

Subject: Antique Firearm Questions



Please find attached our reply to the Antique Firearm Questions as requested. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

John Green	Andrew Harvey
President	Secretary

27th of November 2024

Reference: We use the term 'antique firearms' to be those Pre 1900 antique firearms for which commercial ammunition is not available.

Overview

Antique firearms were predominately used with Black Powder , with the quality and power of Black powder improving towards the end of the 19th century. They were built using inferior materials and methods that mean using more powerful propellants is fraught with risk possibly resulting in the failure of the firearm.

Further, the lack of construction standardisation between manufacturers results in these firearms not always chambering another manufacturers ammunition despite firearm markings to the contrary. This last issue requires specific expertise to resolve. Firing an antique firearm requires specialist knowledge, care and material if even possible at all.

Antique firearms can be extremely rare, expensive and have historical value – a Colt Navy revolver in good condition can be worth over \$100,000 U.S. Some of these have Australian provenance as they were issued as an Australian Colonies service & police pistol.

We question that there has been much in the way of crime with antique firearms – if any, that requires such a drastic change in their control. We ask that if there is evidence to the contrary, that this be produced.

An antique firearm without ammunition has little value for use in crime except as a club or stealing it. We would think that even brandishing many antique firearms such as a muzzle loading rifle or pistol would be apparent to many of the public as antiques, no better than doing the same with a toy or mock up firearm.

A corollary would be antique cars: Cars are involved in large numbers of deaths, injuries and suicides – many more than firearms, however antique cars would account for very few and those that have no fuel and stay in the garage or museum – none. Those that are not driven do not require registration nor licensing! How can an antique firearm be treated differently – without ammunition it cannot be fired.

1) Existing fit & proper person test

We do not believe there is evidence to support a fit & proper person test for antique firearms owners. These firearms do not have ammunition available and therefore the physical and medical requirements do not apply. We

do not believe there is evidence of criminal activity with antique firearms to support the change from the previous exemption. These antiques are display or investment items not operating firearms.

We do not believe that a fit and proper person test is warranted by any evidence for those possessing Antique firearms.

2) The need for tags to be attached to the antique firearm, and whether removal of a tag should be considered an offence.

We do not believe that antique firearms require tagging. Placing a tag on an antique firearm can cause damage, even by soft tags rubbing. A tagged firearm for display will be unsightly if permanently affixed. Some antique firearms cannot be tagged permanently due to the design of the firearm – such as those with folding triggers, lack of a trigger guard and protrusions to affix a tag.

Information required to be provided to Tasmania Police should be enough for most Antique firearms to be identified such as manufacturer, model, calibre & serial number. A very small number of firearms will not have any of these and may require alternative means such as further description or a photograph.

3) Where an antique firearm is capable of being fired, the need for that firearm to be licensed appropriately under the firearm Act 1996.

We do not believe the statement that many antique firearms are inoperable to be true. However, what is true is that many antique firearms cannot be fired due to a lack of ammunition, components, tools and/or expert knowledge to operate them.

We do not believe that the proposed inclusion is warranted on the basis that these firearms will not be fired due to the reasons elicited previously. If an antique is to be fired then it should be registered appropriately to do so.

We believe that if an antique is breech loaded and capable of discharging self-contained cartridge ammunition and that ammunition is not commercially available then it is no different than any other antique firearm – ammunition will not be available to fire it. A firearm without ammunition is an inert object.

We believe breech loaded cartridge antique firearms should be treated the same as all other antique firearms.