



Media contact: Matt McKeone

Mobile: 0427 953 993

Email: [matthew.mckeone@audit.wa.gov.au](mailto:matthew.mckeone@audit.wa.gov.au)

15 May 2019

## **Auditor General finds weaknesses in WA Police Force's control and regulation of firearms**

For the fifth time since 2000, the Auditor General has tabled a report in Parliament finding weaknesses with the WA Police Force's regulation and oversight of firearms.

Inadequate guidance for staff that can lead to inconsistent licence assessment decisions, limited monitoring of compliance with licence conditions and a deficient information system are some of the issues identified in today's [Firearm Controls](#) audit report.

Police assess about 10,500 firearm licence applications each year, and approve over 99% of them.

Western Australia's Auditor General, Ms Caroline Spencer, said while the audit did not find any evidence that Police approve licences inappropriately, it did highlight areas of risk.

'It is disappointing to see significant regulatory controls and information system issues remain unaddressed, despite 4 previous audits by my Office into firearms,' the Auditor General said.

'Our audit found a number of issues with Police's Firearms Licensing and Registry Information System, including weak controls over licence approvals.'

'A small number of Police staff who do not have authority under the Firearm Regulations to approve licences could do so in the system, which increases risks over the validity of licensing decisions.'

The audit also revealed that:

- decisions on licence applications lack transparency
- procedures to help staff assess licence applications are out of date and incomplete
- Police carry out limited compliance and inspection activities
- Police did not meet its own annual inspection targets for 3 of the last 4 years
- less than 1% of regional licences have been inspected, despite over 50% of licence holders being in the regions.

'WA Police need to address these long-standing weaknesses, so they can provide the community, including licence holders, with assurance that firearms are properly managed in Western Australia,' said Ms Spencer.

Today's [Firearm Controls](#) report includes recommendations to help Police strengthen its control and regulation of firearms, such as updating its policies and procedures, developing a risk based license inspection program, and addressing issues with the Licensing and Registry Information System.

You can read today's *Firearm Controls* report at [audit.wa.gov.au](http://audit.wa.gov.au).

ENDS



## **Related resources**

- [Firearm Controls – \(Full PDF version\)](#)
- [Firearm Controls – \(Video overview - 1 minute 25 seconds\)](#)

## **Previous OAG firearm reports**

- [Surrender Arms? Firearm Management in Western Australia \(13 Sept 2000\)](#)
- [Public Sector Performance Report 2004 – Surrender Arms? Follow-up Report \(5 May 2004\)](#)
- [Third Public Sector Performance Report 2009 – Regulation of Firearms – Follow-up \(21 Oct 2009\)](#)
- [Information Systems – Application Controls Audit – Firearms Management System \(27 June 2013\)](#)