



**The Hamilton Pistol Club Inc
3/208 Airport Road
Rukahia**

24th May 2017

**Hon Paula Bennett
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Police**

On behalf of the Committee of The Hamilton Pistol Club, Incorporated, we would like to make a few points about the recently released report from **the *Inquiry into issues relating to the illegal possession of firearms in New Zealand.***

The Hamilton Pistol Club is a very active shooting club in the Waipa District, just on the outskirts of Hamilton, As you fly in and out of the city airport, or attended the annual Mystery Creek Fieldays, you will have driven past our gates.

We have over 300 active members and our membership engage in multiple pistol and other firearms sports at both national and international level. I believe we represent the epitome of current law-abiding firearms holders and users, both competitive and sporting.

We have been heavily invested and involved in the Select Committee process, both contributing to several submissions from legal firearms owners groups as well as inviting a local MP (Lindsay Tisch) a member of the Select Committee, to our club to meet with members of our committee during the sitting period.

In that meeting, Mr. Tisch assured those present that there would be no recommendations made that fall outside the scope of the inquiry.

With the release of the findings we now feel compelled to directly express our concerns and sense of betrayal to you.

The scope of the inquiry was clear. To summarise, the Law and Order Select Committee was to investigate how widespread firearm possession by criminals is, how firearms come into the hands of criminals and gangs and what changes to current practice may further restrict the flow of firearms illegally.

Sadly, the majority of recommendations delivered in the report are well outside the scope of the inquiry.

We believe the following recommendations do fall broadly within the scope:

Recommendation 7 (the establishment of prohibition orders)

Recommendation 10 (that gang members and prospects not be considered fit and proper persons - this is clearly within the scope of the inquiry)

Recommendation 12 (that penalties for firearms offences in the Arms Act be reviewed to make offences involving illegal use of firearms a significant deterrent - HOWEVER the penalties in the Crimes Act should also be reviewed)

Recommendation 18 and 19 (the clarification of the current Amnesty, maintaining the current dealer role, and Police discretion related to Amnesty)

Recommendation 20 (checking of re-export of visitor firearms)

These and some other recommendations could potentially be seen as generally reasonable, however we can't support them as written because the proposed actions are unilateral and driven by regulations interpreted or devised solely by the Police without any guidance or consultation with other interested parties.

We believe instead, that an existing working group, such as the Firearms Advisory Group, with which we are involved via the New Zealand Pistol Association, should be the prime source of recommendations for changes to firearms related legislation.

The remainder of the recommendations are completely outside the scope of the Inquiry. Not only that, but they have the effect of suggesting punitive changes for current law-abiding holders of firearms and firearms licenses. There is minimal real suggestion of punitive action against criminal holders of firearms! Specific punitive actions for legal firearms holders include:

The compliance cost related to ammunition sales changes and recording

The time and effort cost for permits to procure for ALL firearms

The cost to firearms holders of converting ALL semi-automatic firearms to E category (new safes, new fees, more paperwork, new magazines etc.)

Increase in inspection rights by Police where the licence holder has committed no offence is an impingement on reasonable rights to privacy

In addition several recommendations would lead to significant additional costs to the State, examples include:

The management and oversight of increased dealer responsibilities re ammunition sales

The cost of the Police registration of websites involved with firearms related sales

The cost of managing permits to procure for ALL firearms

The cost of maintaining a registry of all firearms and annual inspections required for restricted firearms

These additional costs, mostly to Police, would be on top of the existing resource increase urgently needed today to allow the Police to properly administer the Act and Regulations as they stand now.

These discussions have been underway for some time within the Firearms Advisory Group, sadly to little avail thus far.

The Hamilton Pistol Club committee is disappointed at the overall result of this Inquiry. We feel it missed the opportunity to investigate the actual problem sufficiently and that the bulk of the recommendations are in fact reactionary and based on the unfounded fears some submitters demonstrated in their submissions to the Select Committee, and in other cases, are not even supported by any submissions or evidence.

The members of the Hamilton Pistol Club committee urge you to review the report of the Inquiry carefully based on the scope of the Inquiry and the significant adverse reaction to the report you have already heard from a large number of firearms representative groups.

The HPC committee would like to invite you to come to visit our club at your earliest convenience to both experience what we do at the club, and discuss the wider issues we as club members face in dealing with the Police on firearms matters on a regular basis.

Thank you for taking the time to read this note.

On behalf of the Committee

Richard Radonich
Secretary
The Hamilton Pistol Club, Inc