

Arms Legislation Bill requires significant improvement

The Game Animal Council (GAC) has appeared before Parliament's Finance and Expenditure Select Committee to outline significant issues with the Arms Legislation Bill.

"The GAC agrees with maximising public safety and will support reasonable measures to do that," says Game Animal Council Chairman Don Hammond. "However, we do not support provisions that will have little positive influence on public safety and that will unfairly impact licenced firearms owners and safe participation in hunting."

"Unfortunately, the Bill focuses heavily on law-abiding licenced hunters and firearms owners and does relatively little to address the illegal use and possession of firearms by criminals."

"The proposed firearms registry is an example of something that will increase compliance and costs on responsible firearms owners without actually benefiting safety."

"We are also concerned with the many unworkable provisions within the Bill that would, for example, require hunters to register short-term change of possession when sharing firearms while on a hunting trip or would require a professional hunting guide to hold a dealer's licence so that they can lend a firearm to a client."

"None of these provisions will make a discernible difference to public safety. They are unnecessary, cumbersome and, quite frankly, poorly thought-out," says Hammond.

The GAC has a statutory obligation to make sure there remains sufficient access to firearms safety training.

"Shooting ranges and clubs that are run well benefit public safety, encourage compliance and maximise training opportunities. We want to see greater access to firearms safety and training and fear that the legislation will impose onerous compliance on ranges and clubs that will limit the existence and use of those facilities."

There are also a number of natural justice issues with the Bill.

“While the GAC supports the fundamental premise of a fit and proper person test, the current provisions require amendment so that they are reasonable, objective and do not provide the Police with unnecessary discretionary and non-notified rights of entry powers.”

“The Bill as written contains impractical and unworkable compliance for hunters along with a significant increase in costs,” says Hammond. “The GAC considers that the Bill requires substantial amendment for it to not have a significant impact on game animal hunting in New Zealand,”

The Game Animal Council’s submission on the Arms Legislation Bill is available [here](#).

The NZ Game Animal Council is a statutory organisation responsible for the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, commerce and conservation.

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