



Trentham Rifle Range Reserve - Seddon Rifle Range

I am pleased to announce that we have agreed and finalised a thirty (30) year licence with NZDF to use the Seddon Rifle Range. We are extremely happy with the makeup of the licence and can now look forward to some real progress at the range and NRA Headquarters. This is great news and brings to an end one of the most time consuming tasks ever undertaken by NRA management and volunteers.

This process has cost the Association a great deal of money in recent times and I am making a plea to all Regional Associations, Clubs and Individuals for donations, however big or small, to help offset those costs.

Although the Range has extra significant importance to the Wellington clubs, the importance of the Seddon Range to the overall well being and indeed continuance of the Association is critical and cannot be stressed enough. The range was originally developed by the old Rifle Association of NZ prior to being bought by the Government in 1900. It was established as a "Permanent Rifle Range" for the Association as it was costing too much to move around the country and set up ranges for the National Championships each year.

Now as the home of the Association, along with its great history, its ability to host the National Championships and International Matches like the Palma plus Commonwealth Games and trials etc, it is extremely important to our sport. It is critical to have such a facility in order to provide members, old and new, with some of the important aspects of our international game and more particularly provide a means for the pathway for prospective members to represent their clubs, provinces and country.

Following is a brief of recent proceedings leading to the agreement and the reason for the expenditure of twenty three thousand dollars (\$23,000).

The licence saga began in the mid nineties when the last licence expired and the NRA Council declined to sign what was offered from NZDF. When the range was closed by Army in the year 2000 the [then] President, Mr Tony Loughnan, after developing rules and getting the range open again, began a negotiation process with NZDF for a new licence. Tony, along with Brian Carter, worked on our behalf and spent considerable time and personal expense dealing with government and NZDF, building a case for NRA to have legal use of the Seddon Range. Alas, they were unsuccessful and in fact stymied by NZDF but nonetheless, built a strong platform and made contacts that proved to be critical to the final outcome. We are indebted for their efforts.

With the last changing of governments Tony Loughnan, through personal political contacts, corresponded with the Minister of Defence which resulted in a meeting between Tony, Brian and myself and the Army 2IC and his team. This meeting, in the second half of 2009 reached agreement which, in our eyes, was not honoured by NZDF. There ensued more than 12 months of further negotiation between the parties which was eventually stalled due to the NZDF and their legal team not understanding or accepting the agreement reached and our team not prepared to concede further.

Earlier this year, further contact with NZDF proved no change of attitude and I formed the opinion that, for reasons not known to me, we were purposely being stalled by them and that their attitude obviously had not changed over the past 15 or so years.

During the month of June your Secretariat decided that the path taken to date had proved futile, plus of course had taken way too long, so decided to contact a prominent Wellington law firm for advice. Myself and your Secretary Andre Doyle were convinced by the law team that they could resolve the issue for us so, through political contacts and the office of the Minister of Defence, they quickly arranged for a meeting with NZDF. *Throughout this process it became obvious that one of the unforeseen benefits of the delays over the previous 2 years was that research that was able to be done on-line was critical in proving many of our statements to both the lawyers and consequently NZDF. Due to our better understanding of history, we decided to stick to our guns and removed many of the concessions from the negotiating documents that we had earlier made.* This meeting resulted in both parties reaching full agreement on every clause of the licence. We were back to where we were in late 2009 - only this time it had cost us \$10,000!

However, once again when the document became available there were significant changes included by NZDF legal team (the writer of the document) that had not been agreed at our face to face meeting with NZDF and our lawyers had to act on our behalf once again. After a lot more legal and political wrangling we finally got the document we had agreed to. The last fling of the NZDF legal team had cost us a further \$13,000!

An important clause within the licence is the provision of a Memo of Understanding (MOU) for ease of access to the Seddon Range for maintenance purposes. For those of you outside of Wellington, access for maintenance has been a pressing problem for a number of years and to alleviate this was seen by NRA as very important. This MOU document, that we are very happy with, has also been signed and along with the other provisions of the licence forms an agreement that is better than anything we have previously had.

Due to personal associations of some, to those working on this project, it was not a very well kept secret that we were spending a fair amount but also that we were getting somewhere and were confident of success. This insider knowledge has resulted in some donations already, for which we are extremely grateful. To date we have received \$1500 from two individuals and \$3000 from a club. This \$4500 is near enough to 20% of the expenditure and as it was given without any coercing at all, has encouraged me to "go public" in asking for more.

I hope that the critical importance of the Seddon Range to our sport is understood by the general membership and that those who have competed there will ponder the memories and that their coffers are not too depleted to assist with this worthy cause. Affiliation fee increases are a necessary evil, but at this point in time hopefully necessary just to counter increases in running costs. I would like to think that such ways of extraordinary cost recovery, even say over the next few years, are not necessary

The WRA, the traditional "custodians" of the range have been spending the usual amount of time on maintaining it with no security of tenure, for quite some time. I am sure that myself and others from outside of Wellington will enjoy competitions at Seddon Range over the coming year and beyond but I am particularly sure that the WRA members will rest a little easier for at least the next thirty!

Thank you for reading this and (hopefully) giving it consideration and I trust that the up coming season treats you and yours well.

Kind regards,



Darryl Crow
President