

Game Animal Council welcomes extra effort to process firearms licenses

The Game Animal Council (GAC) has welcomed a commitment from the NZ Police to put more resources towards processing outstanding firearms licenses.

As of December 2020, 9800 new licence applications and 2940 licence renewals sat outstanding.

“The GAC has been concerned for some time about this mounting backlog and have been working with Police to find a solution to it. We are really pleased that they have now committed additional staff to make inroads into the backlog and ensure legitimate firearms users remain compliant with the law,” says GAC General Manager Tim Gale.

“With the growing popularity of hunting over the last few years there has been an increased demand for firearms licenses. Last year’s COVID-19 lockdowns and new legislative requirements to determine a ‘fit and proper person’ also added significant delays to the processing of applications.”

“The Government’s COVID-19 response legislation extended licence expiry dates and provided short-term relief for current licence holders. However, there has been concern that those extensions could expire before the required renewals are processed.”

With autumn’s ‘roar’ fast approaching the hunting sector is keen to make sure that people don’t miss out due to the licence backlog.

“The anticipation is that this year could be one of the best roar periods for a long time with more mature trophy-quality stags having survived 2020 due to last year’s roar coinciding with the initial level 4 lockdown.”

“I know hunters are really excited to get out there and we don’t want compliance issues out of their control keeping them at home.”

The GAC has been informed that uniformed Police officers will be added to the non-uniformed staff undertaking licence vetting work. Applicants should therefore not be alarmed at being contacted and visited by Police constables in the coming months.

“To assist with the smooth processing of licence renewals going forward we also want to remind hunters to get their application in at least four months before expiry of their current licence,” says Gale.

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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