

COLFO News Issue 6 – December 2018

<http://colfo.org.nz>



<https://www.facebook.com/colfonz/>

Arms Act Administration

Acting Superintendent Mike McIlraith attended the November COLFO Executive meeting and provided an update on progress achieved by the Arms Act Service Delivery Group.

In June Police attended at 18 locations speaking to both staff and separately the public. Main themes that came from this consultation for Police to look at included: consistency, timeliness, legislative compliance, trust and confidence and communication. Taking these key themes Police then ran a series of internal workshops to understand what an improved service and service delivery model would look like. In October the second set of community engagement meetings were run in 6 locations. There were less locations due to prudence with funds. These meetings were with dealers and the public and provided updates as to where the Arms Act Service Delivery Group (AASDG) are after the June community engagement meetings, explaining Police ideas and progress. Most people agreed with the ideas presented by Police.

Police have decided to phase in the new system which will eventually provide a good number of online services, noting that paper services will be maintained for those that elect to use paper. Online services will require “RealMe” verified accounts as the identification process for users of the system. The online services will also include the ability for applicants to pay for services online using their credit card or a bank transfer. Future paper application forms will be updated to reflect the format of the online forms to allow for efficient data retrieval.

Police are hoping that most services will be ready by late 2019, however the point was made that if a choice evolved between getting the release right and sticking to the timeline, dates would move in favour of getting it right. Overseas visitor permits will be rolled out first in about March 2019, from which time these will need to be applied for before arriving in New Zealand and will no longer be available at our airports. This will be followed by Dealers Licences and then permits to procure and import.

In regard to imports Police and Customs are working together to ensure both agencies are joined-up and the future system will be better than currently experienced. This will mean that only items that have not been issued a permit will be detained at the border and incomplete shipments should generally not be delayed.

A/S Mc Ilraith advised that a technology based option for automatically updating the firearms owners database would be ideal. Applying for permits to procure online and not having to physically take your firearm into the local Police station is also a process he would like to see. There are possibilities that licensed holders could have “skype” views with Police staff or could photograph and email the firearms serial numbers when they are in possession of them. More work is required in this area before finalising what the future looks like. New processes can be a way of treating the licensed owners as “fit and proper” and trusting them as we have been continuously asking for. He stated that licensed holders should be acknowledged as they are a community of fit and proper users and have been deemed to be by NZ Police. With this comes a responsibility to maintain that fit and proper status. For those that err, Police will follow up on their suitability to retain their licence, as is currently the case.

New Firearms Legislation expected soon

We are continually hearing rumours that the police and government are preparing for a review of the Arms Act, although when they are asked direct questions about this the answers are evasive. COLFO is of the view that any new legislation must address real issues based on hard evidence and be able to produce measurable outcomes. When new legislation eventually comes forward it is vital that firearm owners are united in their approach. Sadly when legislation was announced in the UK to ban semi auto rifles, and later handguns, some interest groups took the attitude of “this doesn’t affect us so we don’t need to get involved” which allowed these firearm bans and other draconian measures to succeed. We don’t want that to happen in New Zealand, all for one and one for all needs to be our motto.

COLFO’s mandate is to represent the interests of all firearm users, whatever their interests, whether it be hunting, target shooting or collecting, with rifle, pistol or shotgun, as well as those who make a living servicing the needs of the firearm community. In order to be effective in looking after your interests we need the backing of all firearm owners, and those who make a living from firearms, not just those who are affiliated through national associations and clubs.

For only \$ 23 you can become an individual supporter of COLFO here: <http://colfo.org.nz>

Court Ruling on MSSA Length Leads to Unresolved Issues

In a case brought by NZ Hunter Group v police an Auckland District Court judge has ruled that an MSSA with a retractable or telescopic butt-stock is to be measured with the butt closed or folded to determine its legal length. COLFO is a financial contributor to the New Zealand Licensed Firearms Dealers Trust Fund which supported this action.

However in another case Police v Dodd heard at the Whakatane District Court the judge indicated that the length was to be measured from the end of the stock and should not include any barrel attachments unless they were permanently fixed. Any firearm with an overall length of less than 762 mm is classed as a pistol. This ruling also applies to any other rifle or shotgun with a retractable or folding butt-stock.

Importing Parts for ARs and AKs

COLFO has instructed our lawyer Nicholas Taylor to file a case in the High Court for a Judicial Review of the Police policy on defining parts for these rifles as being part of an MSSA, regardless as to whether they were manufactured for A Cat or E Cat. This will require a significant financial commitment from COLFO.

We have been advised that six other court cases are pending in relation to police policy decisions affecting firearm owners and COLFO has already provided financial assistance to some of these.

Transporting Ammunition by Courier

Despite the Minister advising that safety ammunition, propellants and primers are exempt from limits on transit times at courier depots; it seems problems are still being experienced by wholesalers and retailers when shipping ammunition. Following a meeting with Worksafe officials in late November, COLFO is able to advise that Worksafe have undertaken to consult with transport companies to resolve confusion over the interpretation of the regulations. *Another example of COLFO working hard for New Zealand firearm owners, including retailers and distributors, please join us.*

United Nations

UN – Programme of Action (POA) – combating and eradicating illicit trade of small arms. The POA have previously stated that they would not interfere with sovereign laws. At the July 2018 UN POA meeting they amended their programme so they now say that they want to strengthen national laws. This is a concerning turn of events and something COLFO will watch closely as to how this could be implemented going forward.