

Gunning for the Law - Should NZ frontline police carry guns?

Over 1600 Buzz panel members took part in our quick survey about arming our frontline Police force. Here's what they had to say...

Almost everyone thinks our society become more violent over the past 20 years...

91% said yes it has become more violent! Only 6% said no and 3% weren't sure.

Should frontline police carry guns? Here's what people thought...

	% Yes
In all cars	39%
On themselves	22%
In cars and on themselves	21%
Not at all	13%
Don't know	5%



If our Police force were armed, the majority of people don't think we would head down the American track particularly quickly (with the right for citizens to buy and carry guns)...

11% felt it would never happen here while 9% felt it would happen very fast.

However, the majority of people (62%) felt we would head down the American track with rights for citizens to buy and carry guns relatively slowly.

In New Zealand we already have the ability to buy a high powered air rifle without a license. Most people think gun control here should be tougher...

	% Yes
Leave gun control as it is now	15%
Gun control should be tougher than it is now	83%
Gun control should be looser than it is now	1%
Don't know	2%

Nearly 80% of people feel penalties are not tough enough in New Zealand for offenders who shoot or kill police

78% of people said penalties are not tough enough, 13% said they were tough enough already and 9% were unsure.

People were fairly consistent about their views on whether or not dairy workers and liquor outlet workers should be allowed to arm themselves.

However a higher number of people agreed that farmers should be allowed to arm themselves, and a much higher number disagreed that citizens over the age of 18 should be permitted to arm themselves...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree on some aspects and disagree on others	Agree	Strongly agree
Dairy shop workers should be allowed to arm themselves	21.6%	27.8%	37.3%	9.7%	3.6%
Liquor outlet workers should be allowed to arm themselves	21.3%	28.3%	36.1%	10.6%	3.7%
Farmers should be allowed to arm themselves	15.0%	22.9%	37.0%	19.3%	5.8%
Citizens over the age of 18 should be allowed to arm themselves	45.3%	35.0%	15.3%	2.4%	2.0%

We also asked people what were the key issues that most concern the, regarding arming our frontline police. The comments were very varied and really insightful. Here are a few comments people made...

- If armed, the public will expect every police officer to be an expert marksman, and that's just not possible
- Britain took all the guns away and their crime rate went through the roof. Arming the police would help but most of the time they get there when it's all over. So it becomes a civilian problem, to arm ourselves or not?
- Arming police causes ALL criminals to arm themselves, instead of carrying lesser weapons such as knives
- I think with proper training in fire arms usage by the police it will help make the public feel safer especially as violent gun crimes are on the increase
- We have already had situations where unnecessary shootings by police have taken place
- My main concern is that arming police is like the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Why do we not look at the issues definitely, and possibly, causing this situation
- That our Society has become so PC it would prosecute any officer who used a weapon in the "heat of the moment"
- The way we (the NZ system) puts a police officer on trial for shooting someone in the line of duty grieves me. I don't believe any police officer should have to go through that for just doing their job. If under pressure they make a wrong decision, the results will no doubt, affect them for the rest of their lives
- The bad guys already use guns, how can our police be effective going against that unarmed?
- I think all officers should carry tasers on them as a non lethal alternative to subduing offenders. A gun should also be available somehow in case a situation escalates and there is no other option.
- It is important that police have adequate training in the use of firearms but also need to be skilled in defusing potentially dangerous people.
- Increasing violence is a societal issue and will not be solved by more violence