



New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association Incorporated

Level 1, 45 – 51 Rugby Street, Mount Cook, Wellington 6021

PO Box 6514, Marion Square, Wellington 6141

Phone: 04 801 7367 | Fax: 04 801 7368

Email: deerstalkers@paradise.net.nz

www.deerstalkers.org.nz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WELLINGTON (7 August 2015): The New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association is calling for police to cancel their contract with the NZ Mountain Safety Council.

This comes just after the MSC unexpectedly abolished two positions administering key areas such as training and licensing, and disbanded an advisory committee on firearm safety. The programme instructors, many of whom are also NZDA members, say the changes were made without consulting major firearm organisations or even the police, according to NZDA National President Bill O'Leary.

"Suddenly there's a great vacuum looming in teaching safety to our growing numbers of sporting shooters and hunters," he said. "It will compromise the training needed by every person going into the outdoors with a firearm, including the more than 10,000 New Zealanders who currently obtaining their first licence each year."

The two programme managers employed by MSC were also tasked with developing the programme and keeping in contact with instructors for training and reporting on firearm incidents, Mr O'Leary said. "They do many other things to make the legitimate sporting and hunting use of firearms as safe as possible – for both shooters and the general public."

The Technical Committee had nominees from national hunting and shooting organisations, firearm instructors, Ministry of Defence and the police. That committee provided advice to the programme managers and contributed to their development. That structure has now been dissolved despite assurances by CEO Mike Daisley over the past year that the programme would not be affected during the disestablishment of the other outdoor disciplines and the regional committees, Mr O'Leary said.

"MSC had assured the police been assured that the programme would continue unchanged but NZDA has no confidence in that assurance."

He said that instructors had a strong loyalty to the programme and the managers and had communicated their extreme concern to the NZDA as the leading hunting organisation in NZ. "We share their view that MSC lets down all New Zealanders by making changes that are pointless at best and almost certainly harmful."

Meanwhile the police have moved to ask police District Arms Officers to reassure instructors that police value the volunteers' services and will ensure that the provision of resources and resolution of any issues will be a priority.

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For further information contact: Bill O'Leary, National President, NZDA

Ph: 03 547 6202

027 430 5008

b.f.oleary@xtra.co.nz