

ANALYSIS PREMIUM

Opinion: The other side of the gun lobby's story

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—Hidesight

I learned from news reports of gun lobbyist Mike Loder's must-watch submission on the botched and rushed gun laws.

His 15-minute presentation drove National's Judith Collins to make common cause with Labour's Michael Wood to smear Mr Loder as a gun-toting, terrorist-inciting, mad-man.

He clearly struck a nerve: MPs ganged up to shoot the messenger, desperate to ignore the message.

The news only reported the verbal abuse.

His presentation was entertaining; his report sobering.

Experience shows guns aren't the best terrorist weapon: 9/11 (box cutters), Oklahoma City (nitrogen fertiliser plus solvent), 2016 Nice (truck). The terrorist wrote he knew this: he chose guns not to maximise death but to maximise the political response. He's won that one.

There is also a serious problem with the police administering gun laws:

They have lost the details of 25,000 gun licensees when they swapped out their bespoke database.

They haven't followed up 6727 expired licences.

They have licenced 29 gang members.

They have licenced at least 1132 criminals from Australia including Peter James Edwards who had 53 convictions in Australia. He used his licence to buy 72 rifles and shotguns, which he cut down and added pistol grips and silencers. He filed off the serial numbers and sold them to criminals including patched members of the Headhunters gang.

Years later there's still no data-checking with Australian police.

The problem is criminals, not law abiding gun owners. Ninety-nine percent of gun crime is committed by criminals without a gun licence. They are not bothered by policy or statute.

Nine percent of all gang members have five or more gun convictions. One has 46. One has been caught with illegal guns nine separate times. There is little or no consequence.

Criminals will always have guns no matter what: They can smuggle them, they can make them, they can modify them and they can steal them. We have had machine gun murders in New Zealand with home-made guns.

Less than 8% of gun thieves are caught. Police treat gun theft no more seriously than any other theft. If miraculously caught, the punishment is typically a fine less than the value of the gun or a warning.

Ordinarily, an opposition would stand up to a government rushing hamfistedly to confiscate the property of responsible owners demonstrably not the problem.

No. The two old parties have made common cause against the interest of a great many law-abiding citizens and against the principles of parliamentary democracy.

The MPs simply abused Mr Loder. Ms Collins questioned whether he was a fit and proper person while Labour MP Michael Woodhouse attacked him for calling Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern a tyrant. He was prompted to do so when she laughed when asked whether she would be seeking public input.

The MPs didn't contradict his facts. They offered no followup to his alarming testimony.

It's only going to get worse: Soon the police will be able to arrest Mr Loder for hate speech. How dare he call the prime minister a tyrant.



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