

SSANZ News July August 2018

www.sportingshooters.nz SSANZ, PO Box 275, Whangarei 0140



Follow us on Facebook

Firearms Prohibition Order Bill

A new Firearms Prohibition Order Bill has been published, which seeks to give Police new powers to prohibit gang members from possessing firearms, together with extended powers to search and seize without a warrant. The Bill also redefines the word “possession” to include firearms in the custody of another person. At the time of writing this Bill is yet to have its first reading.

Whatever your feelings about gang members being in possession of firearms and the human rights they do or do not deserve, this Bill will require close scrutiny and robust submissions at the Select Committee stage to ensure that it does not infringe the rights of law abiding citizens. It also requires safeguards to ensure that the powers granted to those in authority cannot be abused.

We all have a voice and should all use it.

A New Firearm Licence Testing Process

When the media announced the new process for firearm licence applicants, which comes into effect on 1 July, they seemed to be under the impression that it would make it harder for criminals to get guns. But that is not what it is about, the whole purpose of the licence testing programme is to make all shooters safety conscious and thereby prevent unintentional shooting incidents.

Under the old system new licence applicants studied the arms code and then attended a two hour lecture and test where volunteer instructors went the extra mile to ensure that everyone understood the basic safety rules, no matter whether they had reading or learning difficulties, which resulted in a high pass rate. Under the new system, applicants will learn the Arms Code at their computer and then sit a pass or fail test at an AA or VTNZ test centre. If they pass they can then go on to attend a practical safe handling assessment run by Mountain Safety Council contractors at just 48 main centres. If they fail the theory test then they will have to re-apply and sit the test again until they pass. Whether this form of online learning and testing will suit all applicants and result in more failures, or people giving up because it is all too much hassle only time will tell. As for the practical assessment, with planned classes of 20 the instructor will have just 6 minutes to assess the competence of each candidate.

SSANZ is concerned that the significantly reduced number of locations where training is provided will make it more difficult for people living in remote locations to gain a licence and online learning will also be harder for people with learning difficulties or lacking computer skill.

More information is now available on the Police Website:

<http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/firearms-and-safety/news-and-updates>

Firearms in vehicles

It was reported in May that a firearm had been found leaning against a car in a hotel car park while the owner was inside celebrating duck opening season. On investigation police found a further 8 firearms in unlocked cars in the same car park. All were seized and the owners face the possibility that their firearm licence may be revoked.

This incident provides a timely reminder that we all have a responsibility to keep our firearms secure. Remember Rules 6 & 7 and take your firearms home and lock them away before socialising at the pub. If you are travelling with firearms in your vehicle, keep them out of sight, secure them to the vehicle with a lockable wire stop, remove the bolt and ammunition, and lock the vehicle. Don't leave the vehicle unattended, but if you must then keep it in sight and your absence as short as possible. Use your common sense!

Shame on them

In May it was reported that, perhaps frustrated by not scoring any ducks, some shooter(s) had been blasting road signs in Tararua District. Whether the person responsible for this wanton act of vandalism was a licensed firearm owner or not, it reflects badly on all shooters and it is totally unacceptable behaviour.

What value statistics

In April it was widely reported in the media that gun thefts from law abiding firearm owners had jumped by 35% since 2013 and the Police Association used this as a platform to once again call for the registration of all firearms.

What the media failed to mention was that in 2013 police changed their recording methods and improved reporting by staff resulted in a significant rise in recorded numbers. This fact was reported to the Law and Order Select Committee in March 2016 in the police submission but conveniently forgotten by those who should have known better. As so often seems to be the case in this day and age, the media will report any sensational "news" without first checking their facts. We are grateful to Kiwi Gun Blog for drawing the change in data collection to all concerned but few in the media were prepared to admit to the error.

Time to retire

Both Alan Webster and Phil Cregeen our Treasurer and Secretary respectively have decided that they have reached that stage in life when it is time for new younger minds to take up the gauntlet and administer this organisation. We ask you all to consider whether you have the passion to take on these roles and put your name forward for election at our next AGM in February.

There is no doubt that we live in an ever changing world and the threats to the private ownership of firearms are not going away any time soon. It is therefore vital that the work of SSANZ continues in to the future.

LOCK UP YOUR FIREARMS

Keep a Record of: Make, Model, and Serial No