

PROACTIVE INFORMATION	
Private Member's Consultation Draft: Arms (Prohibition on Shortened Firearms) Amendment Bill	
Deadline: NA	Date of Response: 31 July 2018

Purpose

1. Briefs you on the content of the proposed Private Member's Bill, the COLFO position, and Police's comment on the Bill.

Important points to note

2. An Arms (Prohibition on Shortened Firearms) Amendment Bill has been proposed by Alistair Scott MP. A consultation version of the Bill appears to have been circulated to members of the firearms owning community for their comment. The Bill has not yet been accepted into the ballot. It may well be changed following feedback from firearm owners. It is not known if the wider, non-firearm-owning community has been consulted.
3. The Bill seeks to treat a shortened firearm as if it were a pistol by requiring a permit to be acquired if intending to: (i) shorten a firearm (ii) possess a shortened firearm (iii) sell a shortened firearm to another person, and (iv) import a firearm that has been shortened. It also suggests a penalty of imprisonment of no more than five years for anyone found in possession of a shortened firearm without having acquired it through the permit process. Anyone owning a shortened firearm must have it destroyed, disposed of or exported. No provision is made for buy-back or compensation.
4. [REDACTED] COLFO's main points are that a permit to procure process would:
 - put additional requirements on licensed owners of A category firearms who may have legitimate reasons for shortening their firearm but keeping them more than 762 millimetres in length. They correctly point out that many hunters will shorten the barrel of their firearm to accommodate a suppressor;
 - create criminals of law-abiding citizens (this would be the case if a person did not adhere to the requirements of the amendment should it proceed); and
 - put additional demands on Police's limited resources.

Extending the permit to procure process

5. Currently only pistols, MSSAs and restricted weapons require a permit to procure. There is no fee set for this service.

6. Extending the permit to procure process to cover the sale or transfer of all firearms was one of the recommendations arising from the Law and Order Inquiry into the Illegal Possession of Firearms in New Zealand. The Inquiry report acknowledged that the process would impose an administrative burden on buyers and sellers and that Police was planning to allow for permits to procure to be obtained online. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 7. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 8. You have requested advice on a comprehensive set of proposed amendments to the Arms Act. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 9. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
10. There are two significant weaknesses in the Bill.
 11. Firstly, there is no logic to extending the permit to procure process to only a subset of A category firearms.
 12. Secondly no provision has been made for transitioning lawfully held, shortened firearms. This risks causing a significant move of firearms into the grey market and then onto the illegal market. The drafter of the Bill has not recognised that, in order to protect against hearing loss, many hunters are adding suppressors to their rifles. When adding a suppressor many typically shorten the barrel so that the overall length remains the same with the suppressor attached.

Prepared by	[REDACTED], Principal Strategic Adviser	[REDACTED]
Approved by	Jeremy Wood, Director Policy and Partnerships	[REDACTED]