

COLFO News Issue 1

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COLFO and you

As COLFO celebrates its 20th year of operation we face more challenges to our sport and pastime than ever before and this year is shaping up to be a busy one. A Select Committee Inquiry has just been launched into the possession of firearms by criminals, it is most important to engage with this to ensure that its outcomes do not reflect adversely on licenced firearm owners. Police and other agencies are also reviewing all aspects of the Arms Act 1983, which may result in adverse outcomes for all of us. On the world stage civilian ownership of firearms is under greater threat from a large and well funded anti firearm lobby. While at home shooting activities frequently suffer from decisions made by local authorities and corporate bodies.

Most of you enjoy membership of COLFO through a separate Association that represents your particular discipline; many of you may even contribute several times through various clubs or associations. However what you contribute through your parent association is peanuts, in many cases less than 50 cents per year. While COLFO may appear to be financially robust with \$213,000 in assets, your current level of contribution is not enough to sustain the annual running costs and the war chest, built up by your contributions of \$3 per head and hard work by others in the early days will be quickly eroded.

If you believe that the way to safeguard our present rights and privileges to firearm ownership is through an organisation that unites and represents all shooting activities then we urge you to either join COLFO as an individual member (\$20) or persuade your club to join as a club member (\$100) and your parent association to increase its contribution.

COLFO and Parliament

COLFO had the opportunity to attend two meetings at Parliament in early April. The first meeting was with Hon Judith Collins, Minister of Police. COLFO have spent five years trying to get a meeting with the Minister of Police and were excited to be afforded the opportunity.

The Minister was frank and forthright in her views about firearms ownership. She is rightly focused on Police being kept safe from criminals using guns and we completely agree. She has no intention of taking away any rights of the fit and proper licenced individuals. The focus from her office is on illegal ownership and criminal use with no intention of interfering with the privileges afforded to the responsible licenced owners.

Our second meeting was with the Law and Order Select Committee in advance of their *Inquiry into the illegal Possession of Firearms*. We handed a document over to the committee outlining what history firearms has in New Zealand, we outlined the legitimate firearms use that is occurring around the country including international sporting events for multiple disciplines that are coming. We asked the L&OC to be familiar with the effects of any potential law change recommendations on our rural sector and our fit and proper licenced users. We gave detailed suggestions on what information the L&OC should be seeking from other Government departments in order to address the actual issues correctly with the correct information. Suggestions were made regarding border control and deterrence initiatives to affect the criminal users. The L&OC reiterated to us that they do not want their review to have an effect on nor is it targeted at the fit and proper licenced holder.

COLFO is now engaged in preparing a submission for the Select Committee inquiry, submissions close on 8 June. We encourage all members to make their own submissions; more information can be found here:

http://www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/sc/make-submission/51SCLO_SCF_00DBSCH_INQ_68642_1/inquiry-into-issues-relating-to-the-illegal-possession

COLFO and Police

COLFO is a member of the Police Firearms Community Advisory Forum and a number of board members attend this forum representing their own associations. We are aware of issues that many members have around delays in renewing licences, permits to procure and permits to import, also inconsistent decisions made by different Arms Officers. We are advised that staffing problems at Police National HQ have been addressed and backlogs are being cleared. COLFO has made Official Information Act requests to Police seeking details on what they are planning for the next round of arms legislation, but so far Police have declined to provide this information. At this stage further comment would be speculation.

COLFO and Legal Issues

A list of useful firearm related court cases has been researched and made available on the COLFO website. COLFO has engaged Barrister Nick Taylor to assist with reviewing suitable case law and possible legal challenges on firearm issues.

COLFO and the World

Firearm ownership is under threat throughout the world from governments and powerful well funded lobby groups, particularly in Europe, following recent terrorist attacks. COLFO is now a full voting members of the World Forum on Shooting Activities (WFSA) and will be sending a representative to the next meeting in Phoenix USA in late October.

Recognising the importance of international alliances COLFO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA) in February last year and since then has engaged in sharing information and advice between the two organisations. We will be sending a representative to the SSAA Conference on *Conservation through the Sustainable Use of Wildlife* at Brisbane in August and meeting with the SSAA Board.

At the UN there is another round of negotiations on the Arm Trade Treaty later in the year, we hope to gain a place on the NZ delegation to this meeting. Meanwhile our chairman has held several informal meetings with MFAT to ensure the ATT does not adversely affect NZ firearm owners.

In October last year Board member Rachael Dean attended the symposium on *The Sustainable Use of Lead Ammunition in Hunting and Sports Shooting*, held in Brussels. More information will be found on the COLFO website.

COLFO AGM

The following were elected to the Board:

Chair: Paul Clark, Vice Chair & Treasurer: Michael Dowling, Secretary: Nicole McKee.

Members: NRANZ-Nicole McKee, NZSRA-John Bryce, SSANZ- Phil Cregeen, NZAHAA-Andrew Edgecombe, NZDA- Chaz Forsyth, PNZ- Deborah Wakker, Independent-Rachael Dean.