

Firearms Amnesty and Buy-back: OAG performance audit recommendation progress update

CONTEXT



Purpose

In 2020, following the Firearms Amnesty and Buy-back Scheme (the Scheme), the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) conducted a performance audit to understand how well New Zealand Police (Police) had managed and operated the Scheme. OAG concluded Police managed the scheme well, but more work needed to be done to improve firearms information and understand the extent to which it had made New Zealand safer. OAG has now requested a written response from Police about how the recommendations and improvement opportunities included in its May 2020 audit report are being addressed.



Key facts

- Arms Amendment Act 2019 was implemented on 11 April 2019
- Amnesty and Buy-back 1 (ABB1) ran from 20 June 2019 to 20 December 2019
- In May 2020, the OAG released its report based on Police's implementation of the Scheme
- Police provided Ministerial briefings in June 2020 and September 2020
- Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) released its recommendations on 8 December 2020
- Broader package of legislative reforms were passed in 2019 and 2020
- Amnesty and Buy-back 2 (ABB2) ran from 1 February 2021 to 1 May 2021.

OAG RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS UPDATE

	OAG recommendations	Police key actions
Engagement 	Build on engagement with firearms owners and licensed firearms dealers gained during the firearms buy-back and amnesty scheme to further strengthen relationships and build trust and confidence in how the current and further firearms regulatory framework is implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Case management approach and improved owner experience for ABB2 ✓ Ongoing engagement and co-design with firearms reference groups ✓ Proactive engagement with dealers regarding permitting ✓ Partnering with dealers on safety improvement initiatives ✓ Public trust and confidence survey ✓ Increased focus and responsibility for firearms partnerships and engagement
Information 	Improve the information used to support regulatory responsibilities for firearms and firearms owners, and management of that information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Updates to existing firearms records in the National Intelligence Application (NIA) ✓ Training to improve information quality ✓ Quality assurance and improvement framework (QAIF) ✓ More comprehensive licence application ✓ Improved information collection interface ✓ Lessons learned informing design of Firearms Registry including taxonomy and data cleansing
Impact 	Design and implement a framework to evaluate the extent to which changes to firearms regulations have made New Zealander safer, including taking steps to find out what level of compliance with the scheme has been achieved, and publicly report the findings of future evaluations to ensure that Parliament, and the public have trust and confidence in their administration of firearms legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Firearms seizures and import prevention, including parts and ammunition, has reduced the potential number of firearms in the community ✓ A new Firearms System Model has been designed to provide deeper understanding of the system over time ✓ Ongoing information capture relating to firearms encountered through day-to-day policing activity
Close out 	Continue to report publicly on the performance of the scheme until completed processing of the applications for endorsements to use newly prohibited firearms for a limited range of purposes. Then report to Parliament about the final outcomes of the scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Processing of all newly prohibited firearms, including endorsements, dealer stock and unique prohibited items has been completed for both ABB1 and ABB2 ✓ Briefings provided to the Minister of Police in June, September and December 2020, and in May 2021. ✓ Detailed collection information from ABB1 is publicly available on the Police website as at February 2020 (more recent ABB2 collection information is also available).