

New Zealand Police Biannual TASER Report #5

1 July to 31 December, 2013

Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation

Introduction

This biannual TASER report pertains to the last six months of the 2013 calendar year (1 July to 31 December). It is part of an external TASER reporting series produced by Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation, in Response and Operations, Police National Headquarters, for monitoring and accountability purposes.

Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) data

The data in this report is derived from Tactical Options Reports, and presents Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) events. A TOR event is the reportable use of one or more tactical options, by one officer, against one individual. TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment, ie, the highest mode of use is reported. Modes of TASER deployment are: shows (presentation, laser painting or arcing); and discharges (discharge with probes and/or contact stun). Also, some TOR events involve the use of more than one tactical option; thus, the number of TOR events is lower than the number of tactical options used.

Key findings

- Of the over 1.5 million recorded face to face interactions police had with the public from 1 July to 31 December 2013, TASER deployment by police was rare. Reported TASER events accounted for approximately 0.03% of such face to face interactions.
- TASER was deployed in a small minority of Police apprehensions. From 1 July to 31 December 2013, TASER was shown at 0.6% of apprehensions, and discharged at 0.09% of apprehensions.
- From 1 July to 31 December 2013, TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 538 TOR events, at an average of 90 events per month. Overall, TASER was deployed at 21% of TOR events. Excluding minor probe wounds, there was no subject injury in 99% of TASER events. Two TASER –related injuries were recorded for this period (one minor, one moderate).
- In the majority (68%) of TASER events, officers used laser painting as the highest mode of deployment, followed by presentation (18%). Discharge was used in 14% of TASER events, while arcing was used in 1%. Overall, this equates to a show to discharge ratio of 6:1. The majority of TASER discharges (70%) and shows (85%) were deemed effective in de-escalating the incident.

- TASER discharge events were typified by one or more of the following behaviours: verbal threats towards police (45%), physical violence towards police (42%) and the threat of weapons (31%). These factors were also common in TASER show events. Weapons were used in 15% of discharge events. Note, people may display more than one type of behaviour at TOR events.
- Over half of TASER deployments (shows or discharges) involved people with one or more of the following characteristics: alcohol impairment (54%), a history of violence (51%), and a history of violence against police (28%).
- Mental illness and suicidal behaviours were factors at 23% and 11% of TASER TOR events respectively. Of the 6,419 mental health (1M) events that Police attended in this period, TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) in 2%, and discharged in 0.3% of events.
- Those against whom TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) were most often males (93%), and aged 30 years or younger (56%). TASER was deployed (shown or discharged) against Pacific Island peoples, Māori, and European, at 89, 81 and 51 TASER events per 10,000 police apprehensions of these groups, respectively. This data does not account for people's behaviour at TOR events.

View from the frontline...

"...subject was inside her bedroom cutting her wrists with a knife ...Subject did not respond to Police communicating with her, and given the nature of the incident immediate action was necessary to prevent suicide/self harm. O/C spray was briefly considered an option for use, however given the environment (small bedroom), this was impractical. Open handed tactics were considered, however given the subject had a knife and was using it on herself I needed to keep some distance. I considered using my baton, however, the distance and space were issues again. Immediate action HAD to be taken as a response as the subject was in the process of cutting her wrists and any delays may have meant a loss of life. Subject became compliant immediately upon presentation of the TASER."

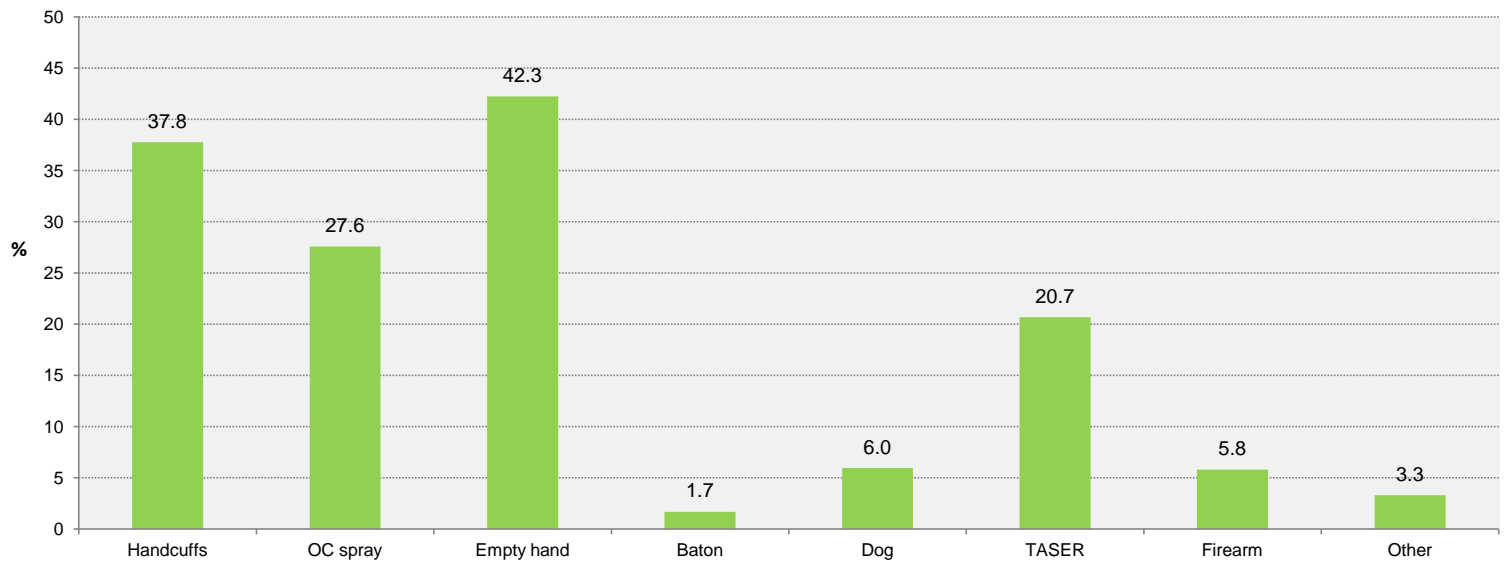
Table 1. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district and locality, 1 July to 31 December 2013 ¹

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other
Northland	40	32	45	1	8	13	3	2
Waitemata	90	38	89	3	12	34	18	11
Auckland City	104	48	123	7	15	50	27	12
Counties Manukau	137	82	174	4	11	73	20	9
Waikato	64	68	59	7	15	44	11	9
Bay of Plenty	137	99	132	6	11	86	28	9
Eastern	71	80	77	3	8	39	5	5
Central	74	82	86	3	13	60	13	3
Wellington	96	70	112	3	22	47	15	11
Tasman	25	39	36	3	15	29	4	3
Canterbury	95	54	109	1	21	45	7	10
Southern	50	26	58	3	4	18	0	2
Total	983	718	1100	44	155	538	151	86
National average	82	60	92	4	13	45	13	7
Upper North ²	371	200	431	15	46	170	68	34
Lower North	442	399	466	22	69	276	72	37
South	170	119	203	7	40	92	11	15

¹ An officer may use more than one tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event. Table 1, Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 count whether a particular tactical option was used at a TOR event, not the number of times that tactical option was used at that event. See page 9 for tactical options deployments that are reportable in a Tactical Options Report.

² There are three localities in New Zealand Police, each under the leadership of an Assistant Commissioner: 'Upper North', comprising Northland, Waitemata, Auckland City, and Counties Manukau; 'Lower North', comprising Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Eastern, Central, and Wellington; and 'South', comprising Tasman, Canterbury, and Southern.

Figure 1. Proportion (%) of tactical options used at TOR events, nationally (n=2,603), 1 July to 31 December 2013 ³



³ Officers may use more than one particular tactical option (eg, handcuffs, OC spray) at a TOR event, thus percentages may exceed 100%.

Figure 2. Tactical options used at TOR events, by locality, 1 July to 31 December 2013

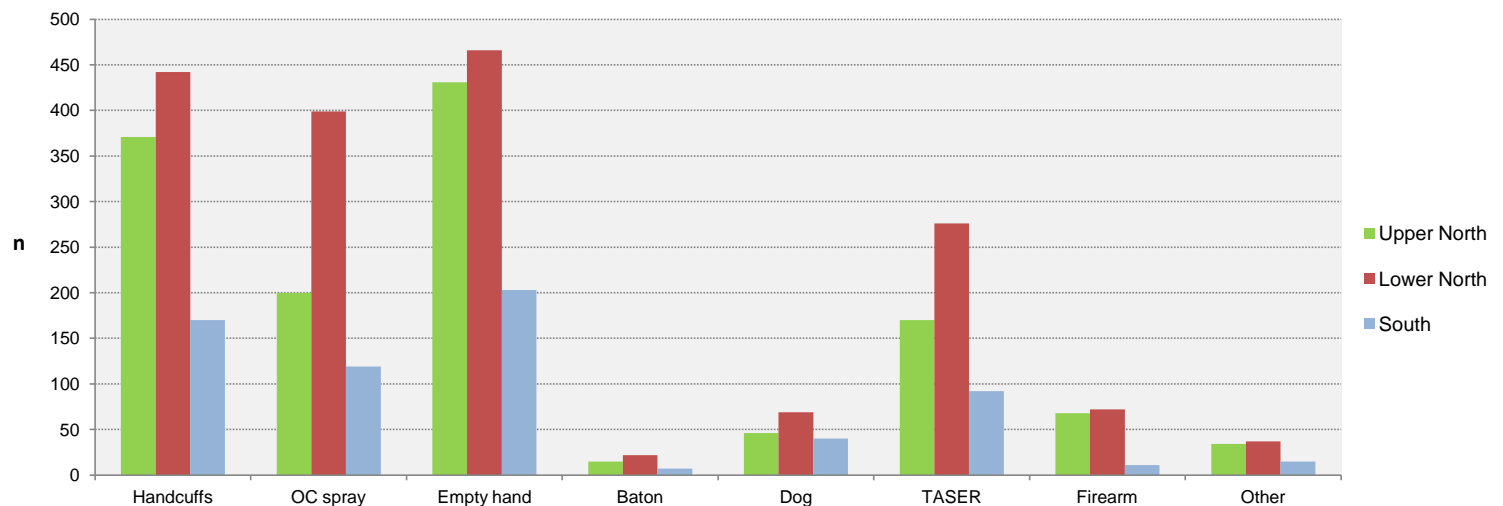


Figure 3. Tactical options used at TOR events, by district, 1 July to 31 December 2013

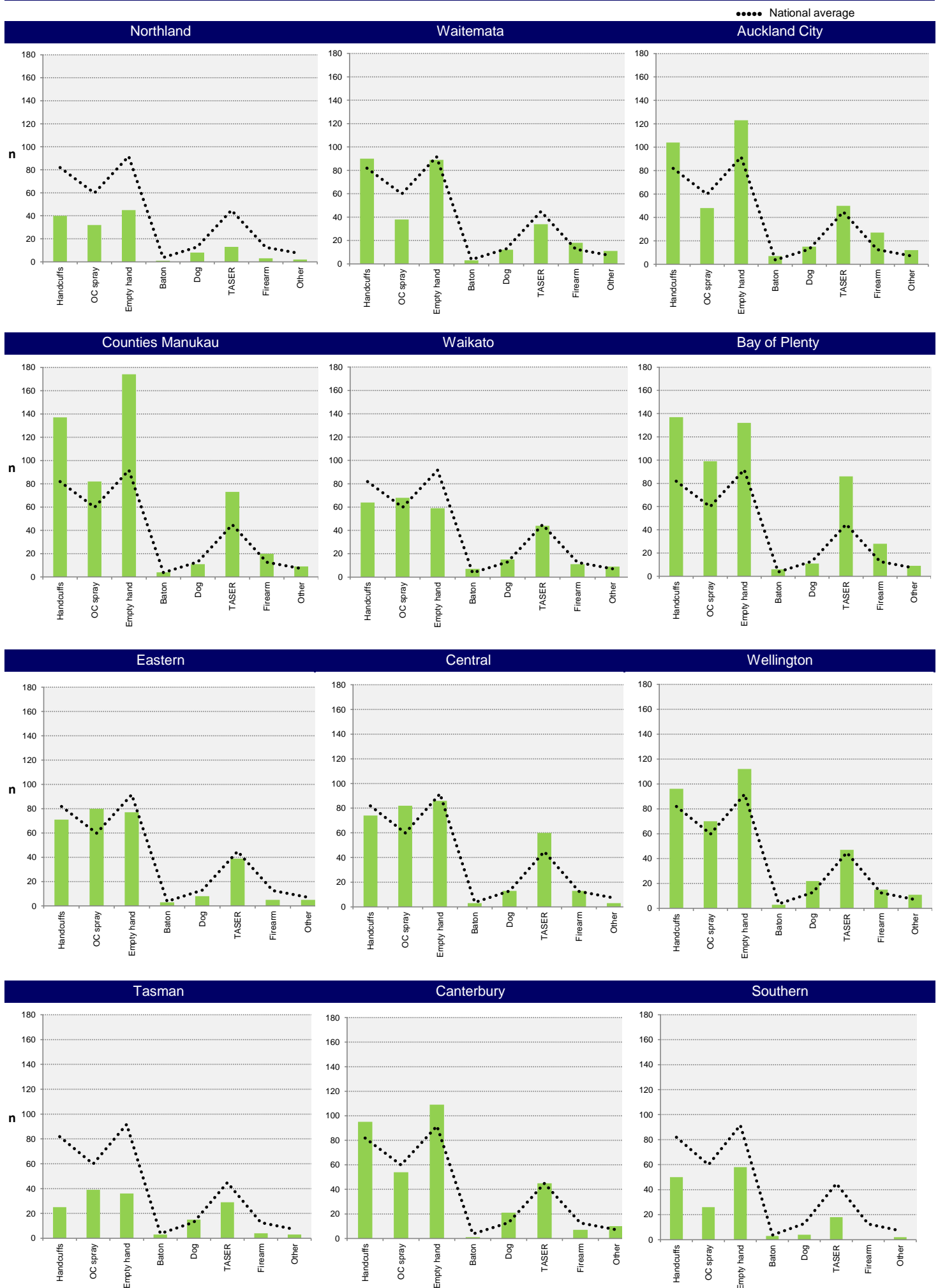


Table 2. TASER TOR events by highest mode of deployment,⁴ by district and locality, 1 July to 31 December 2013

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge ⁵	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ⁶
Northland	5	6	0	2	13	38
Waitemata	2	26	0	6	34	52
Auckland City	9	33	1	7	50	70
Counties Manukau	10	49	0	14	73	71
Waikato	7	31	0	6	44	53
Bay of Plenty	22	55	0	9	86	107
Eastern	4	29	0	6	39	68
Central	11	43	0	6	60	90
Wellington	4	38	0	5	47	81
Tasman	9	14	1	5	29	79
Canterbury	6	32	1	6	45	53
Southern	6	10	0	2	18	33
National	95	366	3	74	538	68
District average	8	31	0.3	6	45	
Upper North	26	114	1	29	170	62
Lower North	48	196	0	32	276	80
South	21	56	2	13	92	52

⁴ TASER data is presented by 'highest mode of deployment', ie, the highest mode of use (presentation, laser painting, arcing, or discharge) is reported. Where TASER discharge is the highest mode of deployment, any TASER show that preceded or followed the discharge is excluded from the data. This caveat applies to Table 2, Figure 4, Table 3, and Table 4.

⁵ TASER discharge data in Table 2 counts the number of TOR events in which a discharge(s) (either discharge with probes and/or contact stun) occurred, but not the number of discharges or modes of discharge (see Table 4 and 5).

⁶ Police apprehension data does not represent the number of offences or offenders, as one offender may be apprehended for multiple offences, or multiple offenders may be apprehended for one offence.

Figure 4. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district (n=538), 1 July to 31 December 2013

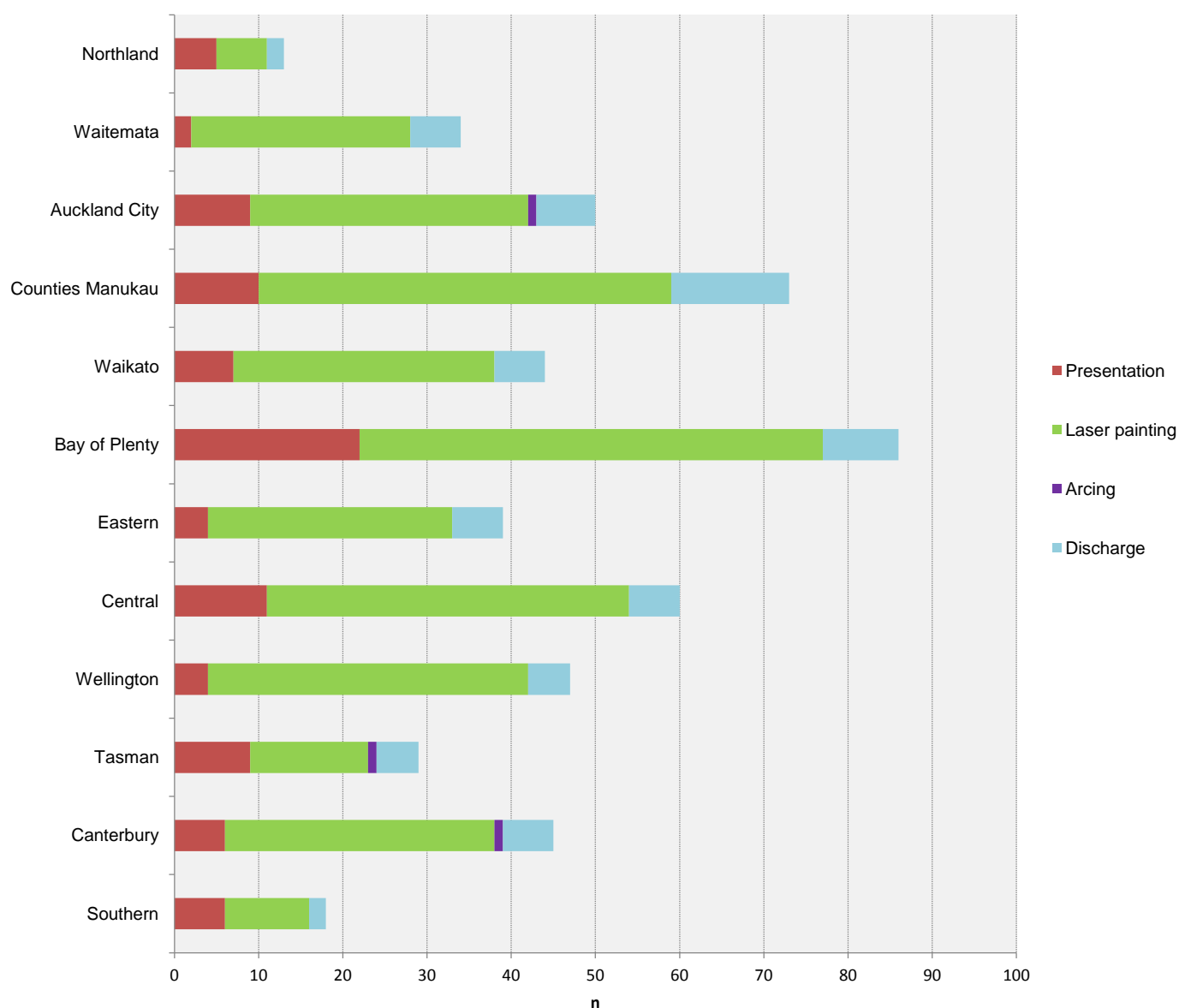


Table 3. TASER TOR events, by highest mode of deployment, by district and area

	Presentation	Laser painting	Arcing	Discharge	Total
NORTHLAND					
Far North	2	1	0	2	5
Whangarei	3	5	0	0	8
WAITEMATA					
Rodney	2	5	0	3	10
Waitakere	0	11	0	1	12
North Shore	0	10	0	2	12
Auckland Motorways	0	0	0	0	0
AUCKLAND CITY					
Auckland Central Area	6	12	1	2	21
Auckland East Area	2	16	0	4	22
Auckland West Area	1	5	0	1	7
COUNTIES MANUKAU					
Counties Manukau Central	0	16	0	4	20
Counties Manukau East	4	8	0	6	18
Counties Manukau South	2	8	0	2	12
Counties Manukau West	4	17	0	2	23
WAIKATO					
Hamilton City	3	19	0	3	25
Waikato East	2	5	0	2	9
Waikato West	2	7	0	1	10
BAY OF PLENTY					
Eastern Bay of Plenty	3	5	0	1	9
Rotorua	5	21	0	2	28
Taupo	5	12	0	3	20
Western Bay of Plenty	9	17	0	3	29
EASTERN					
Tairāwhiti	0	11	0	2	13
Hawkes bay	4	18	0	4	26
CENTRAL					
Manawatu	2	26	0	1	29
Taranaki	7	6	0	1	14
Whanganui	2	11	0	4	17
WELLINGTON					
Hutt Valley	1	14	0	4	19
Kapiti-Mana	1	5	0	0	6
Wairarapa	0	3	0	0	3
Wellington	2	16	0	1	19
TASMAN					
Marlborough	3	4	0	3	10
Nelson Bays	6	8	1	1	16
West Coast	0	2	0	1	3
CANTERBURY					
Northern Canterbury	3	5	0	1	9
Christchurch Central	2	10	0	0	12
Southern Canterbury	1	6	1	1	9
Mid South Canterbury	0	11	0	4	15
SOUTHERN					
Otago Rural	2	1	0	1	4
Dunedin	2	2	0	1	5
Southland	2	7	0	0	9
Total	95	366	3	74	538

Table 4. Number of TASER discharges at each TASER TOR event, by district ⁷

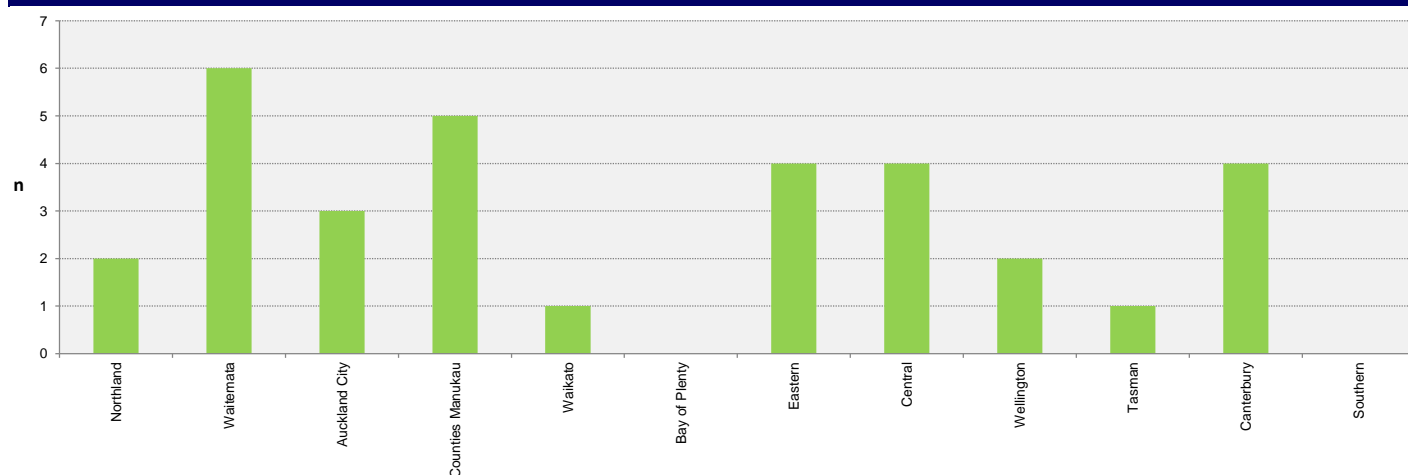
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Northland	2	0	0	0	0	2
Waitemata	5	1	0	0	0	6
Auckland City	5	2	0	0	0	7
Counties Manukau	8	5	1	0	0	14
Waikato	4	1	1	0	0	6
Bay of Plenty	6	3	0	0	0	9
Eastern	4	1	0	1	0	6
Central	5	1	0	0	0	6
Wellington	4	0	0	1	0	5
Tasman	5	0	0	0	0	5
Canterbury	5	0	1	0	0	6
Southern	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total	53	15	4	2	0	74

⁷TASER discharge data in Table 4 includes all TASER discharges with probes and/or contact stuns. TASER may be discharged more than once in a TASER TOR event. In 53 TASER TOR events TASER was discharged once, while in 15 events it was discharged twice. In four events it was discharged three times, and in two events it was discharged four times; thus, there were 103 discharges at the 74 TASER TOR events (see Table 5). Note, where multiple discharges were deployed, 43% (n=9) of discharges had no or insufficient effect on the person.

Table 5. Number of TASER discharges, by discharge mode and district

	Contact stun	Discharge with probes	Total discharges
Northland	0	2	2
Waitemata	3	4	7
Auckland City	1	8	9
Counties Manukau	3	18	21
Waikato	0	9	9
Bay of Plenty	0	12	12
Eastern	2	8	10
Central	2	5	7
Wellington	1	7	8
Tasman	0	5	5
Canterbury	0	8	8
Southern	4	1	5
Total discharges	16	87	103

Figure 5. Number of unintentional discharges of TASER, by district (n=31) ⁸



⁸ All 31 unintentional discharges of TASER occurred in non-operational settings.

Table 6. TASER TOR events, by work group ⁹

Work group	n
AOS	1
CIB/Enquiries	15
Community Relations	2
Dog Section	0
General Duties Branch	461
Road Policing	37
Rural	11
Other	11
Total	538

⁹ Table 6 presents TASER TOR events by work group (work groups represented may change in future TASER reports if TASER is deployed by other work groups).

Table 7. TASER TOR events, by location type ¹⁰

Location type	n
Commercial property	5
Gang premises	10
Non-police vehicle	2
Outdoor public area	84
Police premises	8
Police vehicle	2
Residence	286
Street, highway, motorway	149
Other	29
Total	575

¹⁰ More than one location type may be reported for each TOR event, thus the total in this table exceeds the number of TASER TOR events (n=538).

Table 8. Subject behaviours at TASER TOR events, 1 July to 31 December 2013 ¹¹

	Shows ¹²	% of shows	Discharges ¹²	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Threaten police	174	38	33	45	207	38
Threaten non-police	86	19	15	20	101	19
Violence towards police	54	12	31	42	85	16
Violence towards non-police	78	17	11	15	89	17
Had and used a weapon	19	4	11	15	30	6
Had a weapon but did not use it	122	26	23	31	145	27
Other aggressive behaviours	102	22	12	16	114	21
Resist and / or obstruct police	70	15	5	7	75	14
Evade and / or escape police	34	7	3	4	37	7
Threatened or actual self-harm	12	3	8	11	20	4
Other	71	15	4	5	75	14
Total	822		156		978	

¹¹ Table 8 presents subject behaviours displayed at TASER TOR events; eg, in 42% of TASER TOR events where discharge was the highest mode of deployment, there was violence towards police. Subjects may display more than one type of behaviour at a TOR event, thus percentages may exceed 100%.

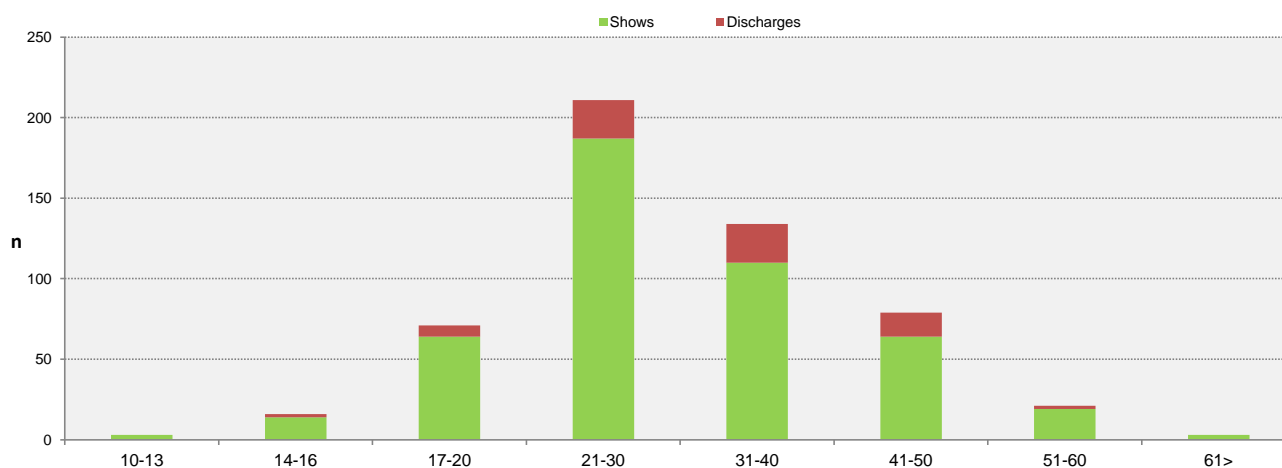
¹² TASER data is presented by highest mode of deployment. TASER shows = presentation, laser painting, and arcing. TASER discharges = discharge with probe and/or contact stun.

Table 9. Relevant factors at TASER TOR events, 1 July to 31 December 2013 ¹³

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	% of TASER events
Mental illness	106	23	19	26	125	23
Suicidal	47	10	13	18	60	11
Alcohol	248	53	44	59	292	54
Drugs	99	21	21	28	120	22
Excited delirium	26	6	3	4	29	5
History of carrying weapons	135	29	18	24	153	28
History of violence against police	129	28	24	32	153	28
History of violence	239	52	37	50	276	51
Medical condition	16	3	1	1	17	3
Other	78	17	14	19	92	17
Total	1123		194		1317	

¹³ Table 9 presents broader factors relevant to TASER TOR events; eg, in 59% of TASER TOR events where discharge was the highest mode of deployment, the subject was impaired by alcohol. Subjects may display more than one relevant factor at a TOR event, thus percentages may exceed 100%.

Figure 6. TASER TOR events by age range, 1 July to 31 December 2013 ¹⁴



¹⁴ The youngest person who had TASER discharged against them was aged 15 years, while the oldest person was aged 55.

Table 10. TASER TOR events, by ethnicity, 1 July to 31 December 2013

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁵
European	139	30	21	28	160	51
Māori	253	55	45	61	298	81
Pacific Island peoples	58	13	5	7	63	89
Other	14	3	3	4	17	–
Total	464	100	74	100	538	

¹⁵ Police apprehension data does not represent the number of offences or offenders, as one offender may be apprehended for multiple offences, or multiple offenders may be apprehended for one offence. The data in Table 10 does not account for subject behaviours at TOR events.

Table 11. TASER TOR events, by sex, 1 July to 31 December 2013

	Shows	% of shows	Discharges	% of discharges	Total	Per 10,000 apprehensions ¹⁵
Male	431	93	72	97	503	80
Female	33	7	2	3	35	21
Unknown	0	0.0	0	0	0	–
Total	464	100	74	100	538	

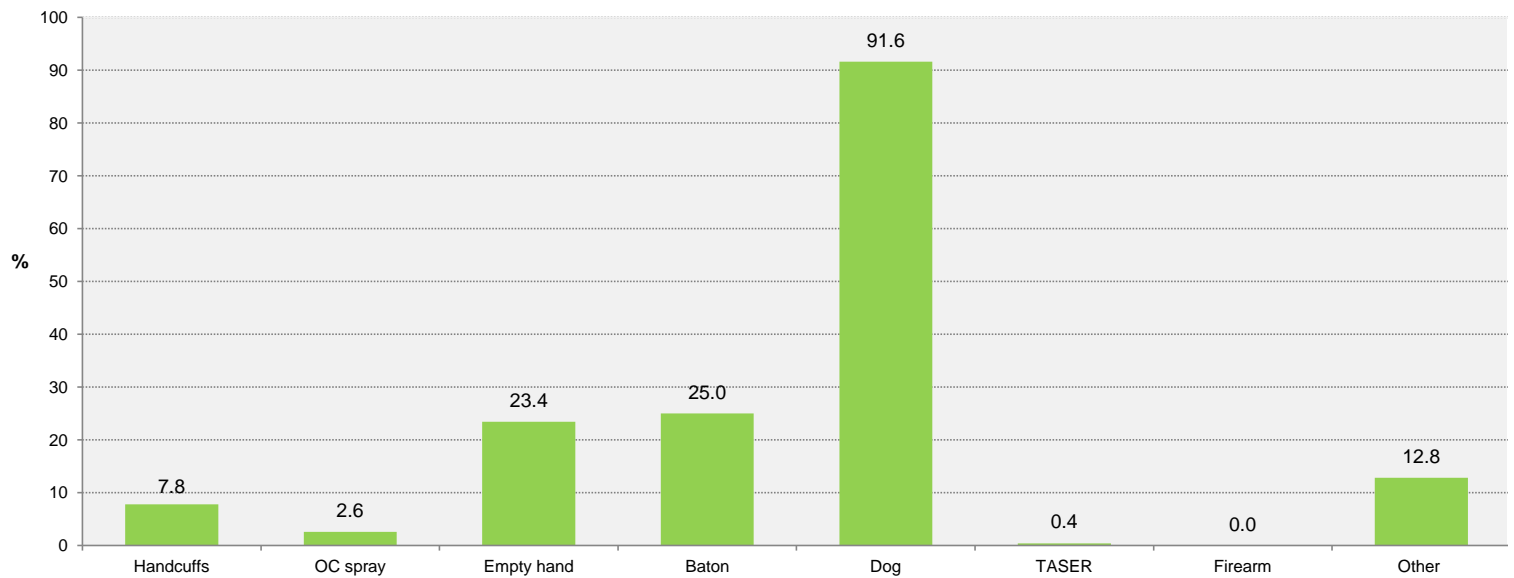
Table 12. Number of tactical options used resulting in subject injuries, by district and locality ¹⁶

	Handcuffs	OC spray	Empty hand	Baton	Dog	TASER	Firearm	Other	Total	%
Northland	7	0	10	0	8	1	0	1	27	5
Waitemata	5	0	22	1	12	0	0	2	42	8
Auckland City	8	0	32	2	15	0	0	0	57	11
Counties Manukau	2	1	29	1	9	1	0	0	43	8
Waikato	7	2	9	2	12	0	0	1	33	6
Bay of Plenty	19	2	33	0	11	0	0	4	69	13
Eastern	3	1	22	0	8	0	0	0	34	7
Central	6	2	19	2	11	0	0	1	41	8
Wellington	5	4	41	2	20	0	0	1	73	14
Tasman	1	3	10	0	11	0	0	1	26	5
Canterbury	10	3	15	1	21	0	0	0	50	10
Southern	4	1	15	0	4	0	0	0	24	5
Total	77	19	257	11	142	2	0	11	519	100

% of all injuries	14.8	3.7	49.5	2.1	27.4	0.4	0.0	2.1	100	
Upper North	22	1	93	4	44	2	0	3	169	33
Lower North	40	11	124	6	62	0	0	7	250	48
South	15	7	40	1	36	0	0	1	100	19

¹⁶ More than one subject injury may be reported as a result of a TASER TOR event. Table 12 presents injuries caused by each tactical option, as a number and proportion of all injuries caused by all tactical options.

Figure 7. Injury rate (%) for each tactical option used at TOR events, nationally ¹⁷



¹⁷ Figure 7 shows the injury rate (%) for each tactical option eg, 92% of dog bites resulted in subject injury. As the injury rate for each tactical option is independent, percentages cannot be summed.

Table 13. Subject injuries resulting from TASER discharges, by severity, and district ¹⁸

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	0	0	0
Waitemata	0	0	0	0
Auckland City	1	0	0	1
Counties Manukau	0	1	0	1
Waikato	0	0	0	0
Bay of Plenty	0	0	0	0
Eastern	0	0	0	0
Central	0	0	0	0
Wellington	0	0	0	0
Tasman	0	0	0	0
Canterbury	0	0	0	0
Southern	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	0	2

¹⁸ More than one subject injury may be reported as a result of a TASER discharge.
 Minor = nil, self, or staff treatment; moderate = medical treatment (but no hospital admission); severe = hospital admission.

Table 14. Staff injuries at TASER TOR events, by severity, and district ¹⁹

	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Total
Northland	0	0	0	0
Waitemata	1	0	0	1
Auckland City	1	2	0	3
Counties Manukau	3	0	0	3
Waikato	0	0	0	0
Bay of Plenty	3	0	1	4
Eastern	1	0	0	1
Central	1	0	0	1
Wellington	2	2	0	4
Tasman	0	0	0	0
Canterbury	1	0	0	1
Southern	0	0	0	0
Total	13	4	1	18

¹⁹ Officers can only report one injury and injury severity type received at a TASER TOR event. Minor = nil, self, or staff treatment; moderate = medical treatment (but no hospital admission); severe = hospital admission.



Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation

This report was compiled by Response and Operations: Research and Evaluation, in Response and Operations, Police National Headquarters. A key role of this team is to undertake research, analysis, monitoring and evaluation of police use of force, to provide accountability and assist evidence-based decision making, to improve police and public safety.

Tactical Options Reporting (TOR)

The following deployments of tactical options are reportable: shows and discharges of a TASER and/or firearm (noting the exemptions below); handcuffs with pain compliance, or without pain compliance when used with another reportable tactical option; OC spray bursts; empty hand tactics; baton strikes; dog bites and/or injuries; and weapons of opportunity.

The Armed Offenders Squad (AOS) and Special Tactics Group (STG) are exempted from reporting shows (but not discharges) of TASER and firearms. Fatalities associated with the use of force are also not reported in a TOR form, but are instead the subject of internal and external investigations. Accordingly, some use of force data is not included in this report.

TASER Tactical Options Reporting (TOR) data limitations

TASER TOR data presents a quantitative overview of TASER deployment; it does not provide a nuanced understanding of factors that influence TASER deployment, and thus, TOR data. Further, where the numbers in these reports are small, slight increases or decreases in these numbers may result in large percentage differences. Accordingly, caution should be exercised when interpreting TOR data, including when comparing TOR data across biannual reports, districts and areas.

Disclaimer

TOR data in this publication is provisional, and is the most accurate available at time of extraction. Data entry errors were corrected where possible; however, given the large number of data categories in the TOR database, some data entry errors may remain. As such, data from the TOR database - like all large administrative databases - cannot be regarded as absolutely accurate. While some data inaccuracies may remain, however, New Zealand Police is confident that the data is more than sufficiently accurate to monitor and describe reported TASER deployment by police. Police makes no warranty, expressed or implied, nor assumes any legal liability or responsibility, for the accuracy, correctness, completeness, or use of, the data or information in this publication. Further, New Zealand Police shall not be liable for any loss or damage arising directly or indirectly from reliance on the data or information presented in this publication.

Contact

Ross Henderson, Chief Media Adviser

Tel: 04 474 9499

ross.henderson@police.govt.nz