

22 June 2020

Our Reference: IR-01-20-13434

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Tēnā koe ██████████

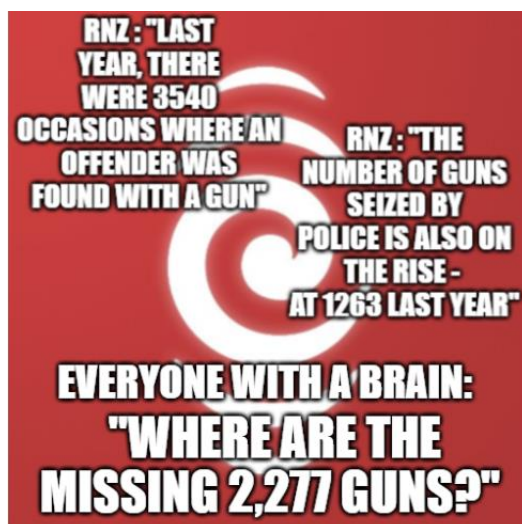
I am writing to you in response to your request dated 18 May 2020. You asked:

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/416881/rates-of-gun-crimes-andkillings-using-guns-at-highest-levels-in-a-decade>

Relating to the story above – where are the missing guns?

On 21 May 2020, one of my staff members contacted you by email to clarify your request as the news article you provided does not describe missing guns.

You responded on 22 May 2020 with the following:



Were all these offenders really left with 2277 firearms? How?

Police National Headquarters

180 Molesworth Street. PO Box 3017, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.
Telephone: 04 474 9499. Fax: 04 498 7400. www.police.govt.nz

I understand that you have read the article which stated that 3,540 offenders were “found with a gun” and 1,263 guns were “seized”, and extrapolated from that that 2,277 guns must be missing, and then asked where those missing guns are.

However, these numbers are drawn from datasets that are not comparable as explained below.

The number 3,540 as provided to RNZ by Police was “occurrences with firearms-related offences that took place in 2019”.

This is not a count of people who were arrested in possession of a firearm or the count of firearms. This means there could be more than one firearm associated with an occurrence or there could be one firearm associated with multiple occurrences or one person associated with multiple occurrences.

Occurrences with a firearm-related offence can include a range of incidents, including those where:

- the offender may not have been identified or located
- the offence involved carriage or presentation of a firearm
- the offence is an Arms Act offence such as failure to notify a change of address

The figure of 1,263 is the count of firearms seized in accordance with section 6¹ or section 18² of the Search and Surveillance Act 2012.

In some instances, where the offence relates to some sections of the Arms Act, Police may not seize the firearms but instead organise for these to be transferred to another fit and proper person, or to a dealer. In other instances, as described above, the firearm may not have been located.

In other words, the first number is occurrences, not people or firearms; and the second number is firearms seized in specific circumstances. Therefore, one cannot be subtracted from the other to arrive at “missing guns”.

For your information, Police has a process for proactive release of information, so the anonymised response to your request may be publicly released on the New Zealand Police website.

Yours sincerely



Mike McIlraith
Acting Superintendent
Arms Act Service Delivery Group

¹ <http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2012/0024/latest/DLM2136635.html>

² <http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2012/0024/latest/DLM2136653.html>