

## COLFO Report – Firearms Safety

A report from New Zealand published in the *Autumn Issue 176 – April to June 2012 edition of New Zealand Hunting and Wildlife* (pp.,4-5, Author Michael Dowling, Chairperson, Council of Licensed Firearms Owners Inc.) compared international death rates and statistics.

The point of the COLFO report was to measure the public safety of responsible firearms owners against their own actions, death and accidental injury and not against the actions of criminals.

The report drew on data from:

- *The National Injury Prevention Research Unit at Otago University, New Zealand;*
- *Australian Bureau of Statistics for 2008;*
- Canadian Statistics from the CANSIM site for 2008; and
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in the USA

Key points from the report:

The author noted that - in New Zealand firearms are largely in the hands of responsible firearms owners. The number and rate of firearms deaths is low compared to other causes of deaths.

The data in the report also shows that Australia has an excellent record with regards to firearms used by licensed firearms owners.

<b>No. of Deaths -</b>	<b>in Australia</b>	<b>in NZ</b>	<b>in Canada</b>	<b>in USA</b>
Unintentional falls	5,410	1,305	10,234	123,706
Falls	1,412	473	3,098	22,631
Motor Vehicle	1,519	365	2,628	42,031
Poisoning	784	105	1,441	29,846
Drowning	169	57	275	3,443
Unintentional firearm	10	4	20	613
<b>Firearm Related Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>31,724</b>

<b>Deaths per 100,000 of population -</b>	<b>in Australia</b>	<b>in NZ</b>	<b>In Canada</b>	<b>in USA</b>
Unintentional falls	25.5	30.6	30.7	41.0
Falls	6.7	11.1	9.3	7.5
Motor Vehicle	7.2	8.6	7.9	13.9
Poisoning	3.7	2.5	4.3	9.9
Drowning	0.8	1.3	0.8	1.1
Unintentional firearm	0.05	0.09	0.1	0.2
<b>Firearm Related Total</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>10.4</b>

The report states that Australia has lower numbers/ rate of unintentional deaths (legal firearms owners using firearms legally) than intentional deaths (illegal use by criminals).

Legitimate firearms owners and users in Australia have a very good record and this is also backed up for NSW by the NCIS report.

The author also stated that education – such as is offered by the NZ Mountain Safety Council teaching responsible and safe firearms practice contributes to the good record.

*(Note: The Game Council of NSW in the past 8 years has developed a comprehensive suite of hunter education programs including: the NSW Hunter Education Handbook and R-Licence accreditation, workshops, OutREACH hunter education modules and program, and the Firearms and Hunting Safety Guide: which has been approved by the NSW Firearms Registry).*