

Appendix B: Firearms Registration in other Jurisdictions

Registries in other jurisdictions

1. New Zealand currently has a partial firearms registry, which includes information on all licence holders, and certain firearms (such as prohibited and restricted firearms).
2. The following jurisdictions have full registries, requiring all firearms to be registered:
 - **Australia:** each State and Territory has a firearms registry and information is stored at a state level on a system that can be shared at a national level.
 - **Europe:** the European Union requires member states to register all firearms or their essential components. Information is stored in a way that it can be shared between Member States.
 - **Great Britain:** all firearms are licenced on either a firearm or shotgun certificate. A national registry records details of those who have applied for a firearm or shotgun certificate, and the firearms they have.
3. While neither Canada or the USA have national registries, certain states or provinces require the registration of all firearms:
 - **USA:** Columbia requires both firearm owners to be licenced and all firearms registered. Hawaii requires the registration of all firearms.
 - **Canada:** Canada used to have a firearms registry, consisting of licensing and firearm registration. It repealed the firearm registration component in 2012. The registry now consists of licensing information and information about restricted firearms. In 2018, Québec passed legislation requiring the registration of all non-restricted firearms.
4. Having firearm registries that encompass both licensing and firearm registration may help reduce theft, and increase the proportion of stolen firearms recovered. They may also result in firearm owners being more careful with their firearms – due, in part to police being able to trace firearms back to their lawful owners.
5. Australia, European Union, and Great Britain all have registry systems that combine licensing and firearm registration. Québec is the modern exception. Québec is unique in that licensing requirements are managed centrally as part of the broader registry.

Best practice requirements

6. There is no international ‘best practice’ on what a firearms registry should look like. Police reviewed the above systems, and liaised with Australian colleagues, to learn from their experiences. Some of the complexities that arose in other jurisdictions can be avoided or mitigated through the use of modern technological solutions that combine multiple functionalities, including enabling people to engage with online solutions directly (e.g. applying for a licence, registering a firearm, notifying of the sale of a firearm, notifying of a change of address, etc).
7. Our research into the models used in other jurisdiction has indicated that firearms registries should be: positioned to take advantage of current and future technology; and, be centralised.

Positioning registration to take advantage of technology

8. Logically, a firearms registry should take advantage of current technology – and be future proofed to take advantage of new and emerging technology.
9. At the time that Australia and Canada implemented their registries (1990s), there was little indication of the rapid technological changes to come, particularly the digital revolution. This meant that, like New Zealand's original firearm register from the 1960s-1980s, their systems were largely paper-based, burdensome on users, and labour-intensive with a high chance of miscoding or input errors. The limited capability of technology in the 1990s, particularly in relation to the additional functionality a technology solution can achieve today, means that Australian systems have limited ability to extract information as needed. Even Great Britain, which implemented the IT component for its registry system around 2004, still requires forms to be printed, signed, and then inputted by registry staff.
10. s 9(2)(g)(i)
[REDACTED]
The need to constantly update the system was one factor in the delays and cost overruns that eventually lead to the decision to remove the registration component of the system (note: most of the system's cost overruns and delays related to the implementation of the firearms registry as a whole – not just the registration component).
11. Today in New Zealand, we do not need to be limited to paper-based systems. For instance, information can now be provided electronically using RealMe or other verified electronic means. Québec, which has the newest register, requires all information to be provided electronically.
12. Police will continue with paper-based options however, in recognition of the needs of remote parts of New Zealand, and our ageing firearm licensee population. Interaction with the register using paper-based systems is likely to be low. Thus, the risks of integrating a largely paper-based responses from users of the system, with the technology operated by administrators, as was evident in other jurisdictions, can be avoided.

Implementing a centralised system

13. The federal nature of countries (such as Australia and Canada), and the need to integrate a number of different police forces' firearms records has meant that implementation of firearms registries has not always gone smoothly. For instance, the difficulties in integrating information from across 40 police forces across Great Britain meant it took over 10 years for their IT system to be operational.
14. Ongoing operational issues have also arisen in Australia and Great Britain due to differences in implementation practices across different states and police forces. This has impacted on the quality of the information contained in the different registries.
15. These issues will not arise in New Zealand as there is only one police force and one system under development. Thus there is no need to integrate systems, and Police are already taking advantage of significantly more modern technology in developing a centralised firearms platform. Police is undertaking work to build the centralised technology and improve the accuracy of information it holds. The first part of the firearms platform was rolled out for online visitors' licences on 16 May 2019.