

COLFO News Issue 5 – October 2017

<http://colfo.org.nz>



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



Election and after

By the time you read this the election will be over and we may or may not have a new government. Once we know the shape of our parliament and what the agenda towards firearm ownership is likely to be we will then be able to plan our future strategy. Social media is playing a bigger and bigger part in informing people and shaping public perceptions. If you want to stay informed and discuss issues you need to be on Facebook, not only reading but sharing what we post with your friends and family. Otherwise we are just preaching to the converted.

All the members of all the clubs that belong to COLFO are only a very small fraction of the firearms community (about 5%). We need to reach out to the other 95% and get them onboard. In politics it is numbers that count, “242,000 own firearms and vote” only means something if we can keep those people informed and actively supporting our cause. That is where you the members come in. We need you to talk to your mates who perhaps do not belong to a club and get them interested and active. They can join COLFO through our website – www.colfo.org.nz . More members = more funds and with more funds we can achieve more, such as engaging professional help to reach out to the wider community and taking legal action against unreasonable policies.

In the past year on your behalf COLFO has:

- Made submissions to the Law and Order Select Committee Inquiry
- Met with the Minister of Police several times
- Provided advice to the Minister of Police
- Meet regularly with Senior Police representing your concerns to the Police at FCAF
- Provided a database of firearms case law free for all to use
- Contributed to a trust fund for judicial review of Police policy
- Supported shooting clubs facing issues with their local councils
- Made submissions to the Environmental Protection Agency on the storage of ammunition
- Liaised with International Shooting Organisations including SSAA, NRA-ILA & WFSA
- Attended United Nations Arms Trade Treaty meetings as part of the NZ delegation
- Raised multiple concerns with media over some of the inaccurate reporting
- Contributed to the guidelines for guns in schools

COLFO has campaigned for:

- Improvements in Police Administration of licences and permits
- Removal of the various Police ultra vires policy changes
- Firearms laws and policy that are based on factual evidence
- Sensible regulations for firearm storage
- Support for Volunteer Firearm Safety Instructors
- Fair and just representation on all firearms issues

Sika Show 2017

COLFO will be present at the Sika Show in Taupo on 30 September & 1 October, come along to booth number 22 and say hello. We will have Nicholas Taylor available to give out free legal advice on firearms issues on both Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 1pm.

LEGAL CHALLENGE to Police's new policy on measuring firearm length

COLFO is pleased to report a legal challenge to this recent change in police policy in relation to the legal length of MSSAs with folding stocks.

Barrister Nicholas Taylor said *"I am filing a challenge to this policy in court this week (18/9) so it shall soon be subjudice (i.e. before the courts for consideration). The case name is - New Zealand Hunter Group limited v The Commission of Police 2017 ADC - this case is being fully supported by the NZLFD ((New Zealand Licensed Firearms Dealers Trust) of which many of you have contributed)".* He added *"It is also a issue for judicial review/declaratory judgments act matter that I am currently drafting which will be NZLFD Trust v The Commission Of Police."*

COLFO and many of our member organisations and individual members have contributed to the NZLFD trust fund that is helping financing this challenge. Donations may be made to the NZLFD Trust account number 06-0193-0122740-04 using reference: 16110001-NZDLF-your name.

Current challenges faced by NZ Firearms owners, a personal viewpoint.

There is no end to the issues that we as law abiding, responsible owners and users of firearms face today, and over the years I have seen many changes in the time I have held a firearms license. Operation foresight introduced us to the red license booklet and licensed the owner not the firearm, it was also the beginning of police vetting of licence applicants. I started with a lifetime license, this did not last long and the current ten year licensing regime was introduced from 1992, in the aftermath of a random mass shooting, and a new E category license came on the scene. This was going to save New Zealand from the scourge of the Military Style Semi Automatic rifle! Two renewals later I am still proud to be a licensed firearm owner and have had plenty of enjoyment through hunting, shooting and collecting. One highlight has been introducing my own children to responsible firearms use and associating with fellow firearms enthusiasts, many of whom mentored me in my formative years of collecting.

As I have progressed through my hobby I have become involved with the management of NZAHAA and COLFO, and as a result I attend the police Firearms Community Advisory Forum (FACF), I am also a volunteer Firearms Safety Instructor. I enjoy being able to give something back to the firearms community through my involvement with these organisations and like to think we can contribute to preserve hunting, shooting and collecting as we know it for future generations. That is something I am very passionate about.

I remember the formation of COLFO and had an awareness of its existence through my NZAHAA membership. Fellow COLFO supporters could be identified by their "Kiwis hunt, shoot and vote bumper stickers" and regular updates filtered through to us all by various means, life seemed so simple then. For me at the time it was just something that went on in the background and I assumed would preserve hunting and shooting forever. I was like most blissfully ignorant, and at the time it was not really an issue to assume that we would be protected and our utopian paradise would remain as such forevermore.

I eventually gained an interest and appreciation for the work done by COLFO and now I'm part of the COLFO team. I have seen COLFO evolve over the years and there is currently a very passionate and well-informed group of people serving the COLFO executive. These people give up their personal time to review and reply to countless emails, to attend board meetings and meetings with police, politicians and other firearms user groups. They invest heavily in building positive relationships with the right people to get our collective voices heard. Much of what is achieved is done with diplomacy and discretion, much of this remains unreported. They put themselves out there on behalf of us all when they would all be quite content to fly under the radar like so many firearms owners tend to prefer. I feel privileged to be associated with such passionate and professional people and have the utmost respect for my peers.

The world has changed, the demographic of our New Zealand society has changed, and the definition of what constitutes a family has changed. This all contributes to changes in public perception and attitudes. We as firearms owners are a minority group in a world where majority rules. We face a multitude of issues every day resulting from a number of contributing factors:

- Urbanization which has taken people away from rural upbringings where firearms and hunting were an acceptable way of life. Most of the firearms enthusiasts I know were privileged to have had such an upbringing.
- Single parent family's have taken the opportunity for exposure to firearms and hunting away from many children during their formative years. This is further exacerbated by family court, councillors and physiologists that take a dim view on firearm ownership. This is a multi generational issue.
- Immigrants, some who come here from war ravaged countries where firearms are something to be feared and others, from countries where firearms are strictly controlled, who struggle to grasp why anyone would need a gun.
- Media sensationalise any shooting incident and firearms become a very emotive subject. Criminal misuse and shooting incidents sell newspapers and to the average member of the public this just reinforces anti firearm sentiment. There is also little definition between a lawful licensed firearm owner and a criminal when media is concerned.
- Firearms are portrayed as bad and firearms user are worse, to the uninitiated and ill informed public. So called experts like Alpers and Gillespie say it is so therefore it must be true. As do animal activists such as SAFE when they call hunting murder and barbarism.
- Political crusaders that want to be seen as saviours of society at the expense of the firearms community.
- Licensed firearm owners who act irresponsibly, such as selling guns to unlicensed individuals bring us all into disrepute.
- Apathy among the firearm community, who make no effort to stand up for their sport or hobby

All of these things are made much worse by division and criticism from within the firearms community. Strength and unity go hand in hand, but sadly this is a HUGE issue. Taking this into account may give a little clarity as to why we are constantly validating what we at COLFO do.

I believe we can all play our part in uniting the firearms community and protecting our sport or hobby. Everyone is entitled to their viewpoint and everyone will see things in a slightly different perspective but we should all work together in challenging those that would deny us our sport. It can be hard to change someone's views and convictions but education helps and if we have the opportunity to discuss and correct someone's misconceptions we should put in the effort and if possible alleviate those concerns. Education, promotion and positivity, it all adds up.

We must all know the law and comply with the law. We represent every licensed firearm owner in NZ and if our negligence lands us in hot water we are potentially all tarred with the same brush. We must not underestimate this responsibility

We can no longer take what we have for granted, the good old Kiwi "she'll be right, someone else will do it" attitude won't cut it. If we are called to make our voice heard and are confident and capable do it, we must all make the effort, or regret not doing it once it is too late. COLFO will endeavour to counter any new laws, regulations, or policies that restrict our lawful ownership and use of firearms, but needs the solid backing of us all to achieve this.

You can become an individual supporter of COLFO here: <http://colfo.org.nz>