

SSANZ News July August 2017

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Law and Order Select Committee Inquiry Report on how Criminals obtain Firearms

This report was made public on the 7 April and shocked the firearm community by being so clearly off target. Criminals were virtually ignored and the bulk of the recommendations made by the committee only served to provide more restrictions for licensed firearm owners while doing little to prevent the criminal use of firearms. You can read our full commentary on the report together with the government response on the Articles page of the SSANZ website www.sportingshooters.nz

Working Together

SSANZ, COLFO, FOUNZ, Kiwi Gun Blog, and many organizations and individuals alerted through e-mail and social media have been working together to bring our concerns to Ministers and MPs. We are fortunate that the Minister of Police, Hon. Paula Bennett, thus alerted to our concerns appointed Nicole McKee (COLFO) and Geoff Thomas as her independent advisors to co-ordinate the feedback from the firearm community. Nicole and Geoff made their report to the Minister in the third week of May rejecting most of the Select committee recommendations. SSANZ thanks Nicole and Geoff for their efforts on our behalf and all of you who sent your feedback to them.

On 13 June Police Minister Paula Bennett made public the government response to parliament on the Report of the Select Committee Inquiry into the Illegal possession of firearms by criminals. SSANZ is pleased that the minister has largely rejected all those recommendations that we opposed. This is thanks to all of you who communicated your views to the minister and her advisors.

In addition to the 8 recommendations she has accepted the minister has introduced two new recommendations which we see as beneficial: 1. to give the Police power to suspend a licence rather than revoke it, allowing the problem to be resolved more quickly and 2. To require Police to consult more with the firearm community.

Remember before any of the recommendations become law there will be a further round of consultation as any new Bill proceeds through the Select Committee stage. It is most important that you become vocal again when any such Bill is before the Select Committee and submissions are called for.

They are Listening

Deputy Prime Minister and Police Minister Paula Bennett has shown that she is willing to listen to the firearm community and has taken action to deal with some of the problems that licensed owners have experience, for example long delays in issuing import permits. Police have responded by setting up a special e-mail address project.firearms@police.govt.nz where you can enquire about permits that have taken more than 40 days to be issued.

Similarly opposition party Law & Order spokesperson and advocate of the Select Committee recommendations, Stuart Nash, after holding a public meeting in Napier with firearm owners, seems to have revised his views and is advising his caucus that many of the recommendations should be rejected.

Police have also started taking note, recently setting up two subcommittees of the Firearms Community Advisory Forum (FCAF) to look at firearm security rules and consider the response to the Select Committee Inquiry report. It is hoped that by working with the firearm community better outcomes will be achieved for all concerned.

Changes at Police National Headquarters

In mid June Police advised that a new Arms Act Service Delivery Group, incorporating the Arms Control Unit and the Arms Safety Control Project is in the process of being established to lead this work. This new Group will report directly to the Police Executive and be focused on improving administrative efficiency and strengthening communications and consultative processes.

Arms Code 2017 Recalled

A new recently published 2017 Arms Code has been pulled from the police website and printed copies withdrawn from police stations. This came about when significant changes were detected by Kiwi Gun Blog, which included a new definition of what constitutes a firearm and a requirement for licence holders to justify the number of firearms they hold to police. Whether these changes were a deliberate attempt to introduce new police policies or a genuine error as they now claim, we leave you to judge. Through social media word of the Arms Code changes spread quickly and again your concerns were heard. The minister listened and the Arms Code was withdrawn, now to be reviewed in consultation with the FCAF before reissue.

Social Media

Whatever older members may feel about social media, it is proving to be a valuable tool in keeping the firearm community advised on issues of concern and also in influencing politicians, many of whom are active on such platforms as Facebook. Events of the past few months have shown that many shooters in our community, who are not members of a club or association and therefore not receiving newsletters and e-mails, can be reached quickly via this medium. It also provides a platform for you to make your views known, to those who represent you and influence and educate the general population through sharing with your own family and friends.

You can keep abreast of the latest news by following Sporting Shooters of NZ (SSANZ), COLFO and Firearm Owners United NZ (FOUNZ) on Facebook. For maximum benefit please LIKE, FOLLOW and SHARE to your own page, those posts that you support.

The Cache that started it all

As a result of an Official Information Act request to Police we can now reveal that the cache of firearms seized in Auckland as part of Operation Turbo, last March that was the catalyst for the Select Committee Inquiry into how criminals obtain firearms, comprised of the following:

7 MSSA E Cat rifles (M 4, AK 47 and 10/22), For M 4 read AR 15.

4 Semi auto A Cat rifles (AK 47, M 4, M14)

2 shotguns and 1 bolt action A Cat rifle

3 Pistols (included a modified 10/22)

NONE were previously reported stolen by licensed owners. Only one of these firearms was imported legally, an M4 in 2003, and registered to a licensed owner. Which begs the question HOW DID THESE MODERN MSSAs ENTER NZ? SSANZ would suggest through our POROUS BORDER, which rather makes a mockery of the recommendations put forward by the Select Committee report.

The offender in question was convicted on representative counts of unlawful possession of firearms (3), ammunition (2) and also convicted for manufacturing and possessing with intent to supply Methamphetamine. He was sentenced to 12 years and 4 months in prison.

Membership Renewals

Our thanks to all of you who responded to our recent membership subs reminder. If you have yet to renew your sub for 2017 we would really appreciate your continued support. Only \$20 per year helps us continue to be active in supporting your chosen sport or hobby and keep you updated on those issues that could have a serious impact on your private ownership of firearms. The campaign still has a long way to go.

To renew your membership - direct credit \$ 20 (\$54 to include NZG&H Magazine) to 03-0179-0160150-00 with your first and last name as reference.