

# COLFO News Issue 3 – June 2018

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## COLFO to become more inclusive.

At the COLFO AGM in May a remit was passed allowing interested groups who may be affected by arms legislation, such as air-soft and paintball users, to come under the umbrella of COLFO... COLFO encourages any firearms interest group or individual to become a member – visit our website for details.

## COLFO Fee increases

Unrelenting anti firearm activity over the past two years has resulted in increasing workloads for COLFO Board members, involving domestic and international travel as well as supporting various legal challenges and projects that benefit all shooters. This all comes at a cost and in order to rebuild our funds it has been necessary to increase fees for the first time in decades. Most of COLFOs annual income is derived from donations; this is where you can help our cause by giving a little to: **06-0501-0736016-00**

## Where to with Licence Testing?

Police have advised that new licence applicants will need to access the new, yet to be published, Arms Code from the Police website, and when ready sit a firearm safety test at a location where driver licence testing is provided, such as AA or VTNZ. Once they have passed the theory test they will then need to attend a two hour practical handling lecture and assessment before their application can progress.

It has been announced by New Zealand Police that they have awarded the contract to deliver the practical firearms handling component of the new on line testing regime for two years commencing 1 July to the Mountain Safety Council. The MSC is now attempting to recruit part time paid contractors to deliver this programme in just 48 main centres throughout the country.

COLFO is concerned that this new system will result in fewer people having opportunity to gain their licence, especially for those with learning difficulties and those living in remote locations.

If you experience unreasonable difficulty in accessing the new licence testing process COLFO would like to hear about it.

## Guns and Gangs

What unintended consequences will the newly announced **Firearms Prohibition Orders Bill** have for law abiding firearm owners? This Bill gives powers to the Commissioner of Police to prohibit members of gangs from possessing or associating with any person with a firearm. COLFO sees one concern in a new definition of “possession” which the Bill defines as “in relation to a firearm, part, or ammunition, includes a firearm, part, or ammunition that is subject to a person’s control but that is in the custody of another person”. What exactly does this mean in practice and how will it affect licensed owners? How will anyone know who is subject to a prohibition order- in order not to associate with them in any way relating to a firearm?

This Bill will require close scrutiny and robust submissions at the Select Committee stage. COLFO will keep you advised.

## Imported Firearms

Recently dealers have queried the need to supply details of imported A Cat firearm serial numbers to Police. Following consultation with the Arms Act Deliver Service it was pointed out to COLFO that this is a requirement set out in **Section 13 Notification of Importation** of the **Arms Regulations 1992**, which requires full details to be supplied to the Arms Office that issued the import permit within 30 days of the firearm arriving in New Zealand. Failure to do so may incur a fine of up to \$ 400 on conviction.

This should be seen as Police doing their job effectively rather than introducing a new imposition on importers. COLFO does not see this as “registration by stealth” but rather a means of collecting accurate data on firearm imports.

### **The Future of the Shooting Sports in New Zealand**

Sometimes it feels that the misguided attacks on our hobbies are relentless. It is clear that there are some people who are of the opinion that all firearms should be removed from civilian hands. This is their right. The only way we can prevent this from happening- and it could well happen that the ownership of firearms is severely restricted in this country - is by increasing our numbers. The reality is that licensed firearm owners- who are by definition “fit and proper” and thus law abiding are likely to adhere to any restrictions on their sport no matter how unjust, or give up the sport because it all becomes too difficult. Once the number of licensed shooters drops below a certain critical mass, the pastime we all love will be stilled, probably for ever.

COLFO works hard for you, frequently behind the scenes. Our board watch carefully all media articles, lobby at the national and international stage and talk to all participants whether police, politicians or “the antis”. But there is one thing we cannot do to any great degree and one thing you can help us with- and that is get more people into the shooting sports.

We see this as a numbers game. More shooters equates to greater influence on decision makers. As it stands there are a huge number of people with licences in New Zealand- but we need as many as we can get and there is much you can do to help.

The first thing is, don’t dismiss other shooters or their disciplines. While you may only enjoy one particular shooting discipline and have no interest in other types of firearm, don’t throw fellow shooters under the bus by condemning their particular style of shooting. Our experience has been that media or persons with an agenda will seize on and distort any message from just one person, no matter how well intentioned, and this will become the opinion of “all” shooters. How often have we heard people with an anti firearm agenda say “I have talked to lots of shooters who agree with me”.

The second thing is, and perhaps more important than anything, is to introduce other people to your hobby. There are two aspects to this. If someone doesn’t like firearms, or has a “Hollywood” view of them, you will find that simply by taking them to the range and exposing them to a chance to have a shot and try out different types of firearms they may be more supportive of us. COLFO did just that with the Select Committee last year. They may well, after a positive experience- pipe up on a comment on a news site or to a friend that they understand the shooting community and why they are so passionate about their sport.

Most importantly however, by encouraging and introducing people to the sport (“ I have always wanted to try this”) they may get a licence and take up the sport. We tend to think about only introducing younger generations to the sport but we need to think more widely. Women are the fastest growing demographic for shooting sports in the United States and there is no reason to think this won’t be the case here. Your clubs and friends should always be on the lookout for a chance to introduce new shooters whether having a “user friendly” process to join the club, or an open day. If you come across someone at your workplace who has “always been interested” in firearms, you should make the opportunity to take them out, even if it is just plinking away with a .22.

If just 10% of shooters in New Zealand got just one person into the hobby every year, within a short time our voices would never be able to be silenced. It is up to you.

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