



MINUTES : Firearms Community Advisory Forum

SUBJECT	Firearms Community Advisory Forum
DATE	Thursday 10 December
TIME	0930 - 1230
VENUE	Draughtsman Room, Wellington Museum, 3 Jervois Quay, Queens Wharf, Wellington
ATTENDEES	MICHAEL DOWLING, ROSS MASON, JOHN HERBERT, GWYN THURLOW, ANDREW EDGEcombe, DEBBIE WAKKER, EWAN KELSALL, ANGELA MCLEOD, JOE GREEN, PETER FURLEY, JARED WRIGHT, DON ROOD, ROGER DUXFORD, MEREDITH ACKRILL, ALEX TOMSON, MIKE MCILRAITH, CATHERINE PETREY, GEOFFREY DUNN, JOHN WHITE, ERIC GATLAND, RICHARD WILSON, CAITLIN KEARNEY JOHN HERBERT
APOLOGIES	ANDREW BAKKER

Agenda item 1: Welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited a round table.

The Chair introduced the Minister of Police, Hon Poto Williams, and gave some background on FCAF and the working relationship that FCAF has with Police.

Confirmation of Chatham House Rules.

Agenda item 2: Meeting the Minister of Police Hon Poto Williams

The Minister introduced herself and thanked FCAF members for their ongoing engagement with Police.

The Minister advised that she wants to ensure that the new arms laws do what they are intended to do. She invited FCAF to discuss the independent entity as well as what the Minister's Arms Advisory Group may look like to determine whether balance is being struck between safety and the needs of the firearms community and where any tensions may be. She invited FCAF's support, guidance and advice to achieve this.

In response, FCAF members advised that they are involved with this forum to ensure licenced firearms holders can enjoy use of firearms and comply with legislation. Further, they want to be recognised as a community and not be pigeonholed or described as a lobby group.

An FCAF member welcomed the Minister's acknowledgement of the professional and commercial aspect of firearms.

An FCAF member advised that new legislative changes following the March 15 terror attacks in Christchurch have created problems between Police and firearms licence holders and these need to be worked through. An FCAF Member acknowledged that this means addressing issues as they arise and noted the need to ensure that all licence holders can restore their relationship with Police and that good communication from both Police and the Minister would assist.

The Minister gave her commitment to collective and collaborative consultation and acknowledged that people can be alienated if there is no collaboration. The collective consultation with FCAF at a high level is good, but we need that consultation in the wider community.

Points raised by individual FCAF members included:

- Members of FCAF have a working relationship with Police but not with the Police Association.
- Members of FCAF felt that there would be benefits to having centrally led firearms services, rather than the current model which is district owned.
- There are the financial implications on volunteers and hunting and shooting organisations as a result of needing to meet the new shooting range requirements. Clubs and organisations are of benefit to the wider community as they provide firearm handling skills and ensure firearms safety, such as providing an appropriate place for people to zero their firearms rather than on a riverbed. They are also a good way to have oversight as to who is involved in the firearms community.

The Minister acknowledged FCAFs concern about club members meeting all health and safety requirements.

It was noted that there is a working group, the Range Engagement Group, who have been involved with advising on the implementation of the legislative requirements for clubs and ranges and that FCAF members and nominees are part of that group.

The Minister raised the proposed independent entity and Minister's arms advisory group, and asked FCAF for its view on the entity and the advisory group.

In response FCAF members:

- raised example of previous data breach, some of their stakeholder members had advised that they had seen the data but did not want to alert Police due to a concern that Police would impose conditions on their licence. FCAF noted this feedback from members isn't isolated, they get similar comments frequently.
- noted that an independent arms agency was set up in Canada and was not successful; arms management was returned to Police. The Thorp Report advises that Police is the best entity to oversee arms administration and the risk with handing this to a new entity is that Police will end up doing a lot of the work anyway.
- Advised they would like to see more women involved in arms discussions and groups, their point of view is important and they understand firearms as well as the danger that firearms pose.

A member on behalf of FCAF thanked the Minister for coming and acknowledged that this was a positive step in the right direction.

Agenda item 3: Confirm previous minutes and update action points

The chair confirmed Andrew Bakker is an apology and advised FCAF that he is replacing Tony Ruffle as the South Island representative from NZ Handloaders.

Previous FCAF meeting minutes and Action Points confirmed.

FIREARMS COMMUNITY ADVISORY FORUM – ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

ACTION POINTS JULY 2020 MEETING	ASSIGNED TO	STATUS
POLICE TO DEVELOP A TABLE FOR THE TYPES OF CLUBS & RANGES WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH TYPE (INCLUDING SHOOTING ON PRIVATE LAND)	POLICE	UNDERWAY THROUGH THE RANGE ADVISORY GROUP
POLICE TO PROVIDE FCAF WITH EXTRACTS OF THE INTERIM AND FINAL DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS PROVIDED TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SHOOTING ON PRIVATE LAND	POLICE	COMPLETED
FCAF TO HELP DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION ON NEW CHANGES TO ARMS LEGISLATION INCLUDING CLARIFICATION ON CLUBS & RANGES TO THE FIREARMS COMMUNITY	FCAF	COMPLETED
POLICE PROVIDE A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR GENERAL ARMS RELATED QUESTIONS	POLICE	COMPLETED
POLICE TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING FCAF MEETINGS ONLINE	POLICE	COMPLETED

Police Action Point: Provide FCAF with an update on the table that is being developed by the Range Advisory Group on the types of clubs & ranges with the requirements for each type (including shooting on private land) once an update is available

Agenda item 4: Implementation of the Arms Legislation Act, including regulations

Police gave an overview of the legislative changes coming into force on 24 December 2020 and advised that prior to June 2021, Police will have issued a discussion paper for public consultation.

An FCAF member asked whether gunsmiths fall within types of businesses covered by dealer activities. Police advised that they do and that many already have dealer licences. Another FCAF member enquired how the term ‘business’ is defined, Police confirmed they have received guidance from Inland Revenue in relation to this.

Police also discussed the conditions on dealers’ licence and suggested that a single document containing all conditions might be suitable. Further, some amendments to regulations may be required regarding security requirements, record keeping and a series of general conditions. An FCAF member enquired how long those records must be kept. Police confirmed the legislative requirement is ten years (s 12(1A)) and understands that this length of time has previously been common practice.

Police then discussed regulations relating to firearms licence holders, ammunition sellers, health practitioners, marking of firearms and parts, Police review process and other technical matters. Some FCAF members raised the following:

- Whether there will be any changes requiring a firearms licence to be held for airsoft. Police advised that the new regulations are not leading to this.
- Whether there was any consideration towards banning blank firing pistols. Police acknowledged that these are an issue, especially as they can be converted, and reiterated this is why there are controls on import.

- Whether the s62A Police review process is for endorsements. Police confirmed that this process is just for revocation of firearms licences/refusal of an application for a firearms licence. The purpose of s62A is to make it easier for someone to undergo a review as they do not need to go to Court. An independent commissioned officer will review and make a decision based on the s 24A 'fit and proper' criteria.
- When will the discussion document be made available for public consultation and how long will public consultation run for? Police advised consultation will likely commence early 2021 and run for 6-8 weeks.

Police Action Point: Police to circulate the PowerPoint used during Agenda Item 4 outlining the upcoming legislative changes.

Agenda item 5: Operation of implementation of the Arms Legislation Act

Police advised that there are around 9,800 licence applications and over 3,000 licence renewals pending for processing. This is due to Covid-19, the lack of availability of Firearms Safety Courses and as a result of the changes/differences to how things are being done in the licensing space, such as new systems and forms, new training for staff, and more quality assurance processes.

An FCAF member enquired what the estimated timeframe is for processing outstanding licence applications and renewals. Police advised that each application or renewal will vary but clearing these is a focus for Police.

Some FCAF members provided feedback on their recent experiences with the licensing process and flagged opportunities where processes could be better or different.

Further questions were asked by individual FCAF members about the licensing system:

- Whether there was an intention to centralise the licensing process? Police advised that there are changes being made in 2021, which will include proposing a national operating model but noted that there is 'no quick fix'. If implemented this would provide an opportunity for increased standardisation and efficiency.
- An FCAF member raised that it is an issue when the applicant and their spouse aren't interviewed separately, and that staff should be trained to pick up on verbal and non-verbal cues. Police advised that with the new interviewing process, the spouse can be interviewed while their partner (the applicant) is completing the soon to be developed and more extensive firearms safety test.
- How are the vettors paid? Police advised that this is currently being worked through.
- What are the new questions asked in the firearms licence test? Police advised that currently there are 10 firearms safety related questions. Moving forward, the intent is to educate applicants and consider adding additional questions about legislative requirements. An FCAF member responded in agreement and said that the test should make the applicant aware of the requirements of them.

An FCAF member raised the benefit of visits to applicants by a vettor that they have had a relationship with during their time as a licence holder. This can also assist in non-verbal cues being picked up on. Police agreed that this relationship is invaluable.

Police completed this agenda item by reiterating that changes to the licensing system will take time and welcomed any further feedback or suggestions.

Agenda item 6: Update on buy-back(s)

Police gave an update on the 2019 buy-back and the 2021 buy-back.

- **2019 buy-back:** Over 60,000 firearms and 299,900 parts collected. This could not have been done without the support of FCAF and the community
- **2021 buy-back:** Will be smaller than 2019 buy-back and will be introduced through targeted communications. The purpose is to remove firearms that were picked up in the Arms Legislation Act 2020. This buy-back will look different to the 2019 buy-back. Hand in process will be different as it will be by appointment to hand into a Police Station. An individualised approach is being taken to ensure compliance with regulations and the buy-back team have been contacting people directly. Option available to get a permit to possess PCCK's, many have already applied for this. To date, the feedback received has largely been positive. Items held on a collector's endorsement won't be affected by the upcoming buy-back.

Further questions and comments were made by individual FCAF members in relation to the 2019 and 2021 buy-backs:

- Will uppers will be included in the 2021 buy-back? Police advised that they will, subject to the regulations being passed and Commissioner of Police approving the price list.
- How will Police deal with those that for whatever reason want to hand in an item that should have been handed in during the 2019 buy-back? Police advised that they want to acknowledge those that did comply during the 2019 buy-back and therefore there is a balance here. An FCAF member noted they would rather have the items out of the community so are not opposed if Police continue to compensate for items from the 2019 buy-back.
- An FCAF member raised that there is an issue of people being called about item(s) that have already handed in. Police acknowledged that there was some follow up taking place and data resolution was part of that.
- As amnesty and compensation for the 2019 buy-back expires 20 December 2019, is there anything outstanding? Police confirmed that there are still a few applications that are still currently application stage, but these can still be refunded after 20 December.
- Is there a pathway for items that that become available after the close out, for example estate property? Police confirmed that we will always take these items and they will be destroyed.
- How do you make appointments? Police confirmed that appointments are made by contacting Police to book a time to hand in your firearms and/or parts at a station.¹
- Why are centrefire pump-action rifles, such as a Remington, included in the buy-back? Police advised they would provide some further information about this.

Police Action Point: Centre-fire pump action rifles

Police to provide FCAF members with further information as to why Centre-fire pump action rifles are included in the 2021 buyback.

Agenda item 7: Minister's Arms Advisory Group

Police advised that they are about to begin the process of establishing the new statutory body the Arms Advisory Group (Advisory Group) as provided for by sections 88-91 of the Arms Act. The purpose of the group is to advise the Minister on matters that contribute to achieving the objectives of the Act; the safe use and control of firearms.

Police outlined the statutory operations of the Advisory Group under section 89 and the provisions relating to the appointment of members under section 90.

Police gave an overview of the criteria considered for selection of the chair:

¹ Since the meeting, further information on the 2021 buy-back has been published on Police's website, including the email address for contact: buyback2021@police.govt.nz <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/firearms-and-safety/what-do-i-need-know/new-firearms-laws-and-what-they-mean/amnesty>

- Experience in setting a direction for a group that will assist on-going review and support the review of the Act
- Knowledge of legitimate and illegitimate use of firearms in New Zealand, the various stakeholders and the associated challenges
- Understanding of machinery of government and experience of good regulatory practice including good consultative practice

Police also gave an overview of the criteria for selection of all members, being the statutory requirements under section 90 as well as:

- Evidence in working collaboratively with individuals holding divergent view; and
- Ability to work with Te Ao Māori and New Zealand's diverse population

Police confirmed that the next steps:

- Extending invitations now and will follow up with a formal letter to each of the members of FCAF seeking nominations.
- Nominations will also be sought from representatives of the non-firearms owning community.
- Nominations are to be approved by Cabinet.
- The aim is for the Minister's proposed Chair and membership of the Advisory Group to be consulted with her Ministerial colleagues on 24 February 2021.
- The intention is to hold a first meeting as soon as possible after that date for the Advisory Group to contribute to the consultation processes for the Regulations and guidance material.

Agenda item 8: Target shooting/private ranges on farms

An FCAF member had raised ahead of the meeting that they wanted to discuss target shooting and private ranges on farms. They understood that this was currently in discussion with the Range Engagement Group and thought it would be useful to have a wider discussion with FCAF about this. Prior to the meeting Police circulated the interim and final departmental reports which inform the policy intent which will inform the regulation and guidance material which is being discussed in the first instance with the Range Engagement Group

Agenda item 9: Other business

Prior to the meeting an FCAF member asked for an update on the Communications Centre in Kapiti. Police advised that in the Centre there are three inspectors, a senior sergeant, around 35 employees, and an additional smaller team at the Centre to bring about general change and to meet legislative requirements.

An FCAF member enquired what Police process is if made aware that that prohibited ammunition is still being used? Police confirmed that a pragmatic approach would be taken and that its use will not be condoned.

Regarding new requirement on firearms licence holder to provide their health practitioner(s) details as part of their licence application, an FCAF member advised that it would be helpful for Police to provide plain English guidance to licence holders about how they initiate this conversation with their practitioner. Police acknowledged this and advised that we have information for health practitioners.² Another FCAF member noted that it would also be helpful to have plain English guidance outlining process when Police inspect firearms and security standard as they are not confident all firearms

² Available at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/info-for-health-practitioners-arms-act-1983.pdf>

owners are aware. Police thanked them for their feedback and confirmed there are things Police can do to assist here.

Meeting concluded 12.30 hrs

Next meeting: 15 April 2021

ACTION POINTS DECEMBER 2020 MEETING	ASSIGNED TO	STATUS
CIRCULATE POWERPOINT USED IN AGENDA ITEM 4	POLICE	
PROVIDE UPDATE ON HOW TABLE FOR THE TYPES OF CLUBS & RANGES WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH TYPE (INCLUDING SHOOTING ON PRIVATE LAND) IS PROGRESSING WITH RANGE ADVISORY GROUP	POLICE	
PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION AS TO WHY CENTRE FIRE PUMPS ARE INCLUDED IN 2021 BUYBACK	POLICE	
DISCUSS AND CONFIRM MEETING DATES FOR 2021	POLICE	