

23 August 2022

Roger Calkin  
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Dear Roger

***Request for information***

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 31 May 2022, in which you asked for information regarding gangs and guns. Firstly, apologies for the delay with our response, there are complexities to firearms data collation that are the focus of a number of projects currently.

My response to each of your questions can be found below.

1. *How many of the firearms that the Police have recovered from Gangs in the last 3 years been identified as having come from burglaries committed against licensed firearms owners?*

Burglaries of firearms are currently trending down nationally.

Linking burglaries to gangs would require the considerable collation and scrutiny of individual files. Therefore, this data broken down by gang is refused pursuant to section 18(f) of the OIA as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Police can, however, provide the overall number of firearms stolen in burglaries per financial year -please refer to the table below.

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Firearms Stolen in Burglary</b>
2019/20	691
2020/21	497
2021/22	351
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,539</b>

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**Police National Headquarters**

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2. *How many holders of firearms licenses have been charged with providing firearms illegally to gangs or gang members in the last 3 years?*

Criminal charges for the supply of firearms do not specify whether the firearm was supplied to a gang or gang member.

However, as a result of Operation Tauwhiro (a nationwide operation to disrupt and prevent firearms-related violence by criminal gangs and organised crime groups), Police identified a trend of 'diversion' whereby on occasion people with firearms licences, (or in possession of a firearms licence that had been revoked) were purchasing firearms for gang members.

Police is now operating a 'Retail Firearms Diversion' project and is analysing all firearms sales back to April 2019. A firearms investigation team has been established and is actively analysing firearms sales (over 150,000 from gun dealers/retailers).

Since December 2021 to date, 11 people, a mix of current and revoked firearms licence holders, have been charged with 37 offences in relation to the diversion of firearms. Only four of these individuals can be definitively linked to gangs. Your request for information prior to December 2021 is refused pursuant to section 18(g) of the OIA, as this information is not held.

This diversion project demonstrates the need and benefit of having a firearms registry. Once Police has a registry in place, it will be much harder for these few licences holders who are acting illegally, to do so.

An extensive campaign to work with the industry was launched to prevent this problem and a firearms licence checking system is in place for dealers to check on licence status.

3. *How many firearms recovered from gangs or gang members in the last 3 years can be directly linked back to having been "diverted away from the lawful fleet" by "unscrupulous" firearms license holders?*

Police did not hold this type of data prior to the establishment of the Retail Firearms Diversion project. Many firearms when recovered do not have serial numbers attached (these are often removed) which makes source tracing difficult. Your request is therefore refused pursuant to section 18(g) of the OIA, as the information requested is not held.

This issue is now being mitigated and reported through the Retail Firearms Diversion project. To enhance this process, Police is now using a firearms source tracing software program E-Trace.

4. *How many of the holders of firearms licenses who have been charged with providing firearms illegally to gangs or gang members in the last 3 years found to have been properly vetted and the licensing requirements properly followed by NZ Police when approving the firearms license?*

The information you have requested is not held, therefore this part of your request is refused pursuant to section 18(g) of the OIA.

A full review is undertaken with every person charged to ascertain their ongoing licence status, and revocation measures put in place.

Police stands by the vetting process requirements. It is important to note many of the people charged in relation to retail firearms diversion are often not obviously linked to gangs.

5. *How many firearms have been intercepted and/or confiscated coming through New Zealands borders illegally in the last 3 years?*

New Zealand Police transferred this question to New Zealand Customs on 11 July 2022. You will receive a response directly from them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darryl Sweeney".

**Darryl Sweeney**  
National Organised Crime Group.  
Lower North - South