

COLFO News Issue 4 – August 2018

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Importing Parts for Semi Autos

Centralising the processing of import permit applications at PNHQ in Wellington has resulted in a faster and more consistent process. However importers are now finding that their applications to import semi auto parts, particularly for AR15, for resale or stock are being declined because police claim these parts can be used for either A cat firearms or MSSAs. A special reason is required to import MSSA parts and police do not consider resale or stock to be a special reason.

This has resulted in a number of dealers contemplating legal action against the police and uproar on social media from fans of the AR 15. At the July FCAF meeting COLFO along with others asked the police to produce a clear guide for importers to follow in order to achieve a successful application. Meanwhile COLFO is looking at all options to resolve this issue.

To put the above in perspective it should be noted that in May and June out of a total of 588 import applications 20 were declined.

Ron Mark has our back

COLFO understands how important it is to be able to speak directly to those in the beehive. That is why we have been fostering relationships with Ministers in the new government, so firearms owners have a voice speaking directly to the decision makers.

We recently spoke with New Zealand First MP and Minister of Defence, Ron Mark,

It was a positive and fruitful discussion. Most of you know how instrumental Ron was during the Firearms Inquiry and that he is a member of the Wairarapa Pistol and Sports Shooting Club in Carterton. I am happy to say that he is just as supportive of firearms owners as he has ever been and that he is working behind the scenes for us.

The nature of being a government Minister, means that sometimes, rather than saying things publicly, things have to be said internally. And while we may not see them making comments to the media, we should resist the urge to think that nothing is happening. In many ways, this is a much better outcome for firearms owners. It is much better having Members of Parliament that support us, sitting around the cabinet table, than to be on the outside looking in.

While Ron could not comment on much of what is going on in government for confidentiality reasons, we should look at the bigger picture. In just a few months time, it will have been a year since the election. During this period, not a single law affecting firearms owners has been tabled by the government and no legislation has been brought forward as a result of the Select Committee Inquiry into Firearms. If you think of that, and recall some of the comments made by the then opposition before the election, I think we can safely assume that Ron is sticking to his guns in government.

It is good to see a Member of Parliament supporting the people who helped put them there.

Latest on Licence Testing

Following a last minute rush of applicants in June to sit their firearms safety test under the old system, it would seem that the new process administered by AA, VTNZ and MSC is not yet fully up to speed. AA and VTNZ staff are still being briefed and MSC has yet to fill all instructor positions and find venues for practical training. Locations so far advised would appear to serve major cities and some provincial towns poorly.

Police have sample firearm safety questions available on their website in the form of 3 x 10 question quiz. Take the test and see how you do, http://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/firearms-learning/arms-code-quiz/content/start.html#/?_k=hbgpbd

Police Road Show

Some 500 members from the firearms community attended meetings held by police around the country during June and July. Police advise that the top three themes for the firearms community are:

- The need for consistency in how the Arms Act and associated processes are administered across districts.
- Better and more frequent communication and engagement between Police and firearms community.
- The introduction of online services including licence application and payment to meet the changing needs of the community while retaining paper-based application options.

More information is available at: <http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/firearms-and-safety/news-and-updates>

The International Side of Things.

COLFO has always felt it's important to have strong international links, not just regionally with Australia but also globally with organisations such as WFSA and the NRA. You will remember late last year we hosted WFSA in Queenstown and had, what was said by WFSA to have hosted the best conference in memory.

Having forged strong international ties gives us many advantages. Firstly, it adds to our credibility within New Zealand. Politicians and the public rightfully look at a network that an organisation is part of. If we have to make submissions on an issue, we are in much stronger (accredited) position by being able to say that we are recognised by the United Nations and indeed it was two of our board members who drafted the model firearms legislation for the UN based largely on the NZ Arms Act.

Secondly, it gives us access to pools of resources that are beyond our capability to obtain easily. There is growing international views about the use of lead for example, and it would be very easy to significantly restrict shooting in New Zealand by restricting this fundamental of substances. WFSA have done a huge amount of research on lead which we have contributed to. The SSAA in Australia have an enormous pool of research and have funded a study which proves that the "post port Arthur" changes in Australia have made no difference to firearms misuse in Australia. We have a good relationship with Canadian groups who have masses of material on the failure of registration in Canada. This gives us access to academics who can counter some New Zealand university commentators with a higher standard of research.

Thirdly, we cannot ignore the global picture of Arms control. International agreements are not binding on you as a New Zealander until they are ratified in law by the New Zealand Parliament. The devil is often in the detail with these agreements and quite often small aspects of any treaty, then adopted by New Zealand law, could have a significant effect on New Zealanders abilities to enjoy their lawful sports. New Zealand is a country that loves to sign international agreements and by having a presence there we can keep an eye on New Zealand's diplomats and report back to our own Government if they "stray from the reservation". One of our friends from SAAMI has reported that the New Zealand delegation is a bit more constrained since "They know you are watching". And watch we will be.

As part of our commitment to the International scene we will be attending the 4th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Tokyo later this year. We will be part of the WFSA contingence to present a united front to people who, without any doubt, would like to see no private ownership (and in some cases Military and Police!) of firearms at all.

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