

SSANZ News September October 2017

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SHOOTING TRAGEDY IN WHANGAREI

The tragic unprovoked shooting of three innocent people in Whangarei on Wednesday 26 July, killing two women and seriously injuring a male companion, has rocked the local community. Our sympathy goes out to the families of the victims and all those who have been touched by this awful event.

Obviously all the factors that triggered this event have yet to be revealed, however this has not stopped media reporting a great deal of hearsay and speculation as to the mental state of the perpetrator Quinn Patterson, who also died at the scene, the number and type of firearms he held and how he obtained them; police have confirmed he did not hold a firearm licence.

Now certain uneducated parties are calling for tougher gun laws as a result of this tragedy, without explaining how such law changes would prevent an allegedly mentally unstable character carrying out such atrocities with illegally acquired firearms.

SSANZ says let the police complete a thorough investigation of all matters relating to this event, then charges should be laid against any who are culpable of wrong doing, such as supplying arms to an unlicensed person. Only when all the facts are known should any consideration be given to changes to firearms legislation and these must be based on clear evidence and not political or personal agendas.

A local man since charged with supplying guns to Patterson has elected for trial by jury and is due to appear in court again in October.

FIREARMS AND HOMICIDE IN NZ

A recently published report by NZ Police HQ shows that firearms are only used in 10 % of homicides each year with an average annual rate of 70 unlawful killings each year and firearms used on average 7 times. There is **no** upward trend in the figures which would appear to contradict the scaremongering claims of the Police Association.

You can read the full report here: <http://sportingshooters.nz/articles/>

MEETING WITH MR FIX IT

Early in July a member of SSANZ executive had a one hour introductory meeting with Superintendent Mike McIlraith, who has been tasked with setting up the new Arms Act Service Delivery Group to deliver the Police administration of the Arms Act and Regulations. The Superintendent pointed out that he was in the early stages in the job meeting people and gathering information, which would take several more weeks, he will then evaluate what he has learned and make proposals for solutions to the challenges faced by police. Once these solutions are approved funding will be sought and if necessary appropriate staff recruited or transferred. This whole process will take a significant number of months to complete. A number of topics were discussed including: the future direction of firearms safety training for licence applicants, delays in import permit approval, secure storage of firearms, consistency of decisions and advice from Arms Officers.

SSANZ formed a very positive impression from this meeting; Mike is a straight talking guy who is keen to establish good communications with the firearm community. We wish him every success with the challenges he faces and look forward to contributing in a positive way for the benefit of all licensed firearm owners. We hope this new group will solve many of the frustrations experienced by firearm owners in their dealings with police over recent times.

GOOD NEWS FOR SHOOTING SPORTS

CONGRATULATIONS AUCKLAND SHOOTING CLUB -7 July saw the official opening of the Auckland Shooting Club conducted by Deputy Prime Minister Hon Paula Bennett. A representative of SSANZ was privileged to be included in the guests at this memorable occasion.

The club facility is located at Makarau just 50 minutes drive from central Auckland and has the potential to be a great asset for Auckland shooters and ultimately the whole country. SSANZ congratulates the club on what they have achieved in just 12 months and wishes them a successful future in the years ahead.

BATTLING AN INSANE BUREAUCRACY -In December 2015 the new \$300,000 Wairarapa Gun Club range was due to be opened: but bureaucracy, by way of the Greater Wellington Regional Council, stopped the opening because of lead shot contaminant! A battle with bureaucracy commenced, but it was only won after the NZ Clay Target Association became involved – and in July 2017 the Club was allowed to proceed using lead shot. Had the battle been lost it would have spelt the end of shooting ranges – because we are told the Minister for the Environment had issued instruction to all Regional Councils to ban both lead shot and lead projectiles on shooting ranges.

NEW SHOOTING RANGE FOR SOUTH CANTERBURY- Under construction near Seadown the Aorangi Road Shooting Range Trust is building a new range on Aorangi Rd, on land leased from the Timaru District Council. It will be able to cater for a wide range of international shooting events in the South Island, and will feature an indoor range, function centre, and club house. The first stage of the project, is expected to open for use in February 2018.

FIREARMS SAFETY COUNCIL

SSANZ is proud to be included as an Executive member of the Firearm Safety Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (FSCANZ) which held its first Annual General Meeting in July. The council which is made up of representatives of all major shooting organizations has been set up to: *Promote the development and maintenance of firearm safety standards in New Zealand to enable people to enjoy the safe use of firearms by fostering community support for firearm safety.*

SSANZ believes that promoting high standards of firearm safety is paramount in maintaining public support for responsible private firearm ownership in this country. A significant number of our members are volunteer firearm safety instructors and the council's policy that these volunteers are the most effective providers of safety training for local communities sits well with us.

SEPTEMBER ELECTION

There are many factors that we take into consideration when we cast our vote in a General Election. SSANZ will not tell you how to vote that is your personal decision, however if firearms ownership is a major concern for you then you may wish to know that this is how we rank the political parties in their sympathy or otherwise to private firearm ownership:

1. NZ First (actively supportive)
2. Act (supportive)
3. United Future (supports hunting, but now out of the race with Peter Dunne standing down)
4. National (prepared to listen to shooters provided Paula Bennett remains Minister of Police, see policy below)
5. Maori (neutral, concerned for the safety of their Whanau)
6. Labour (previously anti, could Greg O'Conner be the next Police Minister?,)
7. Green (definitely against firearm ownership, full registration and 5 year licence.)

National Party position on Firearms in New Zealand

New Zealand has a strong culture of recreational hunting, a vibrant and active sport shooting community and many farmers and professional hunters who work to keep our forests and farms pest free, and who hunt to feed their families and friends.

National believes that semi-automatic firearms are a legitimate tool for pest control and we won't be proposing a blanket ban on them.

However we take the responsibility of protecting the public from gun crime very seriously and believe in the need for restrictions on the most dangerous firearms and other weapons.

National believes the vast majority of licenced firearms owners take care to keep their firearms safe and to stay within the law. We value the relationship with the firearms community as important partners in the fight against illegal firearms and criminal activity.

We will:

- Improve the firearms licencing regime by upgrading Police systems and modernising permitting and import processes.
- Ensure firearms activity is appropriately funded and that fees for applications and permits are set on a cost-recovery basis and do not subsidise non-firearms related Police activities.
- Work with the firearms community towards a fit-for-purpose legislative framework that gives as much clarity as possible, while being able to deal with technological changes and new parts and products.
- Aggressively pursue illegal firearms and target criminals wishing to obtain firearms to commit crimes, including bringing in Firearms Prohibition Orders for patched gang members with serious offending histories.
- Make it clear that patched gang members and prospects will not be considered 'fit and proper' people to hold licences
- Continue to restrict access to the most dangerous firearms in the interests of public safety – but we will ensure any changes to these restrictions will be consulted and carefully considered
- Change the Arms Act to give Police a new power to suspend a licence. We will also introduce a 12-month stand-down after a licence is revoked.
- Direct Police to first consult with the firearms community before they propose any changes to policy. The Minister of Police will have the final sign off.
- Introduce new checks to ensure firearms brought in on visitors permit are exported or transferred legally
- Work with the legal firearms owners to prevent them becoming targets of criminals seeking firearms



Paula Bennett, MP

SSANZ is concerned about the use of the term "Cost recovery" in relation to licence and permit applications, and vague reference to changes to restrictions on "most dangerous firearms". We will be taking these concerns to the Minister.