

## **COLFO meets with Police Minister and Law & Order Select Committee to discuss current firearm issues:**

COLFO had the opportunity to attend two meetings at Parliament over the last two days. 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 yesterday.

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. Having been on a range the Minister acknowledged and observed the strict behaviour that licenced users place on themselves. She has no intention of disrupting or changing that.

COLFO are pleased to report her disclosed views as fitting in with what our membership is needing to hear. 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 Committee. We handed a document over to the LOC 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 LOC 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 LOC 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.

We pushed for your rights to be maintained and the focus to remain on the illegal possession and use. We asked that the potential flow-on effects of any LOC recommendations be considered in a wider spectrum before being published. The LOC 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.

We answered questions around dealers, security, licenced owners peer reviewing, education, licencing and revenue. The success of taking the Whakatūpato firearms safety education and licencing programme into rural communities where unlicenced firearms ownership is occurring was also discussed.

COLFO followed the Police Association into the meeting and were the last to be heard. What was made very apparent is that all organisations that presented to the LOC agreed that the Police are under-funded and under resourced in order to adequately deal with criminal misuse of firearms. That this issue needs immediate attention.

Never before has COLFO attended at Parliament twice in 24 hours. When we speak on your behalf we do so not only for all the organisations we represent but for all firearms licenced users. It is not a right in this country to own a firearm, it is a privilege that most users

understand and expect to maintain. That understanding and our 20 year lobby history gives this organisation the ear of the decision makers.

Once the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are made public and submissions are underway, it will be up to you to put pen to paper and make your views known. COLFO will be there to assist you when we get to that stage.