

# Arms Act rewrite

## February 2025



New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services

### Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Arms Act rewrite. We support the kaupapa to prevent public harm from firearms and urge the strengthening of regulations to achieve this.

### Taunakitanga | Recommendations

Our main points are:

#### **Access to firearms harms New Zealanders**

New Zealanders deserve to live free from violence and fear of violence. The availability of firearms in New Zealand impacts both public safety and the public's sense of safety.

New Zealand frequently sees firearms used in suicides and family violence [1]. It has also seen firearms used in the March 15 terrorist attack. Firearms are also used as tools of intimidation and coercion, including within intimate partnerships and families.

#### **We support a reduction in access to firearms**

Greater numbers and access to firearms increase the chance of their misuse. Strengthened gun control has been shown to be effective at reducing suicides, including from New Zealand's previous experience [2, 3].

The need for easy access to civilian ownership of firearms is usually defended for the purposes of recreation and pest control. While we do recognise there is a legitimate use for firearms for pest control, New Zealand has far more guns than it needs for this purpose. Our rate of firearms per capita (26.3 per 100) is around twice the rate of Australia (14.5) and six times the rate of England and Wales (4.6) [4].

In our view, the purpose of the Act should be to reduce the number of firearms and reduce access to them. We support the inclusion of policies that would enable:

- reducing the sale of new firearms
- buying back existing firearms
- tightening criteria for the lawful ownership and use of firearms
- tightly controlling the resale of existing firearms.

**Recommendation 1:** We urge that the regulation of firearms prioritise the safety of New Zealanders.

**Recommendation 2:** We urge the rewrite of the Arms Act to prioritise reducing the number of firearms in New Zealand and reducing access to existing firearms.

### Ngā Tohutoro | References

[1] Response to Public Consultation on Gun Regulations – Joint Response from the Family Violence Death Review Committee, Suicide Mortality Review Committee and the Child and Youth Mortality

Review Committee [https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Our-work/Mortality-review-committee/FVDRC/Publications-resources/Submission-on-firearms-regulations\\_2021.pdf](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Our-work/Mortality-review-committee/FVDRC/Publications-resources/Submission-on-firearms-regulations_2021.pdf)

[2] Zalsman et al. Suicide prevention strategies revisited: 10-year systematic review. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2016;3:646-59

[3] Beautrais AL, Fergusson DM, Horwood LJ. Firearms legislation and reductions in firearm-related suicide deaths in New Zealand. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry*. 2006 Mar;40(3):253-9. doi: 10.1080/j.1440-1614.2006.01782.x. PMID: 16476153.

[4] [Small Arms Survey 2018. Global Firearms Holdings Database: Civilians. Geneva: Small Arms Survey.](#)

### **Ko wai tātou | Who we are**

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 230 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. Our mission is to call forth a just and compassionate society for Aotearoa, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website - [www.nzccss.org.nz](http://www.nzccss.org.nz).

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