

# GUN CONTROL NZ

February 13, 2021

## Statement by Gun Control NZ

Gun Control NZ has recently been made aware of misleading [references](#) to the outcome of New Zealand's assault weapon buyback program in the context of the gun control debate in Canada. We would like to respond to them:

*"The New Zealand gun buyback has been a major success, with a high level of cooperation from gun owners. Police are now making a major effort to confiscate illegal weapons and we look forward to the introduction of a gun register. Bringing firearms under effective regulation is a preventive measure. The results will be seen over decades as they have been in Australia where there has been a huge decline in gun harms following their buybacks in 1996 and 2003."* says Dr Hera Cook, Department of Public Health, University of Wellington Otago Medical School and founding member of Gun Control New Zealand.



*"The New Zealand Auditor-General stated that it is difficult to determine the level of compliance with the gun buy-back because of uncertainty about the number of prohibited firearms, magazines, and parts. No one knew the number of prohibited firearms in the community when the law was changed because New Zealand doesn't yet have a firearms register. Before the buyback, the NZ Police estimated a range from about 55,000 to 240,000 newly prohibited firearms, based on an analysis by KPMG. As at 13 February 2020, the Police's provisional information reports that 61,332 firearms had been handed in or modified. This is at the lower end of the range of the Police's estimates, but still within the range,"* says Philippa Yasbek, Gun Control NZ co-founder



*"An independent review was undertaken by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) of the NZ Police's estimates. It concluded that, although it would be possible to improve the reliability of the estimates with significant investment, confidence in them would remain low. Neither the Auditor-General nor any independent expert ever endorsed the gun lobby estimate of 170,000 prohibited firearms and we have seen no credible evidence to support their single estimate. We are concerned that the Canadian government has been misled by the discredited misinformation of the New Zealand gun lobby"* says Philippa Yasbek.

According to Dr Cook, *"There are a number of other indicators suggesting the buyback was successful:*

- *More than 5,000 firearms were handed in or declared for surrender before the buyback and amnesty even officially got underway in June 2019.*
- *Anecdotes that the price of newly prohibited firearms on the black market has increased significantly.*
- *The government is about to undertake a second buy-back of items that weren't prohibited at the time of the buy-back in 2019 (this includes longer pistols, pistol carbine conversion kits, pump action rifles with detachable magazines, and some centre-fire lower receivers)."*

*"New Zealand has achieved elimination of COVID-19 in the community because of the very high levels of compliance of the population with COVID-19 laws. We believe that, like the rest of the population, most Kiwi firearms owners are law-abiding. They complied with the buy-back in the same way as they comply with other laws," says Philippa Yasbek.*

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#### **References and useful sources:**

- The New Zealand Auditor-General undertook a review of the gun buyback and found that NZ Police administered it well. The report includes references to the discussion above about the estimates of the number of firearms by the NZ Police, KPMG and the review by the NZIER. The full report and a summary is available here: <https://oag.parliament.nz/2020/firearms-buy-back/implementing-the-firearms-buy-back-and-amnesty-scheme>
- The latest NZ Police data on the buyback is available here: <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/firearms-amnesty-buy-back-national-overview.pdf> (Category E firearms covered some semi-automatic firearms that were held by those who had undergone extra vetting. All of these firearms were registered before and became prohibited in 2019. The Police infographic doesn't include information on the number of firearms that were modified to bring them into compliance with the new laws)
- Information on the second buyback is available here: <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/firearms-and-safety/what-do-i-need-know/new-firearms-laws-and-what-they-mean/amnesty>
- The press release from the Minister of Police at the conclusion of the gun buyback: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/gun-buyback-over-next-phase-underway>
- A link to some of the media commentary at the time of the end of the gun buyback: <https://www.guncontrol.nz/media/the-end-of-the-gun-buyback-scheme>
- Dr Hera Cook's piece in The Guardian at the end of the buyback: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/20/gun-buyback-wont-change-things-overnight-but-it-will-give-people-hope>
- More information about Gun Control NZ is available at [www.guncontrol.nz](http://www.guncontrol.nz)