



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

*United Nations Consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO and UNCTAD
Special relations with the ILO, FAO, UNICEF, and other organisations and agencies*

16 February 2026

Submission to Justice Select Committee

Re: Arms Bill

This submission is being made on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Aotearoa Section.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is a peace and disarmament organisation which has been working for social justice and a non-violent society since its establishment in The Hague in April 1915. We are grateful for the opportunity to make a submission on this Bill.

In general, we support the submission made by Gun Control NZ. We are heartened to see that the Bill makes no changes to the public safety measure of banning semi-automatic weapons and maintaining a register of firearms. On 14 December 2025 a mass shooting happened at Bondi beach in Sydney, despite the effective 1996 Australian gun control law changes. If the Bondi shooters had had access to semi-automatic weapons and large magazines, the death toll would have been much higher.

Regarding the Bill:

We recommend a licensing period of 5 years, (not the 10 years (clause 76) in the Bill) as is the case for other like-minded jurisdictions. Canada and the UK both have 5-year licences. Australian states have a range of terms, that vary from 1-5 years, depending on the types of firearms owned.

A person's circumstances can change significantly over 10 years. For example, relationship breakdowns, ageing and online radicalisation are all risk factors that can have a significant impact on a licence holder.

In terms of administration, we believe that the process of appointing the chief executive of the Firearms Safety Authority (Clause 302) should follow the practice outlined in clause 5, schedule 7 of the Public Service Act 2020, that is, be made by the Governor General on the advice of the Public Service Minister, not by the responsible Minister. This proposed change is constitutionally unprecedented in New Zealand's system of government. (See also Clause 308 and 309 regarding the chief executive.) We see no

good reason for an exceptional process for appointing the head of this important authority.

Recommended additions to the Bill:

The December 2025 Bondi attack also illustrated the slaughter that is possible if shooters have multiple weapons. For that reason, WILPF suggests the addition of a clause to set a limit on the number of firearms that can be owned on an ordinary firearms licence.

We also recommend that ammunition sellers be required to keep records of their ammunition sales, as under section 22E of the Arms Act 1983. Maintaining a register of ammunition sales is important for reducing the risk of ammunition being sold to unlicensed individuals. It would ensure that the ammunition is only sold to those with registered weapons that require that calibre of ammunition and would enable the Police to detect any suspicious patterns of ammunition purchases that warrant further investigation.

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