

COLFO News Issue 1 – February 2018

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Meeting the Police Minister

At the end of November COLFO held a meeting with Stuart Nash the new Minister of Police who listened carefully to what we had to tell him about current issues facing firearm owners. Our concern was expressed over Police attempts to add their “wish list” to new policy instead of abiding by what is required by the exiting Arms Act and Regulations. He told COLFO that his number one statement to Police was to fix the relationship between the Police and firearm users. He has asked for a further advice on the findings of the Select Committee Inquiry into Illegal Firearms and will consider this before making any decision on how this should proceed. Although he did not reveal his intentions in respect of any new firearm legislation he did say that any changes would follow the full parliamentary process with opportunity for public submissions.

Meanwhile COLFO has pointed out to Police in the strongest terms that their attempt to introduce new policies in relation to the secure storage of firearms through a revised POL67N is unlawful and contradicts the current Arms Act and Regulation.

Police reveal the shape of future licence testing

Just before Christmas Police National Headquarters released information on what the New Zealand Firearms Licensing regime will look like in the future. They sent it out to potential service providers who had previously indicated their interest at the start of the tender process last year.

The key points are:

- An applicant applying for their firearms licence for the first time will need to complete their firearms safety education online.
- They will then have to attend at a Government agency to complete an online test based on what they downloaded and learned online.
- Next they will have to attend a 2 hour practical firearms handling course with instructors at a central location, reduced in number to only a third of the locations currently offering the theory instruction. The practical does NOT include live firing. COLFO expects that the applicant will need to demonstrate some sort of competency in safe handling of the firearms given to them to handle.
- Once both the theory and practical are successfully completed, the applicant can then move on with the security check and required interviews of themselves and their referees.
- People without internet access will need to get someone else to download and possibly print the relevant information for them.
- Arms Codes will still be available from Police Stations.
- It is suggested that the Whakatūpato programme which currently delivers a full day firearms safety and licensing opportunities course will extend into areas where communities are isolated – allowing a face to face instruction of both theory, practical and testing.

COLFO has questions:

- Does the applicant have to pay the licensing application fee before sitting the theory and practical courses?
- Is the application fee going to change from \$126.50 to something more substantial?
- What qualifications does the writer/s of the online and practical courses have in firearms safety?
- Will there be consultation?
- Is there any ongoing safety education for those renewing their licences?
- What provision will be made for those who cannot use web based learning?

Brokering (Weapons and Related Items) Controls Bill

This Bill is currently before parliament as a result of New Zealand's commitment to the UN ATT, a forum and area COLFO keeps a close watch on and indeed sends a representative too. The idea of this bill is to ensure that arms sales brokered by New Zealanders for overseas buyers and sellers are approved by New Zealand and do not fuel overseas conflicts. It does not affect arms imported into or exported from New Zealand. We will keep an eye on the bill as it makes its way through the house. If you believe this will affect your business, please get in touch with COLFO".

Meeting with Defence Minister

Some of the COLFO team met with Minister of Defence Ron Mark in December. We briefed him on our experiences and thoughts around some of the firearms related issues that are occurring at present. The Minister wants to ensure that the firearms community is looked after and that we have a supporting voice in the House of Representatives. He continues to be a very keen advocate to us all.

Meeting with other Firearm Advocacy Groups

In early December COLFO joined several other Firearm Advocacy Groups such as SSANZ, FOUNZ and Kiwi Gun Blog for a strategy meeting, to see how we can best all work together to achieve our common goals. This left all parties with a better understanding of how we operate and will see better co-operation in the future.

Shot Expo 2018

COLFO will be present at the Shot Expo in Auckland ASB Show Ground, Greenlane on 17 & 18 February, come along to our stand and say hello. We will have Barristers Lisa Hansen from Wellington and Nicholas Taylor from Auckland, attending at their own expense, available to give out free legal advice on firearms issues on both Saturday and Sunday.

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