will however, respond appropriately to the concerns and fears of the public. Given situations where it cannot be established what the intent or purpose is of a person carrying a firearm (air rifle in this instance) and, on reasonable grounds it appears an offence is committed, police will respond in a manner that puts the defence and safety of the public and police first and foremost.”

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