

## Firearms reform

# Firearms Registry review

## Questions and Answers

### Background

#### *What is the Registry?*

- The Firearms Registry aims to create a digital record of the possession of firearms, major firearms parts, and other specified arms items. It has been in operation since June 2023.
- Its stated purpose is to help:
  - *stop the diversion of firearms to organised criminal groups*
  - *make frontline police staff safer, and*
  - *give licence holders more confidence when buying and selling arms items.*<sup>1</sup>

#### *Who and when are licence holders required to register their arms items.*

- Under the Act, licence holders are required to register all of their arms items within 30 days of an 'activating circumstance', such as applying for a firearms licence, and buying or selling a firearm. If no activating circumstance occurs before 24 June 2028, licenced firearms owners (LFOs) have until 31 August 2028 to register their arms items.
- From 24 June 2025 the purchase of ammunition will constitute an activating circumstance, requiring LFOs who purchase ammunition after that date to register their arms items within 30 days.

#### *Why review the Registry and why now?*

- The National/Act coalition agreement sets out a comprehensive commitment to firearms reform this Parliamentary term – to provide for greater protection of public safety, simplify regulatory requirements, and promote compliance.
- The coalition agreement includes that a review is undertaken to determine whether the Registry is effectively improving public safety. It requires that this is commenced by June 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> [Firearms Registry | Firearms Safety Authority New Zealand](#)

- Some LFOs have expressed concern about the effectiveness of the Registry at protecting personal information, their privacy, and targeting illegally held firearms in the possession of criminals. They are also concerned that the process of registering their firearms is difficult and demanding, and that a breach in information could compromise their personal safety and that of their property. On the other hand, I understand other stakeholders consider it will have public safety benefits over time, particularly with regards to preventing firearms from being illegally diverted to criminals.
- I think it is worthwhile to thoroughly evaluate the Registry at this point and investigate concerns from both sides of the debate before determining the Registry's future.

*How many licence holders have registered their firearms?*

- I understand from Firearms Safety Authority data that 17 percent of licence holders have registered their firearms.

## Methodology for reviewing the Registry

*Where will information be sourced from?*

- The review will be carried out by the Ministry of Justice and will look at data and information, stakeholder insights, and domestic and overseas experiences with firearms record-keeping.

*Will there be sufficient information for you to draw meaningful conclusions from the review?*

- I acknowledge that there will be limitations to the information available given that the Registry is one year into its five-year implementation programme.
- However, the review will consider a variety of different sources to ensure that we have as much information as possible to inform future decisions.
- I expect that the limitations of the review, including the Registry's place within the context of the wider system of firearms regulation, will be factored into the analysis of data and information and be reflected in the findings and any recommendation.

*Who will you be consulting with?*

- The Ministry of Justice will undertake focused consultation with key stakeholders that represent a cross section of New Zealand's society.
- I have ensured that this will include representatives of not only the firearms community, but also medical professionals, community lawyers, the Muslim community, law enforcement, and family harm prevention groups.
- Many of the groups are long established and are well-placed to provide expert feedback in an efficient manner.

*How will you consult?*

- In addition to gathering data and information from the Registry itself, we will seek insights from stakeholders, including those entering and using information in the Registry.
- As this is a lean and focused review, our primary tool for stakeholder consultation will be a questionnaire which will be provided to key representative groups to inform the review.

*When will consultation occur?*

- The Ministry of Justice will be seeking input from the representative groups in October.

*Will there be other opportunities to have a say on this work?*

- The focused consultation will reach out to a range of groups. I expect that many people affiliated to those groups will have an opportunity to input into the process through their representatives.
- If the review recommends changes to the law, and a Bill is taken to Parliament, there will be further opportunity for both individuals and groups have their say on any proposals at select committee.

*What are the next steps for this work?*

- The outcome of the review will inform any decisions made regarding the future of the firearms registry.

## Relation to Government's wider programme for firearms reform

*Where does this fit within the Government's firearms reform programme?*

- The National-ACT coalition agreement sets out several commitments to reform New Zealand's outdated and complicated firearms law, which includes this work relating to reviewing the Firearms Registry.

*What else has the Government planned for firearms reform this term?*

- As you know, this Government has already taken steps to crack down on the misuse of firearms by criminals. In March, I announced changes to target criminals by making improvements to firearm prohibition orders through the Firearms Prohibition Orders Amendment Legislation Bill, which is already before Select Committee.
- On Tuesday I announced the beginning of focused consultation on the removal of overly burdensome and unnecessary regulations impacting upon the operation of firearms clubs and ranges. The Ministry of Justice is currently consulting with key community representatives on proposals before introducing a bill later this year.
- I look forward to sharing my broader plans for firearms reform soon.