

Reference: IR-01-22-7254

11 April 2022

Tēnā koe

Request for information

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 14 March 2022. Your questions are listed below, followed by an answer to each.

Can you please confirm if the Government or Police Minister have requested evidence to show that the 2019 ban on semi-automatic weapons and assault rifles and the subsequent gun buyback scheme helped to reduce gun violence in New Zealand?

Parliament passed a package of reforms in 2019 and 2020 which, when fully implemented, will work together to reduce the availability of firearms to non-licence holders and the risk of harm from misuse and criminal use of firearms. As part of that legislative change, a statutory review of implementation of the changes introduced through the Arms Legislation Act is required to be commenced in 2026. In preparation for that review, a number of performance indicators are being developed to measure the progress towards meeting the safe use and control of firearms in New Zealand. Additionally, the Minister has asked her Arms Advisory Group to contribute to the development of performance measures.

If the Government or Police Minister haven't requested that evidence, can Police please provide me with evidence to show that the 2019 ban on semi-automatic weapons and assault rifles and the subsequent gun buyback scheme helped to reduced gun violence in New Zealand?

The number of high-risk firearms previously lawfully held in New Zealand has been reduced, the importation into New Zealand of semi-automatics and the semi-automatic parts used to convert semi-automatic into military style semi-automatic firearms has been dramatically reduced, and the importation of and access to large capacity magazines stopped.

Police National Headquarters

The two firearms buyback programmes removed a range of prohibited firearms and their parts from circulation:

- In the first amnesty, more than 60,000 firearms, and more than 200,000 firearms parts were surrendered; and 2,800 firearms were modified.
- More than 1,000 firearms, 240 pistol carbine conversion kits and 2,400 accessories were handed in during the second amnesty.

Turning off the supply into New Zealand has reduced the potential for harm. The number of firearms held unlawfully remains unknown. Once the arms Register is in place from June 2023 and fully implemented by June 2028, the opportunity for diversion of firearms from the legal to the illegal market will be reduced. The combination of these initiatives will reduce the supply of those who seek access to firearms for criminal purposes.

You may be interested in firearms-related data that Police publishes quarterly https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/firearms-data

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 https://www.police.govt.nz/advice/firearms-and-safety/firearms-information-responses

Yours sincerely

Superintendent Mike McIlraith

Director Partnerships Arms Safety and Control