

Response ID ANON-C4QC-15WM-N

Submitted to Public consultation on the Arms Act rewrite
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Personal information

If you choose to provide personal information and object to it being released as part of an Official Information Act request, please indicate below and explain why.

I object to my personal information being released as part of an Official Information Act request. :

No

Explain why:

Age group

50 – 59

Gender

Male

Ethnicity

European

Other ethnicity:

Name

Enter name:

Christopher Wakeman

Group or organisation

I am making this submission on behalf of a group or organisation (please write which group or organisation).

Group or Organisation:

– the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and its Aotearoa New Zealand Trauma Committee

Firearms licence

Yes

Sector

Medical and mental health professionals

Other sectors:

Theme 1: Purpose of regulating firearms access, possession, and use

Purpose section of the Act

What do you consider the main principles and purposes of the Act should be? :

Te Whare Piki Ora o Māhūtonga – the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and its Aotearoa New Zealand Trauma Committee are committed to reducing the seriousness and frequency of trauma associated with gun injuries.

RACS supports the objectives of the firearms reform programme to deliver a system which:

- imposes controls that protect individuals and the public from fire-arms related harm
- supports the safe possession and use of firearms and other weapons for legitimate purposes, such as sports, hunting, collecting, and pest control.

We advocate the following approach to reduce gun violence in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1. We strongly oppose the potential reintroduction of Military-Style Semi-Automatic (MSSA) weapons in this country.

2. We recommend the revision of the Arms Act 1983 includes:

- stricter gun licensing criteria and protocols, including compulsory training
- universal registration of gun ownership
- closing loopholes that facilitate illicit transactions
- stricter penalties for non-compliance
- refining screening protocols for gun license applicants

- regular review of the provisions in the Act
- enabling and mandating better collaboration among government agencies, including law enforcement, and healthcare providers to prevent at-risk individuals accessing firearms.

Are there any additional considerations that should be included?:

3. In tandem with law reform, Government must recognise and address the fact gun-related harm disproportionately affects marginalised communities, including Māori and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Government must crucially address the underlying factors contributing to violence and mental health concerns - poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, and social alienation, including racism, bigotry and hate speech. By tackling these root causes, we can work toward safer communities and a safer society.

The tragic mass shooting in Christchurch in March 2019, resulting in loss of 51 lives, serves as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of gun violence and underscores the need for stringent gun control measures to protect our communities. Since then, significant progress has been made in tightening our gun laws. Swift actions taken by the government to implement a near-total ban on MSSAs and high-capacity magazines and establishing the Firearms Safety Authority were essential steps supported by the public.

Reintroducing MSSA weapons would not only undermine these critical measures but would contradict recent progress in enhancing public safety. It could also lead to an increase in gun-related violence, as evidenced by similar experiences in other countries.

While we do not yet have published scientific data in New Zealand, evidence in countries with comparable socioeconomic status is overwhelmingly in favour of stricter gun control laws.

1. Countries which prioritise collective safety over individual gun rights experience lower rates of gun violence. There is also evidence to show decrease in accidental firearms death and suicide by firearms.
2. A study from Arizona showed that children living in states with non-strict firearms laws have a statistically significant increase in accidental and self-inflicted gun related injuries compared to those who lived in states with strict firearms laws.
3. Stricter laws had a 28% decrease in firearms related injury and a statistically significant decrease in mortality in USA.

Theme 2: Products controlled by the Act

Definition of a firearm

In your view does the Act define a 'firearm' well?:

Control of products based on risk

In your view, is the focus on regulating firearms (and associated products) based on the risk profile of each product an appropriate approach to the maintenance of public safety?:

Do you have any other comments on a risk-based approach?:

List of controlled products

What product definitions outlined in Appendix 5 do you think need to be reviewed and what changes would you recommend? :

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Firearms amnesty and buy-back provisions

Should there be options to support people to surrender, dispose or modify firearm products that the licence holder can no longer legally use? If so, what should these be? :

Theme 3: Responsible possession and use

Licence issue period

What are your views on the length of time a firearms licence is issued for? :

Do you have any other comments on firearms licences?:

Fit and proper person test

What are your views on the fit and proper person test?:

What are your views on the minimum age?:

Do you have any other comments on the fit and proper person test?:

Manufacturing under a standard licence

What are your views on people with a standard firearms licence being able to manufacture products for their own use, including the use of 3D printing?:

Do you think specific requirements are needed for the manufacture of ammunition and firearm parts?:

Do you think the Act provides appropriate controls on manufacturing of firearms and related products?:

Firearms licence compliance requirements

What role should the FSA play in ensuring licence holders follow the rules relating to firearms possession?:

What are your views on licence compliance? :

What are your views on the FSA checking of security and storage?:

What are your views on the role of health practitioners in the licensing process?:

Rules relating to unlicensed use, and use of airguns

What are your views on rules relating to unlicensed use?:

What are your views on the regulation of airguns?:

International visitors

What are your views on the processes for visitor's licences?:

Endorsements, approvals, and permit to possess

What are your views on endorsements relating to pistols, prohibited firearms and restricted weapons?:

What are your views on the requirements for approved ammunition sellers? :

What are your views on the permit to possess system, and how it interacts with endorsements? :

Resources on using firearms safely

In your view, are there any areas that would benefit from having more guidance/education?:

Theme 4: Supplying, importing, and buying products

Selling products under a standard licence

What are your views on standard licence holders' ability to sell privately?:

Being a dealer

What are your views on the types of activities that require a person to hold a dealer's licence? :

Do you have views on any other matters relating to dealers?:

Obtaining a dealer's licence, endorsement and permit

What are your views on the fit and proper person tests applied to ascertain the suitability of dealer licence applicants? :

Do you have any other views on the rules for licensing dealers?:

What are your views on the dealer licence endorsement and permits system?:

What are your views on licensing requirements for employees?:

What are your views on the rule that only dealers are able to manufacture and supply some firearm items? :

Do you have any other comments on dealers and controls on manufacturing?:

Do you consider the rise of 3D printing requires specific rules to control it? If so, what should these be?:

Permit to import

What are your views on the current rules for a permit to import? :

Theme 5: Compliance, offences, and penalties

Offences and penalties

If you are a licence holder, what has been your experience with understanding your legal obligations in the Act?:

Do you think current offences and penalties are contributing to public safety? If yes, how?:

What are your views on the current offences and penalty levels in the Act? Are they too high? Too low?:

Do you think there are other ways we could encourage compliance?:

Do you have any other views on the offences and penalties regime in the Act?:

Theme 6: Cost recovery

Setting the fees

What are your views on how fees are set or processed?:

Do you think any changes are required?:

Theme 7: Agencies that control the possession and use of firearms

Roles and responsibilities in the Arms Act

What are your views on the role of the Minister's Arms Advisory Group?:

The Firearms Safety Authority

What are your views on the FSA's roles and responsibilities? Are there any changes that you would recommend?:

What education and guidance should the FSA provide to help people understand risks associated with possession and use of firearms products and best practices?:

What are your views on the role of the Firearms Community Advisory Forum and the Arms Engagement Group?:

Do you think the FSA has been successful in reaching members of the firearms community with its education and compliance work?:

Which roles and responsibilities do you think should be retained by the Police within its law enforcement role? :

Are there roles and responsibilities which should be shared between the FSA and Police? :

Roles and responsibilities of other government agencies

Other matters

Feedback on other aspects of the firearms regulatory system

Are there any matters related to the firearms regulatory system that have not been covered in this document that are not out of scope that you have views on?:

Do you have any other views not covered in this document on how the Act protects public safety? :