

Western Australian Auditor General's Report



Firearm Controls



Report 18: May 2019

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Firearm Controls

Report 18
May 2019



**THE PRESIDENT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**THE SPEAKER
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Firearm Controls

This report has been prepared for submission to Parliament under the provisions of section 25 of the *Auditor General Act 2006*.

This was a narrow scope performance audit, conducted under section 18 of the *Auditor General Act 2006* and in accordance with Australian Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500 *Performance Engagements*. Narrow scope performance audits have a tight focus and generally target compliance with legislation, public sector policies and accepted good practice.

The audit objective was to determine how effectively the Western Australia Police Force controls and regulates firearms.

I wish to acknowledge the staff at the WA Police Force for their cooperation with this audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Spencer'.

CAROLINE SPENCER
AUDITOR GENERAL
15 May 2019

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Auditor General's overview

This Office has previously reported 4 times since 2000 on WA Police's regulation and oversight of firearms. These reports consistently highlighted issues with Police's firearm application and inspection policies, procedures and activities, and weaknesses in the information systems used to carry out its regulatory responsibilities. Almost 20 years since our first audit, we have had another look at this important area of Government regulation.



In November 2016, the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia released a comprehensive report¹ into the *Firearms Act 1973* and Firearms Regulations 1974. The report included 143 recommendations aimed to improve the administration and enforcement of the firearms legislation. Limited progress since the Law Reform Commission's report provided strong impetus for another look at this area of regulation through my Office's most recent audit.

My Office tightly focussed this audit to look at the effectiveness of Police's regulatory approach to firearm licensing and monitoring, and key information systems used to support these functions. My Office received almost 200 public comments and submissions during the audit about Police's firearm licence and approval processes. These comments provided my Office with valuable insights during the audit.

It was disappointing to find that Police still has significant weaknesses in its regulatory controls and information systems, particularly given that this Office in its 2009 and 2013 audits had previously reported many of these weaknesses.

While this most recent audit did not identify instances of licence approval, or firearms kept by anyone when not eligible, Police has a sizeable task ahead to reduce these risks being realised. By strengthening its systems, processes and procedures Police will address the long-term weaknesses identified in this report, and significantly improve the effectiveness of its regulatory functions. I also encourage other licensing agencies to consider how the findings and recommendations apply to their regulatory responsibilities.

¹ Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, Project 105 Final Report, [Review of the Firearms Act 1973 \(WA\)](#)

Executive summary

Introduction

This audit assessed how effectively the Western Australia Police Force (Police) controls and regulates firearms in Western Australia (WA).

We reviewed Police's licensing of firearm owners, dealers and repairers, as well as inspection and monitoring programs. We also assessed the effectiveness of key information systems Police uses to support its regulation of firearms.

Since 2000, we have conducted 4 audits of Police's management and regulation of firearms. As part of this audit, we assessed progress made on our previous recommendations.

Background

In Australia, firearms and their owners are registered and licensed to protect public safety.

In WA, Police is responsible for the control and regulation of firearms and ammunition under the *Firearms Act 1973* (the Act) and the *Firearms Regulations 1974* (Regulations).

In May 2019, there were around 330,000 licenced firearms and 85,100 licence holders in WA.

To obtain a firearm licence in WA, applicants must meet eligibility criteria to confirm:

- Criteria 1 – identity and that persons are fit and proper
- Criteria 2a – genuine reason for a firearm
- Criteria 2b – genuine need for Category B firearms and above (Appendix 1)
- Criteria 3 – sufficient firearm knowledge and safety awareness
- Criteria 4 – firearm details and good working order (serviceable)
- Criteria 5 – secure storage for firearms and ammunition.

The Act lists the following 7 genuine reasons for a firearm:

- hunting or recreational shooting
- club membership
- occupational
- paintball
- corporate
- collection
- another approved purpose - the Commissioner of Police has discretion to decide a genuine reason.

Under the Regulations, Police has to keep a register of information for each licence application. The register must record information such as the applicant's name, date of birth and address; as well as the type, magazine size, calibre, and serial number of the firearm. The register must record all successful and refused applications.

To support accountable and transparent licence approvals, the Regulations also require Police to maintain records and state that only an officer ranking sergeant or above can approve and issue a firearms licence.

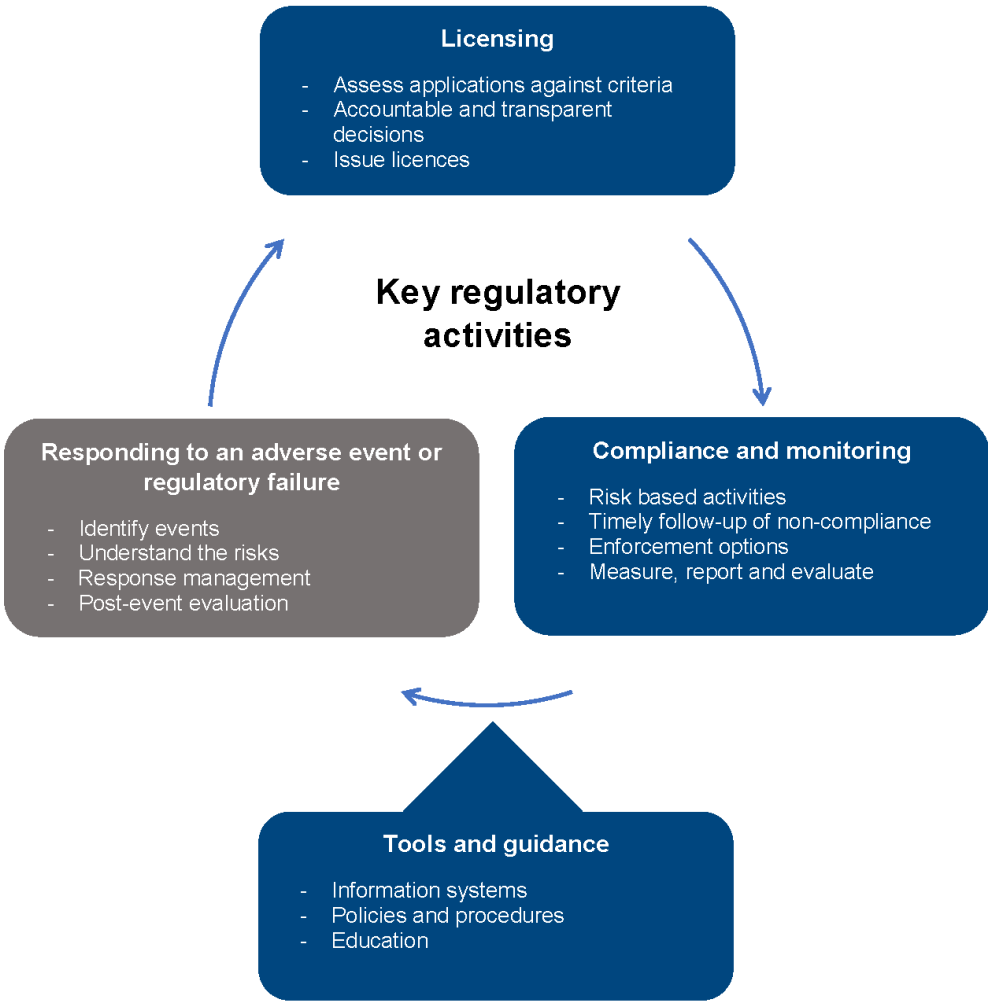
Most licences are valid for one year. Police issue a renewal notice about 1 month before a licence expires. The licence holder must pay a renewal fee, however they do not have to submit any new information when renewing a licence.

Police is required under the Regulations to issue an infringement if a licence is not paid within 3 months of its expiry date.

Under the Act, Police can inspect and monitor compliance with licence conditions, but there is no requirement to do so. Police inspections should confirm that firearms and ammunition are securely stored, keys are not accessible, and firearms are not loaded.

In 2016, Police introduced the Licensing and Registry (L&R) information system to support its regulatory functions. The system records details of licence applications, licensed firearms and users, licence conditions, and firearm storage. It also guides staff through the key licence assessment processes, including final approval before a licence is issued. The L&R system also has some reporting functionality.

Figure 1 summarises key elements of a good regulatory framework. Our audit focused on the areas shaded blue.



Source: OAG using information from the Australian National Audit Office Better Practice Guide – Administering Regulation

Figure 1: Key elements of a good regulatory framework

Audit conclusion

Police assess about 10,500 firearm licence applications each year, and approve over 99% of them. We found that dedicated staff with appropriate experience and knowledge carry out the work. However, weaknesses in Police controls raise significant risks.

While our audit did not find any evidence that Police approved licences inappropriately, it did find that assessments and decision making lack demonstrated rigour and transparency. This increases the risk that decisions to approve and decline applications may not be appropriate or consistent.

Further, the audit also found there is limited monitoring of compliance with licence conditions, and when Police does inspect it is not informed by a documented risk assessment. Police is also slow to follow up when licences have expired or for deceased estate firearms. Risk-based and timely compliance activities are essential to effective regulation of firearms.

Police's key firearm licensing information system does not effectively support the entity to carry out its licensing and compliance activities. Basic licence and compliance information is unreliable and hard to get.

Police is still to address a number of findings raised in our previous audits that date back nearly 2 decades.

Key findings

Licence assessment procedures are not sufficient and transparent

Licence assessment procedures and guidance for staff are inadequate. Formal procedures were last updated in 2012 and are not used by staff to assess licence applications because they are out of date.

Staff also lack formal guidance on key elements of the assessment process, and how Police has interpreted key legislative requirements. This increases the risk that assessments will be inefficient and inconsistent. Police informed us it plans to develop formal guidance for staff.

Eligibility assessments were poorly documented. Twelve of the 27 assessments we reviewed had poorly documented assessments of fit and proper person, genuine reason and need, and storage. Good records support sound decision making and improve accountability and efficiency.

Oversight of licence approvals lacked rigour. During July 2016 and December 2017 over 150 licence applications were partly assessed by the same person who approved the licences, and another 19 were approved by the person who carried out all steps in the assessment. Inadequate segregation of key licensing steps increases the risk of errors and misconduct.

Monitoring and compliance activities do not address risks

Police's approach to monitoring compliance with licence conditions has a number of weaknesses. In particular:

- licences are not selected for inspection based on a documented assessment of risk
- inspection procedures and guidance are inadequate. For example, inspection procedures have not been updated since 2013 and guidance on how to assess licence holder compliance with key conditions of their licence is lacking
- internally set inspection targets in 3 of the last 4 financial years were not met. In 2017-18, Police only inspected 788 of the target 1,050 firearm owners, and 35 of the target 50 dealers and repairers

- Police is slow to follow up, and recover firearms from deceased estates and expired licences where necessary. We found it takes Police on average 150 days from notification to secure firearms from deceased estates, and at least 6 months from the time an infringement is issued to actively follow up expired licences.

These weaknesses limit the effectiveness of Police's monitoring and inspection activities, the likelihood that non-compliance will be identified, and the recovery of firearms in a timely manner.

Information systems do not support effective regulation of firearms

Control weaknesses and a lack of system functionality limit the effectiveness of Police's firearm licensing system. Control weaknesses relate to data input, logging and monitoring of access, and authorisation to approve licences. These issues affect the integrity, reliability and completeness of information in the system. In addition, a lack of reporting functionality makes it difficult for Police to review and continually improve processes and activities.

Recommendations

To strengthen its control and regulation of firearms in WA, Police should:

1. update its policies and procedures for licence application assessments and inspections, and keep sufficient records to demonstrate accountable and transparent decision making

Police response: Agreed

Implementation timeframe: by December 2019

2. develop and implement a risk-based regulatory framework, including a licence inspection program

Police response: Agreed

Implementation timeframe: by December 2019

3. implement appropriate controls in the L&R system to ensure only delegated authorities can approve licences in the system

Police response: Agreed

Implementation timeframe: by December 2019

4. implement appropriate procedures to secure firearms from deceased estates and expired licences in a timely manner

Police response: Agreed

Implementation timeframe: by December 2019

5. address L&R system issues to ensure data integrity and reliability, and accurate and timely reporting.

Police response: Agreed

Implementation timeframe: by July 2019

Response from the Western Australia Police Force

The majority of findings relate to inconsistencies with documentation or adherence to policies and procedures within Licensing Services (Firearms) heightened by some inadequacies within the Firearms Licensing and Registry system.

The Licensing & Registry Enhancement Project is in progress with estimated delivery in July 2019. It is anticipated this will address the issues relating to data integrity, systems reliability and business reporting.

By way of an overall response to the performance audit on firearm controls we agree with the five areas highlighted by the audit and accordingly, believe we have sufficient risk management and related controls in place, or in development, to achieve compliance.

Licensing Services (Firearms) acknowledges the audit findings and recommendations, and will focus on the implementation of improvements to administrative practices and procedures.

The Western Australia Police Force will continue its endeavour to improve its capability to fulfil its obligations under the *Firearms Act 1973*.

Audit focus and scope

The audit objective was to determine how effectively the Western Australia Police Force (Police) controls and regulates firearms.

The specific lines of inquiry were:

1. Does Police adequately manage the licensing of firearm owners, dealers, and repairers?
2. Are monitoring programs effective at detecting non-compliance?
3. Does the Firearm Licensing and Registry (L&R) Information System support effective regulation?

We focused on Police as the key entity responsible for regulating firearms under the *Firearms Act 1973* (the Act) and the *Firearms Regulations 1974* (Regulations).

We considered information and data from January 2015 to April 2018.

During the audit we:

- reviewed relevant policies and procedures
- interviewed Police staff and ‘walked through’ Police processes and databases
- reviewed a sample of licence application assessments and inspections to assess compliance with legislation, policies, and procedures
- sample tested records in L&R, such as licence application information and inspection records
- analysed data from over 15,000 licence applications
- assessed over 700 licensing records for deceased estates and over 400 expired licences
- assessed security of the L&R system including database and application level monitoring
- reviewed nearly 200 public comments and submissions received via our website between March and July 2018.

The audit assessed how Police managed licence applications (initial and renewal) and compliance activities for original owners, additions to existing licences, dealers, and repairers. Licence applications and compliance activities related to collector, manufacturer, corporate, and shooting gallery licences were not included in the audit.

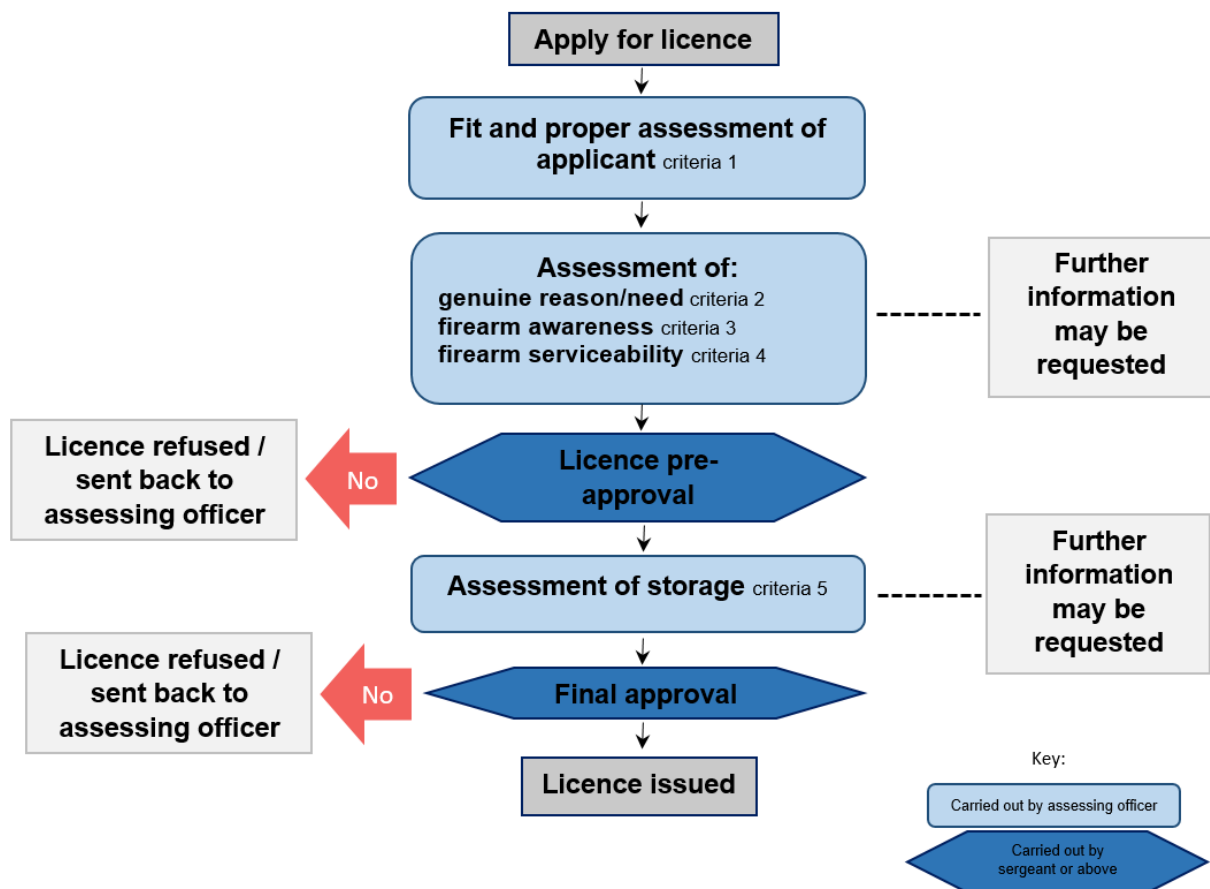
This was a narrow scope performance audit, conducted under section 18 of the *Auditor General Act 2006* and in accordance with Australian Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500 *Performance Engagements*. We complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements related to assurance engagements. Performance audits primarily focus on the effective management of public sector programs and activities. The approximate cost of undertaking the audit and reporting was \$415,000.

Findings

Licence assessment procedures are not sufficient and transparent

The procedures and guidance that help staff to assess licence applications are inadequate. This increases the risk that assessments will be inefficient and inconsistent. The way Police document and oversee assessments is also poor. This reduced guidance to staff and transparency means that someone who does not meet the eligibility criteria may be given a licence. During the audit, Police informed us that it intends to develop a corporate knowledge base and assessment policies to improve decision making accountability.

Figure 2 illustrates the key steps in how Police assesses owner licence applications.



Source: OAG using information from WA Police

Figure 2: Licence application process

Procedures and guidance are inadequate

We found a number of weaknesses in the procedures and guidance available to staff. These weaknesses increase the risk that assessments and decisions will be inconsistent and inefficient.

Procedures are out of date and not used

Procedures were last updated in 2012 and still refer to Police’s old licence information system, which has not been used since April 2016. Staff we spoke with said they did not use the procedures because they are out of date.

Formal guidance is lacking

Key steps in the assessment process have not been formally interpreted and documented. For example:

- Guidance is available for only 1 of the 7 genuine reasons for a firearm licence. Staff have examples of firearm types and calibres suitable for different vermin and property sizes to use to assess a genuine reason for hunting or recreational shooting. But, there is no guidance for the other genuine reasons.
- There is no guidance on whether there is, or should be, a limit on the number of handguns allowed and what justifies the need for a high calibre firearm.

In the absence of formal guidance, we found staff used informal notes to help assess criteria such as firearm serviceability, genuine reason and need. We identified instances where the informal notes contradicted themselves and the reasons for existing licence approvals. For example, licences approved for vermin control, despite the notes listing this as not a genuine reason for a firearm licence.

Documentation and oversight of decisions is poor

Assessments are poorly documented, lack transparency, and oversight of decisions lacks demonstrated rigour. Despite these findings, we did not find any instances of inappropriate licence approvals in the small number of assessments we reviewed.

We reviewed 27 assessments of fit and proper person, genuine reason and need, and storage and found 12 instances where decisions had been poorly documented. For example:

- Most of the 27 assessments documented vague reasons for why applicants met the licensing criteria. Reasons included 'appears suitable' and 'seems to meet requirements'.
- Four of the 6 firearm storage assessments we reviewed included photographs that were small and blurry. They did not allow staff to assess the adequacy of storage against requirements in the Regulations. Staff rely on a signed statutory declaration and photographs as evidence that storage facilities meet regulatory requirements.

We also assessed the oversight and review of licence approvals and found these processes lacked rigour. Appropriate oversight and review support accountable and transparent decision making. We found:

- there is no guidance on the role of approving officers. Staff we spoke with told us they checked everything, that all steps had been followed and that the assessments were valid. However, we could not confirm this in the assessment documentation we reviewed
- between July 2016 and December 2017, 155 applications were partly assessed by the person that approved the licence. There were another 19 instances where 1 person assessed and approved all steps in the process. Police advised us that the system should not allow this to happen.

We received nearly 200 public comments and submissions during the audit, some of which related to Police's licensing and approval processes that supported our findings (Figure 3).

Public comments received by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG)

'I hear repeated stories from my peers of arbitrary decisions made by WA Police Firearms Licensing Branch to allow or disallow the licensing of a firearm to a user. Often these decisions are contradictory ... typically delivered without clear explanation or justification.'

'There are stories of being given different answers to questions and approved/debited for the same things purely because the individual assessing their case decided to interpret the law in their own way.'

'The licensing process is all too often beset with delays, errors and subjective decision making based on the opinions of licensing officers.'

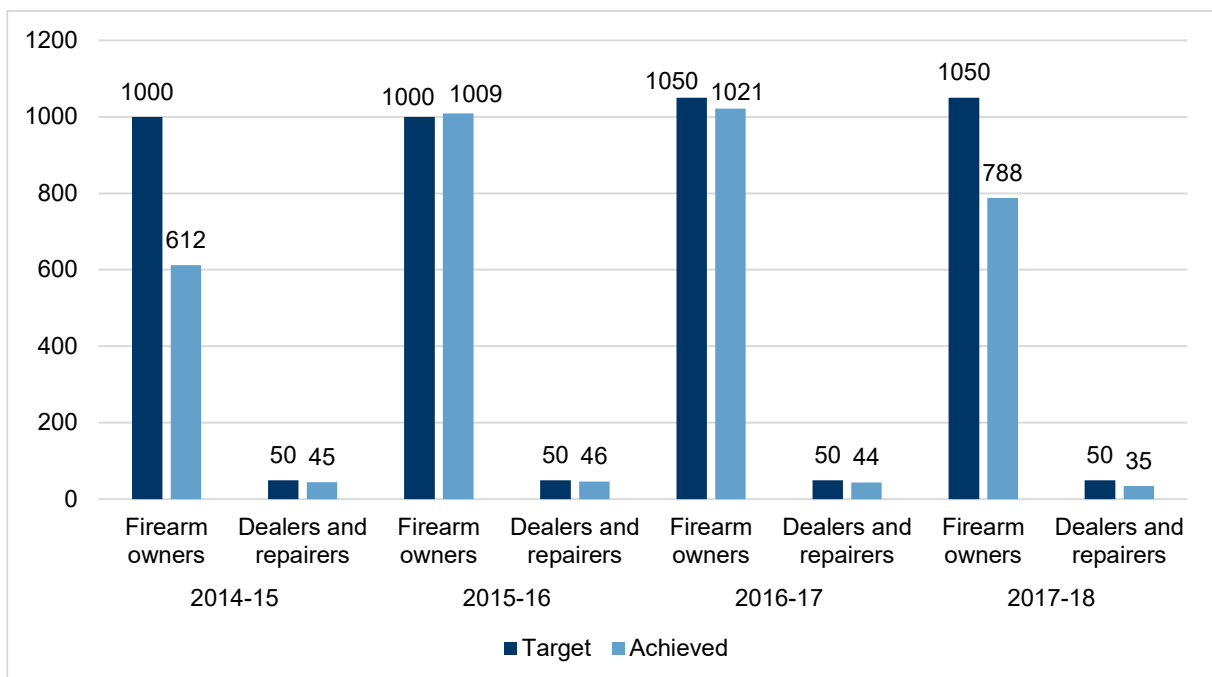
Figure 3: Examples of public comments the OAG received

Monitoring and compliance activities do not address risks

We found a number of significant weaknesses in how Police monitors compliance with licence conditions. In particular, Police inspections are not prioritised and carried out based on assessed risk, there is limited reporting of outcomes to management, and internally set inspection targets are not met. We also found that Police does not recover deceased estate and expired licence firearms in a timely manner. A risk-based monitoring and compliance program is key to effective regulation.

Regulatory compliance activities are not risk-based

Police carries out limited compliance and inspection activities, and when it selects licences for inspection, this is not based on a documented assessment of risk. Further, despite Police's annual inspection targets being low, it did not meet them in 3 of the last 4 years (Figure 4). In 2017-18, it only inspected 788 out of a target of 1,050 firearm owners and 35 out of 50 dealers and repairers. Police did not provide us with documented reasons for how it sets its targets or how it prioritises its inspections.



Source: OAG using Police information

Figure 4: Number of Police inspections - firearm owners, dealers and repairers

Inspections are critical to ensure licence holders comply with their licence conditions and securely store firearms. Police told us that resourcing constraints and other priorities contribute to them not meeting the targets.

We found most inspection activities focused on licence holders in the Perth metropolitan area, who were available during office hours. Police were unlikely to inspect licence holders in the regions or those that were not available during office hours. However, we did see evidence of Police inspections in metropolitan Perth and the regions as a result of public or industry complaints, or intelligence.

The current approach to inspections limits the number of licence holders that can be inspected. We found:

- less than 1% of regional licences have been inspected despite about 56% of licence holders being in the regions
- 30% of current firearm dealers had no record of ever being inspected, with most located in regional areas. We identified 1 dealer that had not been inspected in 48 years.

Our 2009 audit recommended that processes for planning and conducting inspection activities should be improved through a risk-based approach. This would allow Police to better target inspections of licence holders using available resources.

Inspection procedures and processes need improvement

Staff have limited guidance on how to interpret the Regulations and assess compliance during inspections, and inspections are poorly documented. Inspection procedures have not been updated since 2013. This increases the risk that non-compliance will not be identified.

Police has not developed appropriate guidance to help staff assess licence holder compliance. For example, the Regulations do not define or provide guidance on what constitutes secure storage for a dealer during opening hours or a secure safe passcode. Without appropriate guidance, staff have to apply significant judgement. This increases the likelihood that inspections will not be conducted consistently and efficiently, or identify non-compliance.

Our high level review of over 2,500 inspection records found many instances of missing or poorly recorded information. The ability to assess the effectiveness of Police's inspection program and take follow up action is limited. We found:

- information is inconsistently recorded in free text
- the specific Regulation breached is not recorded
- inspection outcomes were often not recorded
- dates of follow-up inspections were often not recorded
- outcomes were not reported to management to help inform future compliance activities.

We also found there is no guidance on when non-compliance should be followed up, increasing the risk that non-compliance will not be appropriately actioned.

During the audit, Police advised it is transitioning inspections and outcomes records to the L&R system.

Police is slow to recover firearms

Police does not have a target timeframe to recover firearms that belong to deceased estates or expired licences, nor does it report on the time it takes to recover them. We found Police is slow to follow up and recover firearms and take appropriate action. People without a licence may gain access to firearms if Police does not recover them in a timely manner.

Deceased estates

There were 705 deceased estate cases from 2016 and 2017. Our review of 37 cases showed 20 had unrecovered firearms.

We reviewed a different sample of 39 deceased estate licences for the average time it took to recover firearms and found:

- it took Police 150 days on average to secure the firearms from when it was notified of the licence holder's death
- two cases took between 3 and 4 years for Police to close. In the first case, the firearms were eventually recorded as lost, and in the second, the firearms were sold in another jurisdiction 18 months before Police found out.

Police told us it tries to notify the licence holder's next of kin that the firearm must be re-licenced, sold or handed in, but may not follow-up when it is difficult to locate the firearm.

Expired licences

Police is slow to follow up expired licences. We found it takes at least 6 months from the time an infringement is issued for Police to actively follow up to see if they need further action. The Regulations require Police to issue an infringement 3 months after a renewal is not paid.

At the time of our audit, Police told us there were 345 licences that had been expired for 3 to 12 months. A further 72 had expired for at least a year and the firearms had not been recovered. Failure to follow up expired licences in a timely manner increases the risks that firearms will be lost, stolen or that an unlicensed person will keep them.

Police advised that it has not improved the process as expired licence holders are of reduced community safety concern compared with an unlicensed person.

Information systems do not support effective regulation of firearms

The L&R system has a number of control and functionality weaknesses around data input, logging and monitoring of data access, authorisation for approving licences, system access and reporting. These create a risk to the integrity, reliability and completeness of information in the system, and limit Police's ability to measure, report and evaluate its regulatory performance.

As a result of these weaknesses, staff told us that they lack confidence in the L&R system and prefer to use their own spreadsheets to manage work such as licence applications, deceased estate firearms, and inspections. Manual workarounds increase the risk of errors.

We did a desktop review of the project management to establish the L&R system. We found the way the system was developed and implemented has likely contributed to existing deficiencies. The project started in 2014, has cost almost \$9 million, and functionality concerns raised by staff during development still remain. The L&R system does not currently provide the functionality required to help Police effectively regulate firearms.

Weak data input controls and missing information

Data in the L&R system can be entered as free text in key fields such as firearm model, property locality, address and owner. Without controls on key fields, there is an increased risk of inaccurate, duplicate and incomplete information which may then compromise its integrity, and can impact regulatory decisions and actions.

We reviewed a sample of 38 licence records in the L&R system to see if they complied with regulatory requirements. We found all were missing at least 1 of the 21 requirements. For example, 10 records had no firearm barrel length, and 13 had no magazine size information. Police told us that the Firearm Reforms Ministerial Working Group is updating the Regulations to remove the requirement to record magazine size.

No logging and monitoring of system access

There is no logging of Police staff who access the L&R system database. The database is the backend of the system, where information is stored. There is logging of access to the L&R application, however that log is not monitored. Without effective system logging and proactive monitoring of access logs, there is a risk Police will not detect unauthorised or malicious access or changes to information in the system.

Weak controls over licence approval

The L&R system allows the same person to submit and approve licences. Staff who do not have authority under the Regulations to approve licences can do so in the system. Police advised us the system should not allow this to happen. Specifically, between July 2016 and April 2018:

- 24 of 26 dealer and repairer licence applications were approved and issued in the system by an officer below the rank of sergeant. While we sighted hard copy evidence of sergeant approval, which is required by the Regulations, this information is not available in the L&R system.
- 3 of 15,638 firearm licences were approved and issued by officers in the system below the rank of sergeant. A non-sworn officer approved one of these. Hard copy evidence of sergeant approval is not retained for these licences.

During the audit, Police told us that it intends to address these weaknesses by recording sergeant approval in the L&R system, and ensuring only an officer ranking sergeant or above can approve and issue licences in the system.

Excessive user privileges

We found 7 staff had been assigned excessive system privileges allowing them to approve licences. These staff were included in a senior supervisor administration group, which has the highest level of privileges in the L&R system, but should not have been. There may be inappropriate licence approvals or changes of information in the system.

There is limited reporting functionality

Police does not have timely access to information, and reporting from the L&R system is unreliable. Police told us it can take weeks to receive a report and the information may not be accurate. We confirmed this during the audit. We found there was limited ability to extract reliable information from the L&R system. For example, the system could not provide reliable information on the total number of firearms, or details of various types of licences and owners. We also found that the reporting function often failed to produce reports. Police needs access to timely and accurate information to effectively licence and regulate firearms.

During the audit we were told new staff receive informal on the job training on how to use the system. In our view, this increases the risk that the system will be used inconsistently, and potentially compromises the integrity and completeness of the information in the system. A comprehensive user guide for the L&R system was developed in 2016 when the system was deployed but has not been given to staff. Police told us this was due to ongoing work on the L&R system.

Our previous audit recommendations have not been addressed

During this audit we found Police has not addressed findings reported in our *Third Public Sector Performance Report 2009* and *Information Systems Audit Report 2013*. These previous audits found that Police lacked appropriate quality controls over assessment and licensing decisions, did not have a risk-based approach to monitoring and compliance, and lacked adequate controls for their information systems. Police has not addressed our previous findings to adequately reduce risks. Appendix 2 summarises recommendations from our previous audits.

Appendix 1 – Firearm licence types and categories

Firearm licence types

Firearm licences	Description
Firearm	The licence holder can possess, carry, and lawfully use the firearm (and ammunition for it) identified on the licence. Must meet requirements including a genuine reason (in all cases) and a genuine need (in some cases) to licence a firearm. There are 3 sub-categories of a firearm licence, original, additional and co-user.
Repairer	Issued to a qualified person involved in repairing firearms.
Dealer	Issued to a business involved in selling firearms and/or ammunition.
Collector (firearm)	Allows the holder to possess, but not carry or use, any firearm named and identified in the licence. The firearm must have significant commemorative, historical, thematic or heirloom value.
Collector (ammunition)	The licence holder can possess and carry ammunition, however the ammunition cannot be used. Ammunition quantities may be specified, in some cases.
Corporate	Issued to a business involved in club or occupational use of firearms.
Manufacturer	Issued to the manufacturer or modifier of firearms and/or the manufacturer of ammunition.
Shooting gallery	Issued to conduct a shooting gallery at the premises and events specified in the licence.

Source: OAG using the Act and Police information

Note: Items shaded blue were covered in this audit

Firearm categories

Firearm category	Examples include	Criteria
A	Firearms such as air rifles, repeating rim fire rifles, single shot shotguns, double barrel shotguns, repeating shotgun (bolt action).	Genuine reason test.*
B	Firearms such as muzzle loading firearms (except handguns), double barrel centre fire rifles, repeating centre fire rifles, repeating shotgun (lever action) with a magazine capacity of no more than 5 rounds.	Genuine reason and need test, must satisfy that a firearm of Category A would be inadequate or unsuitable.*
C	Firearms such as self-loading rim fire rifles with a magazine capacity no more than 10 rounds, self-loading shotgun with a magazine capacity no more than 5 rounds, a pump action shotgun with a magazine capacity no more than 5 rounds.	Genuine reason and need test, must satisfy that a firearm of Category A or B would be inadequate or unsuitable.*
D	Automatic self-loading and pump action shot guns and rifles with a magazine capacity of more than five rounds.	Category D Firearms are only approved for Commonwealth and State Government purposes.*
E	Items such as cannons, line throwers, tranquillisers or paintball guns and anything not of Category A, B, C, D or H.*	
H	Items such as handguns or underwater explosive devices.*	Must satisfy that a firearm of Category A, B or C would be inadequate or unsuitable.*

Source: OAG using Regulations and Police information

***Other requirements may need to be met.**

Appendix 2 – Progress against previous OAG recommendations

Third Public Sector Performance Report 2009 – Regulation of Firearms Follow-up	
Report recommendation	Current progress
Improve quality control over the assessment of applicant’s eligibility criteria and over licensing decisions.	Assessments remain poorly documented, lack appropriate guidance, and oversight of decisions lacks demonstrated rigour.
Develop programs for monitoring compliance with legislation that are risk-based and ensure monitoring activities and outcomes meet good practice principles of quality control, accountability, natural justice, management review and process improvement.	Compliance activities are not based on risk and inspection procedures and processes need improvement.
Improve firearms register systems so they can be maintained accurately to support firearms licensing, monitoring and enforcement activities and can provide information for planning, management and review.	The L&R system has limited reporting functionality and there are control weaknesses for data input. Manual workarounds are used to overcome functionality issues.
Information Systems Audit Report 2013 – Application Controls Audit – Firearms Management System	
Ensure that the integrity and timely input of information into firearms management systems is performed.	Control weaknesses over data input in the L&R system.
Ensure the business requirements for the new firearms management system (which later became the L&R system) are adequately defined to ensure they support the business of managing firearms. Strong consideration needs to be given to management reporting. Good project management practices are essential from initiation to completion.	The way the L&R system was developed and implemented has likely contributed to existing deficiencies. The L&R system does not currently provide the functionality required to help Police effectively regulate firearms.
Retrieve firearms from deceased estates promptly and ensure that the information is entered correctly into firearms management systems.	Police is slow to recover firearms from deceased estates and expired licences.
Review controls for logging and monitoring access and changes to back end systems including databases and servers that support firearms management.	There are weaknesses for controls of logging and monitoring with no logging of who accesses the L&R database.

Source: OAG

Auditor General's Reports

Report number	Reports	Date tabled
17	Records Management in Local Government	9 April 2019
16	Management of Supplier Master Files	7 March 2019
15	Audit Results Report Annual 2017-18 Financial Audits of Local Government Entities	7 March 2019
14	Opinions on Ministerial Notifications	13 February 2019
13	Opinion on Ministerial Notification	23 January 2019
12	Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Housing	20 December 2018
11	Opinions on Ministerial Notifications	20 December 2018
10	Opinions on Ministerial Notifications	18 December 2018
9	Treatment Services for People with Methamphetamine Dependence	18 December 2018
8	Opinions on Ministerial Notifications	10 December 2018
7	Audit Results Report – Annual 2017-18 Financial Audits of State Government Entities	8 November 2018
6	Opinion on Ministerial Notification	31 October 2018
5	Local Government Procurement	11 October 2018
4	Opinions on Ministerial Notifications	30 August 2018
3	Implementation of the GovNext-ICT Program	30 August 2018
2	Young People Leaving Care	22 August 2018
1	Information Systems Audit Report 2018	21 August 2018

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