

Report to Government

# Recommendations on Provincial Firearms Policy

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Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee

Recommendations on Provincial Firearms Policy  
Published by the Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee  
February 2021

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# Message from the chair

## MLA for Brooks-Medicine Hat, Michaela Glasgo, chair of the Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee

It has been a true honour to chair the Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee. I have been privileged to work with such a talented group of individuals, all of whom have a sincere passion and desire to provide Albertans with outstanding services. Since the committee was formed in 2020, members have worked hard to stand up for Alberta's law-abiding firearms owners. This report is another step forward in advocating for a Fair Deal for Alberta and provides recommendations to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. I am confident our work, in consultation with Albertans, will support the Alberta firearms community long into the future.

I learned how to safely use, store, and operate firearms from an early age. Firearms are part of my family's lifestyle and history and a key part of how we sustain ourselves. The firearms community is full of spirit and culture, an attitude reflected in every member of the committee. So, when the federal government banned the acquisition, use, or sale of more than 1,500 firearms in May 2020, we all wanted to do everything we could to protect our way of life, and the way of life of thousands of our fellow safety-focused and law-abiding Albertans.

The committee represented Albertans from across the province's diverse firearms community. Our members included firearms retailers and businesses, former law enforcement and military officers, sport shooters, educators, shooting range officials, and leaders from advocacy groups, such as the Alberta Federation of Shooting Sports and the Canadian Historical Arms Society. In July 2020, we presented a recommendation to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General that Alberta begin the work of appointing a chief provincial firearms officer. Later in the year, we consulted Albertans on provincial firearms policy and composed a number of initiatives for the minister to consider.

Our recommendations will ensure Alberta's licensed firearms owners will get a fair deal. They target illicit firearms users rather than sport shooters, hunters and farmers, and fall into three broad categories: advocacy, education, and collaboration.

Our first broad recommendation is that the chief provincial firearms office advocates for evidence-based policy changes to the federal *Firearms Act* to ensure legislation and regulations are focused on safety and the reduction of violent crime. This will include the protection of property rights, the continued assessment of Justice and Solicitor General's role as intervener in federal court challenges against the firearms ban, and the creation of an Alberta Firearms Public Policy Committee. The committee will contain well-informed and skilled volunteers who will serve as the

chief provincial firearms officer's think tank. It will include a wide range of representatives and reflect Albertans' views.

The committee's second major recommendation is to focus on educational initiatives to strengthen our focus on safety and enhance the understanding of all firearms-related issues across Alberta. The chief provincial firearms office will have a public-facing component and will be responsible for the implementation of an ongoing public education campaign to promote safe firearms use, including the introduction of a Firearms Safety Week and the creation of a user-friendly website. The office will also liaise with other organizations to explore possibilities for the creation of safe hunting/firearms safety courses for youth.

Our third set of recommendations centre on collaboration. This will include coordinating with the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service on the potential development of alternative measures programs to divert less serious firearms offences from the criminal trial process, saving the justice system time and resources. The new office will also identify opportunities to work more closely with the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) to enhance engagement and improve the process of gathering better data on all firearms-related issues.

Overall, thanks to the input of thousands of Albertans, the committee has composed a set of innovative ideas that will make Alberta a safer place to live, work and raise a family, while standing up for law-abiding firearms owners and their personal property rights. I would like to thank every member of the committee, and department officials, whose expertise and commitment has been vital through the whole process – right from the time the federal government released the Order in Council to the introduction of the federal Bill C-21 in February 2021. You have served Albertans well. Thank you for your dedication and your insight.

I look forward to our continued progress on getting a Fair Deal for Albertans and strengthening Alberta's firearms policy.

*Original signed by:*

**Michaela Glasgo, MLA** for Brooks-Medicine Hat

Chair of the Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee

# Introduction

## Why the committee was established

On May 1, 2020, the federal government issued an Order in Council that banned the acquisition, use, or sale of more than 1,500 firearms, and then introduced Bill C-21 in February 2021. Many of the banned firearms have long been owned and used lawfully and safely by Albertans for hunting, sport shooting, and other legal purposes.

The Fair Deal Panel consulted tens of thousands of Albertans through in-person town hall meetings, an online survey, and stakeholder interviews to get input on how best to define and secure a fair deal for Alberta. One of the panel's recommendations, released in May 2020, was to appoint a chief provincial firearms officer.

Subsequently, the Government of Alberta established the Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee to provide recommendations on how Alberta can better assert areas of provincial jurisdiction and respect law-abiding Albertans' long history of responsible firearms ownership, as well as to protect their property rights. The committee was also asked to make recommendations on how a chief provincial firearms officer can strengthen the administration of the firearms program in Alberta, improving services for responsible, licensed firearms owners.

The 12-member committee represented groups that speak for a wide range of law-abiding firearms owners, including farmers and ranchers, hunters, business owners, collectors, and shooting sports enthusiasts. Through this report, the committee's work will help the province develop an effective firearms policy that will allow the courts to concentrate on more serious criminal matters.

In November 2020, the committee launched a public survey to engage with Albertans on firearms issues. Committee members also held two telephone town hall events that month as in-person events were not possible due to the pandemic.

Just under 40,000 people participated in the consultations; the findings from these sessions can be found in the What We Heard and Survey Analysis sections later in this report. All of this valuable feedback enabled the committee to identify the key issues for Albertans in terms of provincial firearms policy.

The committee's thorough report contains 17 recommendations in three broad areas: advocacy, education and collaboration. These recommendations will help the government stand up for law-abiding Alberta firearms owners and increase public safety.

It is important to note that the regulation of firearms in Canada falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. The federal *Firearms Act* defines the categories of firearms regulated and the *Criminal Code of Canada* states criminal offences related to unlawful possession or misuse of firearms.

# Recommendations

The following recommendations will help the government secure a fair deal for Albertans in terms of provincial firearms policy. The recommendations will enable the province to better assert areas of provincial jurisdiction and maintain greater control over gun regulation, respecting law-abiding Albertans' long history of responsible firearms ownership. They will also help the chief provincial firearms officer strengthen the administration of the firearms program in Alberta and improve services for responsible gun owners.

## Recommendation 1: Advocacy

**Advocate for evidence-based policy changes to the federal Firearms Act to make sure legislation and regulations are focused on safety and reducing violent crime.**

- Explore opportunities to secure a fair deal for Albertans within the administration of the Canadian Firearms Program, including the protection of property rights.
- Advocate for the efficient, consistent, and lawful administration of federal services, such as processing times for licences, transfers, authorizations, and acquisitions.
- Advocate for clear and unambiguous federal firearms legislation and regulations that further enhance public safety. Communicate federal legislation and regulation changes clearly and effectively to licensed Alberta firearms owners.
- Continue to assess Justice and Solicitor General's role as intervener in ongoing federal court challenges against the 2020 firearms ban to better assert areas of provincial jurisdiction and maintain greater control over gun regulation.
- Create an Alberta Firearms Public Policy Committee comprising the chief provincial firearms officer and a wide range of representatives from the firearms community.

## Recommendation 2: Education

**Use educational initiatives to strengthen safety and security and increase understanding of all firearms issues in Alberta's communities.**

- Develop and implement an ongoing public education campaign to promote safe firearms use, highlight the important role the chief provincial firearms office plays in strengthening safe communities, and enhance mutual respect and understanding between all Albertans on firearms issues.
- Organize a Firearms Safety Week to celebrate Alberta's long history of responsible firearms ownership and highlight safety. The week would encompass Provincial Hunting Day, which is typically held on the fourth Saturday in September.



- Plan and launch a website where all Albertans can find a wide range of safety and security information, such as home security tools and resources.
- Ensure education plays a major role in creating safe streets and communities by enhancing and promoting training for law-abiding firearms owners, other interested community members, and the chief provincial firearms office staff.
- Connect regularly with all stakeholders from across the firearms community, including youth groups, school groups, Indigenous and victims' organizations, as part of an ongoing and inclusive strategic engagement process.
- Build a strong public presence in the firearms community by consistently supporting a wide range of positive initiatives, including attending gun shows, sporting competitions, and other key events.
- Liaise with the appropriate organizations to explore possibilities for the creation of safe hunting/firearms safety courses for youth.

## Recommendation 3: Collaboration

**Foster collaborative relationships with all parts of the firearms community to ensure the chief provincial firearms office better reflects Albertans' priorities and more closely aligns with the province's law-abiding firearms culture.**

- Identify opportunities for the chief provincial firearms office to work more closely with the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) to enhance engagement with all Alberta law enforcement agencies and focus on illicit firearms crime, such as smuggling, illegal firearms manufacturing and straw purchasing. Other partner organizations include the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service, the RCMP, the Alberta Sheriffs, and border agencies.
- Coordinate with the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service on the potential development of alternative measures programs to divert less serious firearms offences from the criminal trial process, saving the justice system time and resources. These alternative approaches would be focused on firearms-related offences where the public interest in prosecuting the matter might be met by alternative sanctions outside of the criminal justice system, such as licence restrictions or further safety training.
- Build an even stronger national advocacy network to increase our ability to advocate for sound policies and stand up for law-abiding Albertans.
- Promote sport shooting, hunting, heritage, and conservation by supporting and developing local firearms communities, including firearms clubs and ranges.
- Improve the process of gathering data on firearms-related issues from partner agencies to collect better information and make better policy decisions.

# What we heard

The Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee completed public stakeholder engagements in fall 2020 to gather input from Albertans on the federal government’s May 2020 Order in Council, which prohibited 1,500 previously restricted and non-restricted firearms. (The federal government introduced Bill C-21 in February 2021). This consultation process also collected feedback on Albertans’ expectations for the appointment of a chief firearms officer and firearms policy in Canada and Alberta. During these engagements, more than:

- 37,500 Albertans shared their thoughts and opinions through an online survey from November 6 to December 6, 2020, and
- 600 Albertans participated in two telephone town hall events on November 17 and 23, 2020.

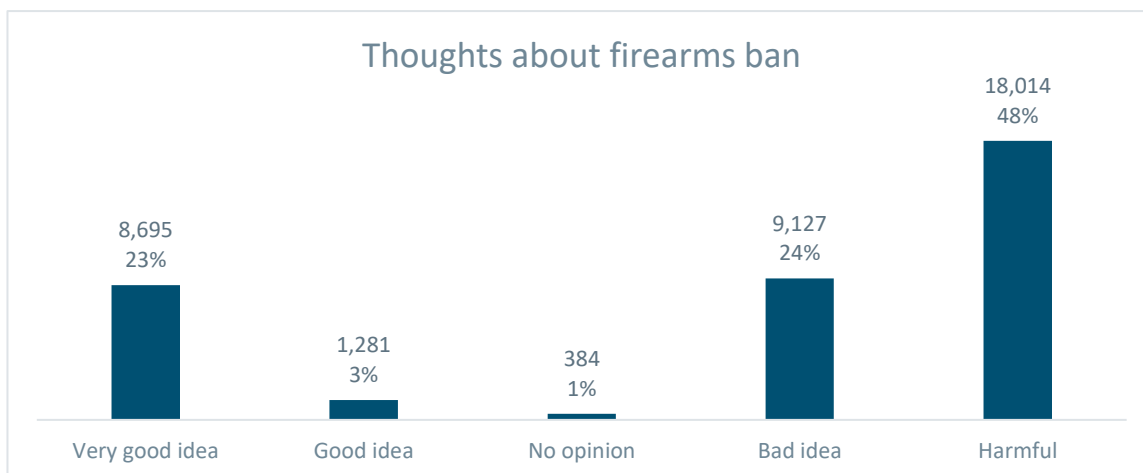
Feedback gathered during these activities informed the committee’s recommendations to the minister, the most significant of which is that Alberta appoint a chief provincial firearms officer.

## Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee Survey

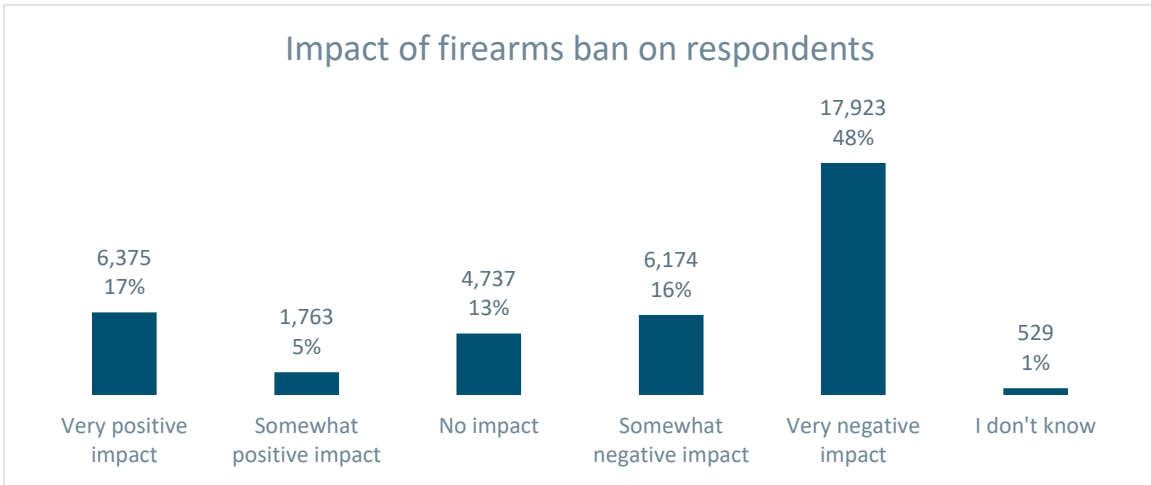
This section presents key findings from the firearms survey. A detailed analysis can be found in the Survey Analysis section.

### Firearms ban

Most respondents said the federal government’s May 2020 firearms ban is a bad idea or is very harmful. A smaller number of respondents stated the ban is a good idea or very good idea.

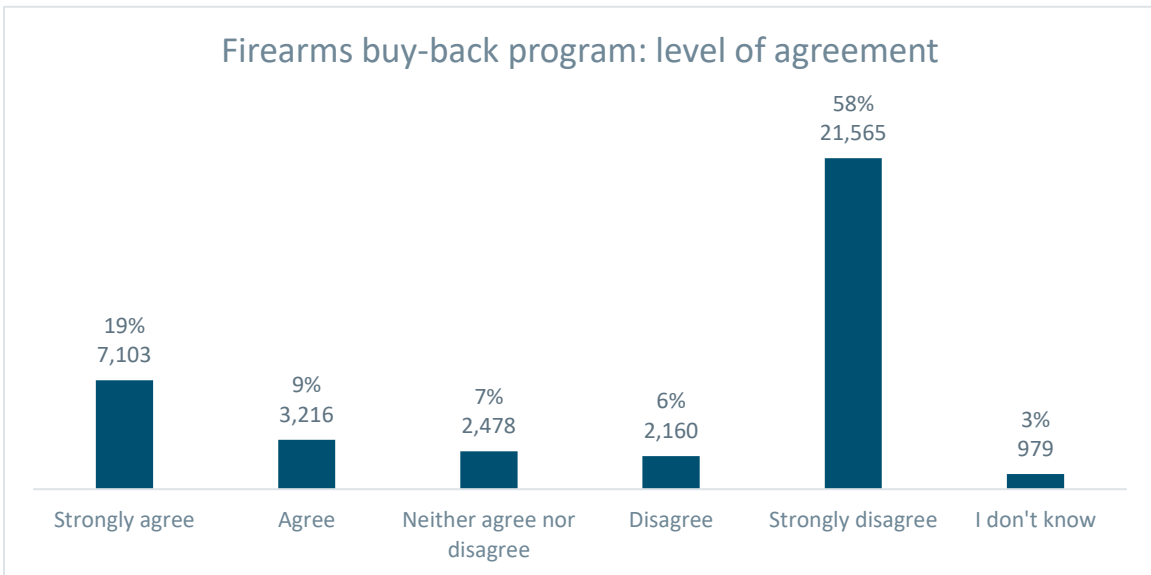


Most respondents also felt the ban has a very negative or somewhat negative impact on them. Fewer respondents said the ban has a very positive or somewhat positive impact.



## Buy-back program

Most respondents strongly disagree or disagree with the federal government's planned buy-back program (64 per cent). Conversely, 28 per cent strongly agree or agree with the buy-back program.



## Canadian Firearms Program

When asked about the quality of services provided by the Canadian Firearms Program, responses were mixed. Most respondents said services are very good (16 per cent), good (21 per cent) or fair (18 per cent). A smaller number of participants said services are poor (19 per cent) or excellent (10 per cent).

## Telephone town halls

The Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee invited Albertans to ask questions and share their opinions during two telephone town hall events.

Using telephone town halls allowed the committee to connect with hundreds of stakeholders at once without having to be in the same physical space. This format allowed for a two-way conversation, similar to an in-person town hall, but over the phone or online. The telephone town halls were open for anyone to participate.

## Participation

A total of 677 Albertans participated in the telephone town hall events, including:

- 382 participants on November 17, 2020, and
- 295 participants on November 23, 2020.

Participants were mainly from the firearms community (e.g., hunters and sport shooters).

## Telephone town halls: key findings

The issues discussed by Albertans during the telephone town halls reflect the survey results.

### **Objection to the federal government's firearms ban**

Many participants used the telephone town halls to discuss their objections to the federal government's firearms ban.

Participants were opposed to the firearms ban for a variety of reasons. Some thought it was a violation of their property rights. Others felt it was federal overreach and unfair to law-abiding firearms owners. Another group said it was not an effective way to fight crime.

### **Chief provincial firearms officer**

Some participants discussed the upcoming appointment of a chief provincial firearms officer. They expressed their support for the appointment and their expectations for the position. Others questioned whether this appointment would be enough to create meaningful changes for firearms owners.

### **Advocacy**

Another major theme to emerge was a desire to see the Government of Alberta and the incoming chief provincial firearms officer advocate for law-abiding firearms owners.

### **Other topics of discussion**

Other issues raised included opposition to the federal government allowing municipalities to ban hand guns, a desire to see the provincial government become involved in various court cases opposing the federal government's firearms ban, the identification of firearms education opportunities for youth, and a need to change the remote wilderness authorization to carry rules.

# Detailed survey analysis

A total of 37,501 Albertans completed the Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee Survey in 2020. This section presents a detailed analysis of completed survey responses.

## Methodology

Survey respondents are anonymous; identifying information was not collected. It is important to note respondents could make more than one submission because the data collection tool, OPINIO, allowed for more than one response from the same IP address, permitting participation by several members of the same household using a shared computer or portable device.

The survey used convenience sampling, relying on those who were willing to participate. For this reason, it is not representative of the Albertan population and results are not generalizable to this group.

The analysis of categorical (i.e., quantitative) information consists of the presentation of simple counts of categories as well as proportions (i.e., percentages).

The analysis of textual information (i.e., qualitative data) applied the principles of thematic content analysis. The lead researchers developed coding frameworks for each question asking for written responses.

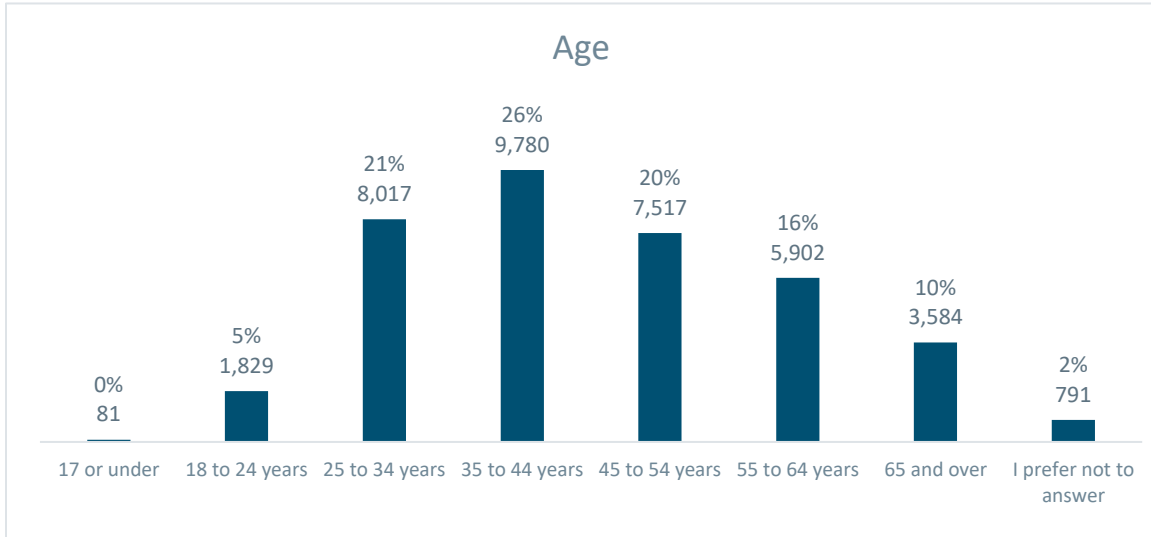
This process consisted of identifying the most dominant themes by first using line-by-line coding and subsequently refining these codes (i.e., themes). A larger research team verified these frameworks and completed the analysis of the first 1,250 responses for each written question, at which point the lead researchers determined that no new themes were being discovered (i.e., saturation was reached).

## Demographic profile

The following section outlines the demographic profile of survey respondents. The typical respondent is a non-Indigenous middle-aged male living in an urban area who owns at least one firearm.

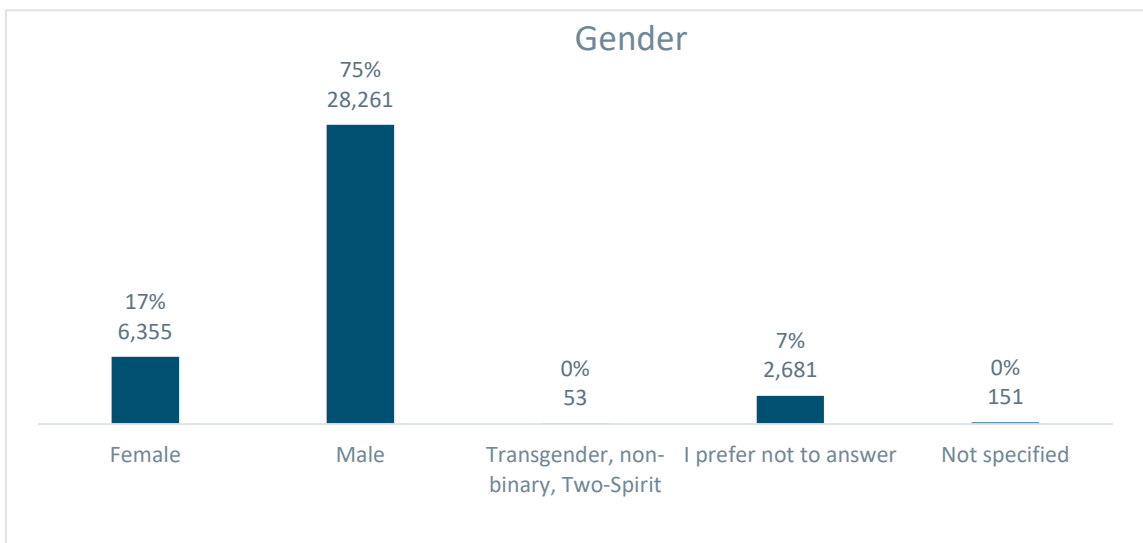
## Age

The majority of respondents are between the ages of 35 and 44. Few are younger than 25 or older than 65.

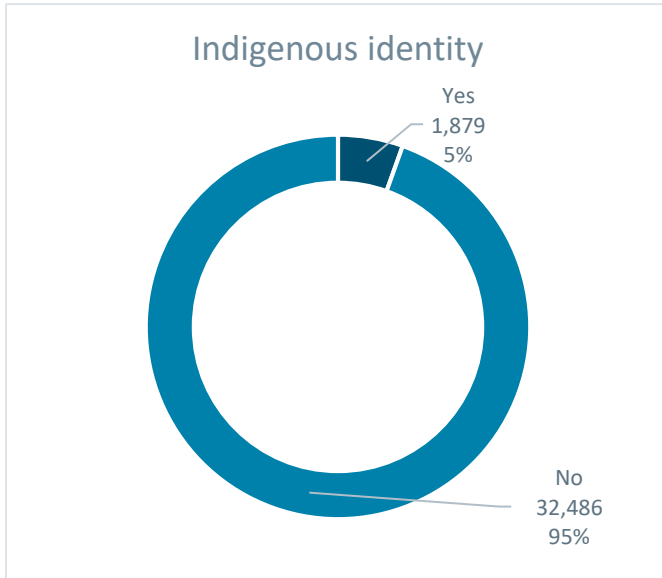


## Gender

At 75 per cent, a disproportionate number of males responded to the survey. When considering only the categories “male” and “female” (i.e., excluding all other categories), 86 per cent of respondents are male.



## The Indigenous community



The proportion of respondents who identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) roughly reflects the proportion of Indigenous people in Alberta's general population.

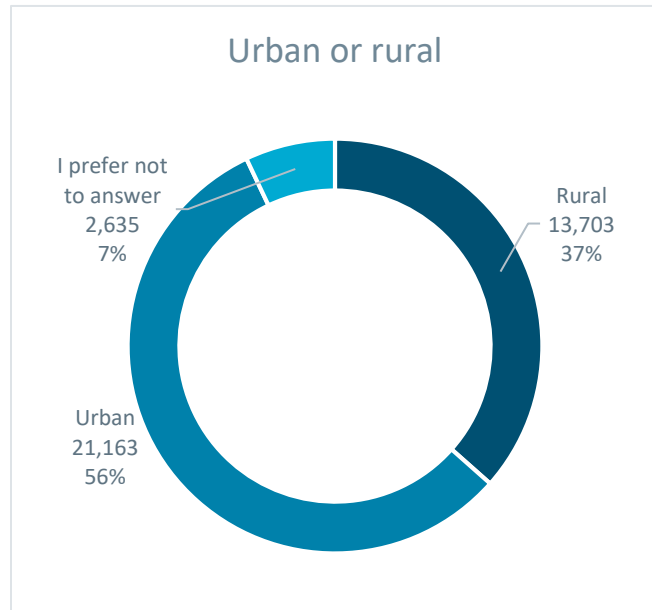
In the 2016 census, there were 258,640 people in Alberta who reported "Aboriginal identity," meaning First Nations, Inuit and/or Métis, making up 6.5 per cent of the population.<sup>1</sup>

## Urban and rural

A disproportionate number of Albertans living in rural areas responded to the survey.

Considering all the survey responses on this question, including those who preferred not to answer, 37 per cent of respondents were from rural communities.

In contrast, 2016 census data indicates 16.1 per cent of Albertans live rurally.<sup>2</sup>



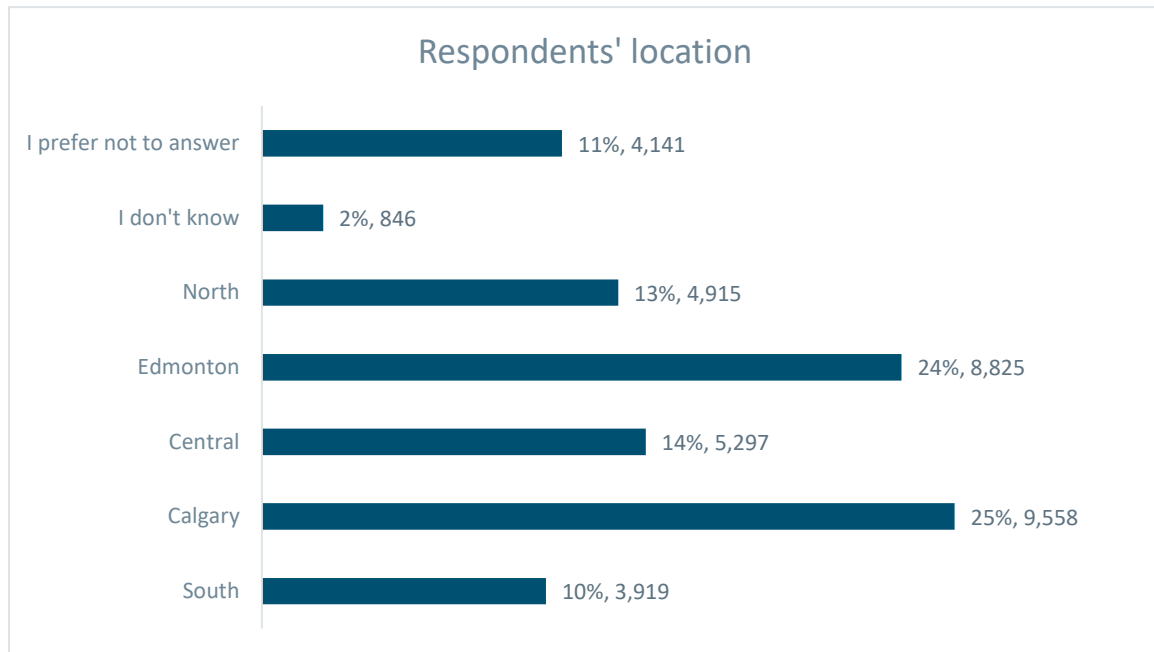
<sup>1</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-PR-Eng.cfm?TOPIC=9&LANG=Eng&GK=PR&GC=48>

<sup>2</sup> <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/7d02c106-a55a-4f88-8253-4b4c81168e9f/resource/e435dd59-2dbd-4bf2-b5b6-3173d9bd6c39/download/2016-census-population-and-dwelling-counts.pdf>



## Regional distribution

Responses to the survey were well distributed across Alberta, with most responses coming from the large population centres of Edmonton and Calgary, although these areas are underrepresented when compared to population size. In contrast, the north, central, and south regions are overrepresented.



In 2019, the population size and percentage for each Alberta Health Zone was as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- South: 308,924 or seven per cent
- Calgary: 1,696,765 or 39 per cent
- Central: 482,349 or 11 per cent
- Edmonton: 1,424,837 or 32 per cent
- North: 484,941 or 11 per cent
- Total population: 4,397,816

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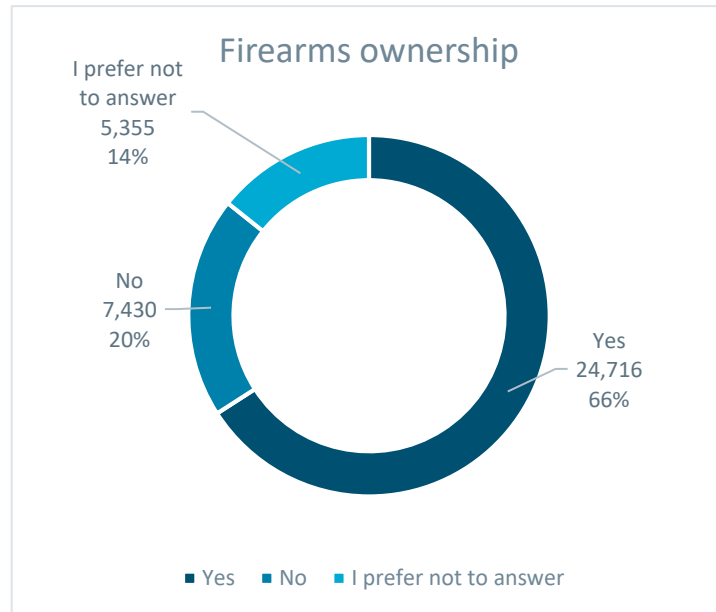
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/publications/ahs-ar-2020/zones.html>

### Level of firearms ownership

The majority of survey respondents own at least one firearm.

There were approximately 325,000 Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) holders in Alberta in May 2020.

In addition, there were approximately 2,000 licence holders between the ages of 16 and 17 (minors), over 600 business licence holders (e.g., retailers that sell firearms or ammunition) and approximately 20 museum licence holders.<sup>4</sup>



## Attitudes towards the federal government's 2020 firearms ban

In the survey, respondents were asked about the federal government's May 2020 Order in Council prohibiting over 1,500 previously restricted and non-restricted firearms. Survey respondents were also asked about the type of impact the firearms ban has on them.

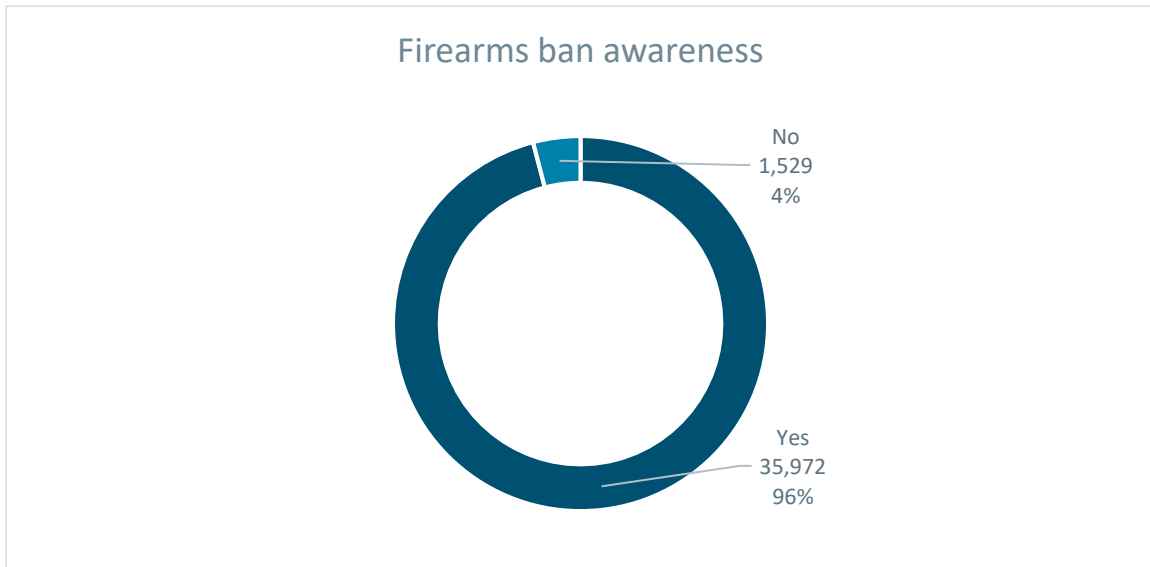
### Total counts: attitudes towards the federal government's 2020 firearms ban

This section presents the total counts and proportions for responses related to the federal government's May 2020 firearms ban.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/firearms/firearms-reports>

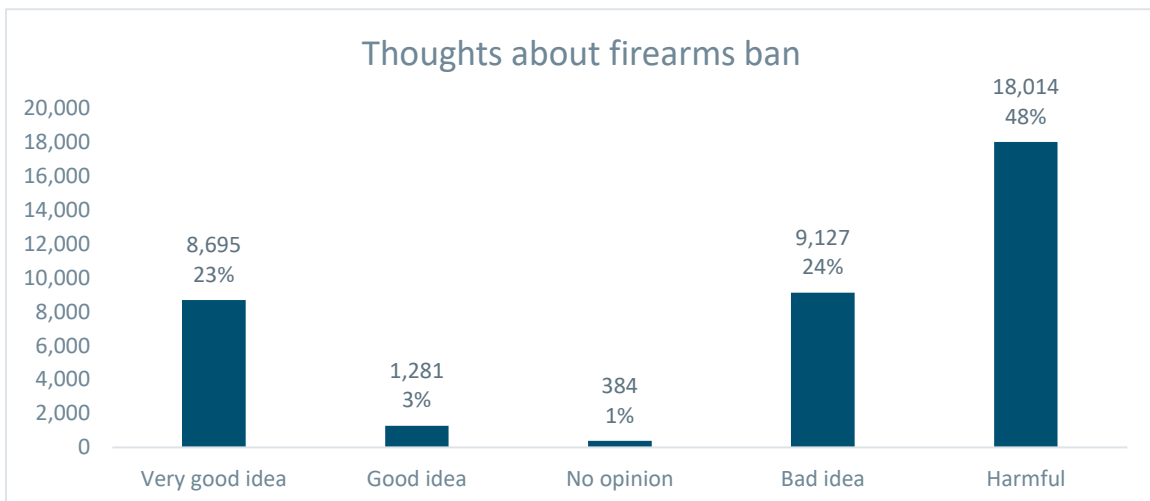
## Before today, were you aware of the federal government banning certain types of firearms in May this year?

The vast majority of respondents are aware of the 2020 firearms ban.



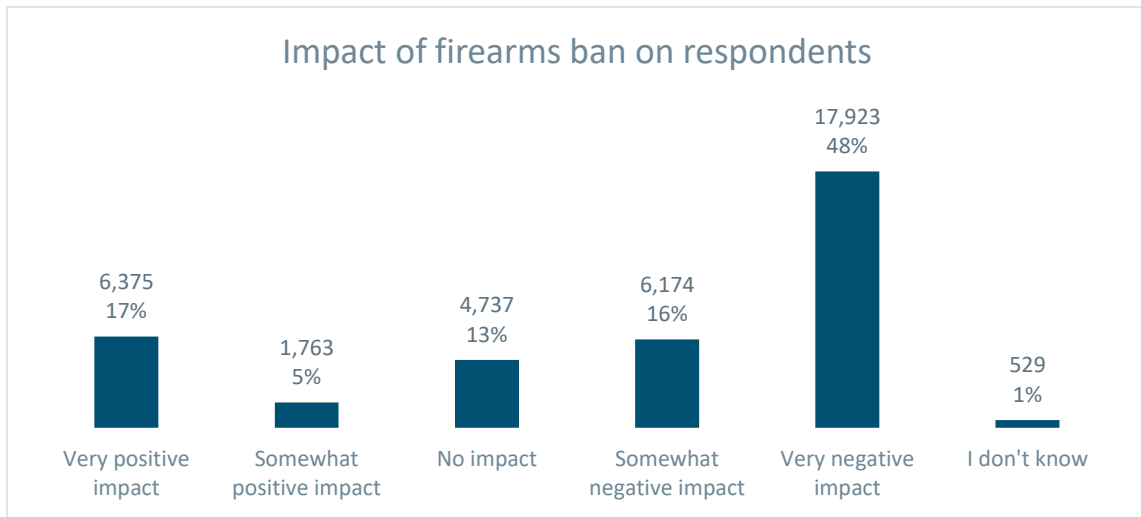
## What do you think about the 2020 firearms ban?

On average, more respondents think the firearms ban is harmful or a bad idea than a very good or good idea.



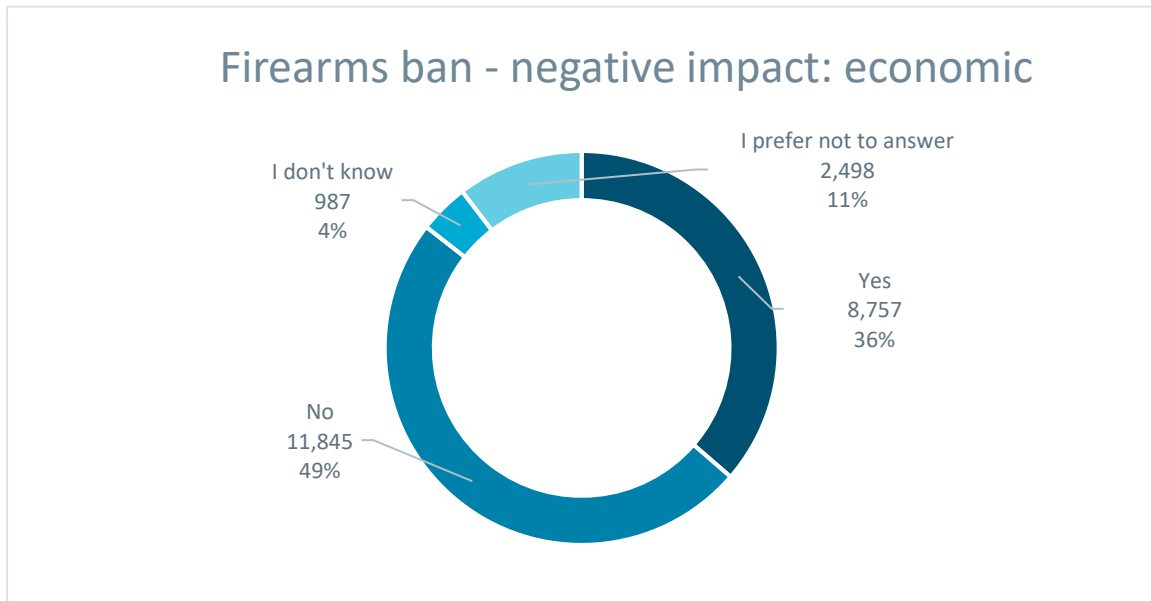
### What impact does the 2020 firearms ban have on you?

The majority of respondents said the 2020 firearms ban has a somewhat negative or a very negative impact on them.



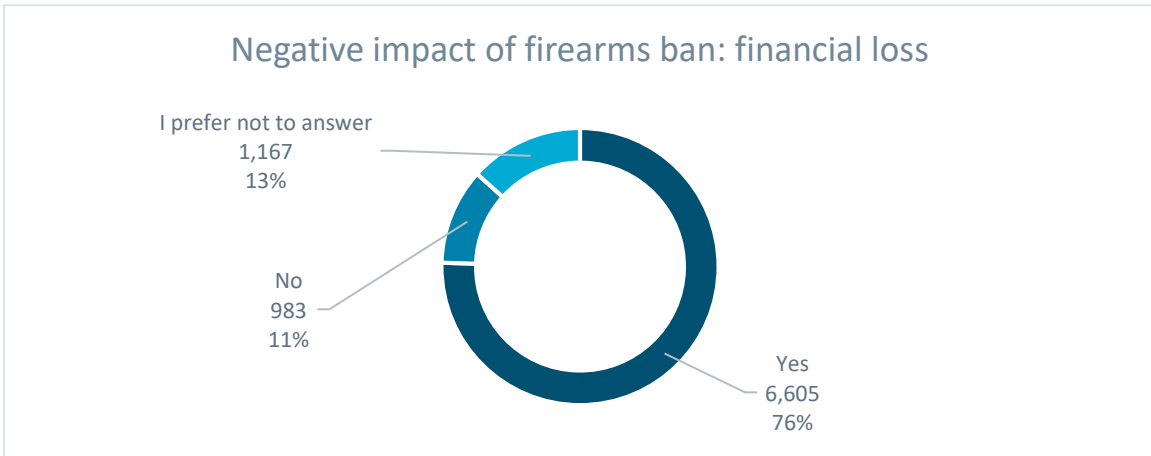
### You stated that the 2020 firearms ban has a negative impact on you. Is this impact economic in nature?

Of those who stated that the 2020 firearms ban has a negative or very negative impact on them (18,452 out of 37,501), almost two in five believe this impact is economic in nature.



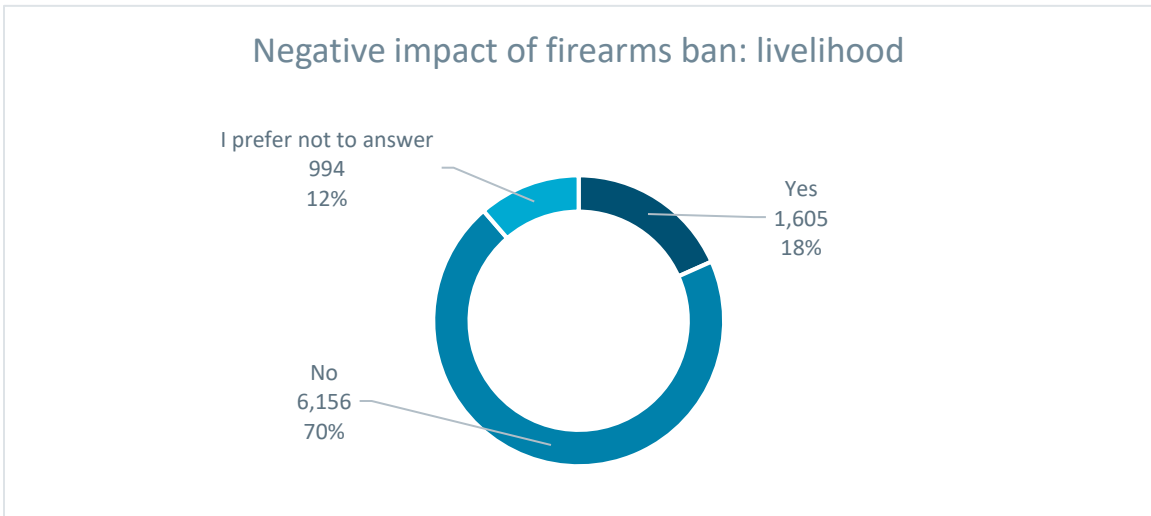
### Have you incurred or do you anticipate any financial loss because of the 2020 firearms ban?

Of those who answered that the 2020 firearms ban has a somewhat negative or very negative impact on them and that this impact would be economic in nature (8,755 out of 18,452), three out of four stated that this impact would involve a financial loss. This figure represents 18 per cent of all respondents (6,605 out of 37,501).



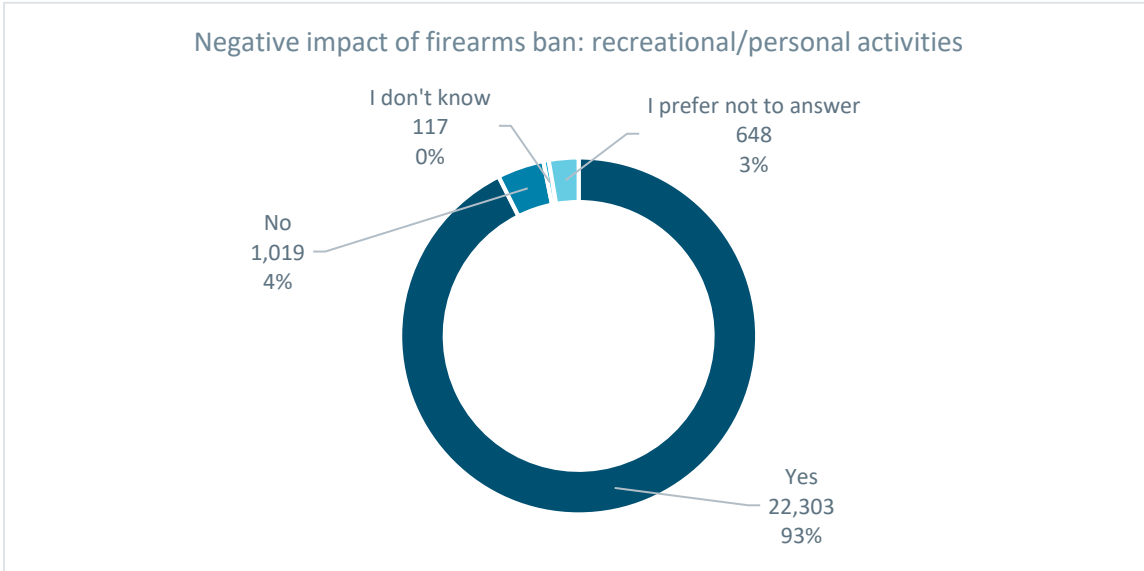
### Will the 2020 firearms ban affect your ability to earn a livelihood?

Of those who said the 2020 firearms ban has a somewhat negative or very negative impact on them and that this impact would be economic in nature (8,755 out of 18,452), about one in five stated this impact would affect their ability to earn a livelihood. This figure represents four per cent of all respondents (1,605 out of 37,501).

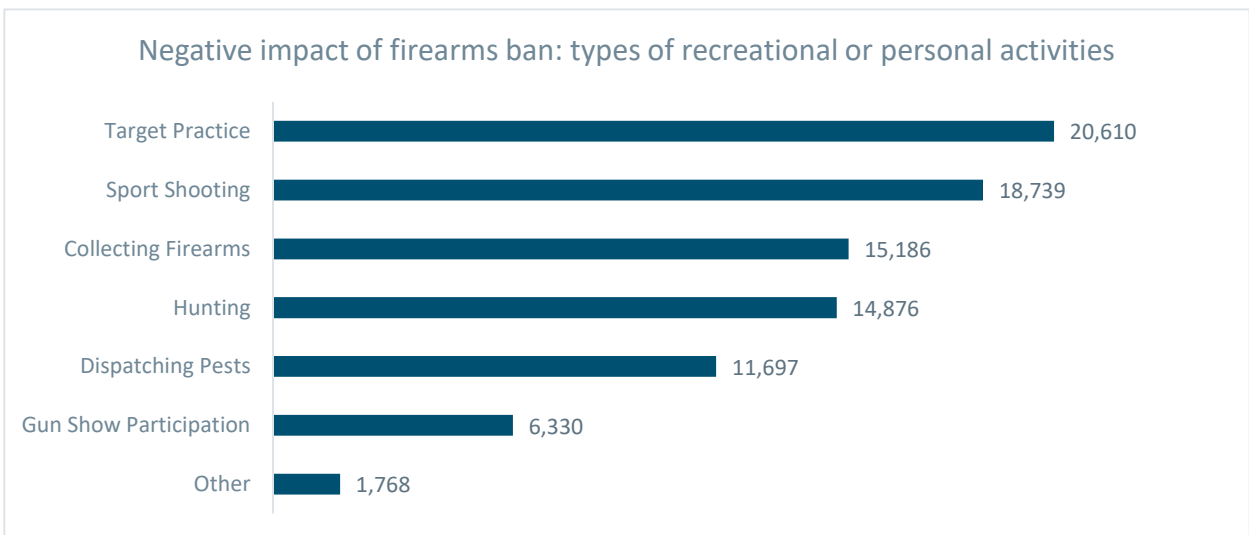


**You stated that the 2020 firearms ban has a negative impact on you. Does this impact relate to your recreational or personal activities?**

Of those who felt the 2020 firearms ban has a somewhat negative or very negative impact on them (18,452 out of 37,501), the vast majority described this impact as relating to their recreational and/or personal activities.



**What recreational or personal activities do you conduct that have been negatively impacted by the 2020 firearms ban?**



# In their own words: attitudes towards the federal government's 2020 firearms ban

Survey respondents were asked to describe in their own words the negative or positive impact the federal government's May 2020 firearms ban has on them. This section presents a qualitative analysis of the key themes articulated about the impact of the firearms ban.

## Negative impact of the federal government's May 2020 firearms ban

Participants who said the federal government's May 2020 firearms ban has a negative or very negative impact on them were also asked: ***Please describe any negative impact the 2020 firearms ban has on you that has not already been discussed.***

### Criminalization of lawful firearms owners

Many survey respondents said they feel criminalized by the federal government's regulation changes despite having always followed firearms ownership rules in Canada. In addition, some respondents felt that the federal government is unfairly blaming law-abiding firearms owners for crimes and tragedies committed by criminals.

One respondent said:

*It punishes me, and all firearms owners, for crimes we did not commit. It demonizes all firearms owners and does nothing to address the real problem of illegally-imported firearms, and organized crime.*

Other respondents were concerned that they will become criminals if they fail to surrender their newly prohibited firearms.

### Limits recreational activities, hunting and passing on family heirlooms

Many survey respondents discussed how the federal government's firearms ban limits access to their hobbies, such as sport shooting. Others stated that they could no longer use their hunting rifles.

The firearms ban has a particularly detrimental impact on one respondent's ability to participate in sport shooting activities and hunting. This respondent said:

*I have a disability where I have partial paralysis in one of my hands. The firearms ban has taken away my ability to use firearms that are ergonomic, lightweight and comfortable for me to use for hunting and sporting purposes.*

Some respondents said that they have a firearms with significant sentimental value, such as a family heirloom, that is now prohibited.

## Legislation, rights, and the democratic process

Some participants expressed a decrease in trust in the democratic process or feel the federal government's firearms ban should have been debated by parliament. Similarly, others said they feel the prohibition and confiscation of their lawfully purchased property infringes their charter rights or property rights.

In addition, other respondents said the new regulations are unclear and create uncertainty.

## Positive impact of the federal government's May 2020 firearms ban

Survey respondents who said the federal government's 2020 firearms ban has a positive or very positive impact on them were also asked: ***You stated that the 2020 firearms ban has a positive impact on you. Please describe this positive impact.***

### Crime and community safety

Some respondents said the federal government's decision to prohibit certain firearms provides peace of mind and will make them safer or make them feel safer in specific situations.

Some respondents said the firearms ban will lower the risk of mass shootings and school shootings. Others said the federal government's firearms ban will result in fewer accidents and suicides.

### Social impact

Other respondents said the federal government's firearms ban strikes an appropriate balance between hunting rights and safety.

Another theme expressed by some respondents is a sense that Canada is distinct from the United States in its policies and attitudes towards firearms and should remain distinct.

## Attitudes towards the federal buy-back program

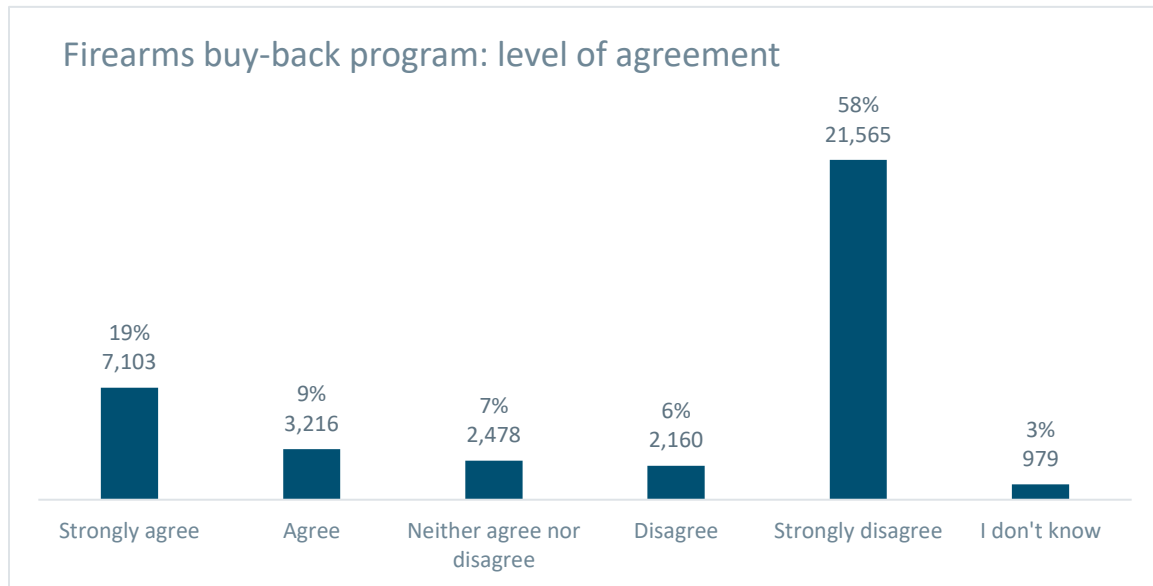
The survey asked respondents about their level of support for or opposition to the federal government's planned buy-back program for firearms prohibited by the May 2020 Order in Council.

### Total counts: attitudes towards the federal buy-back program

This section includes the total counts for respondents' level of agreement with the federal government's planned buy-back program.



Albertans were asked: **The federal government has announced there will be a firearms buy-back program for individuals affected by the 2020 firearms ban. Please indicate your level of agreement or support for the program.**



### In their own words: attitudes towards the federal buy-back program

Respondents who said they do not agree with the federal government's planned buy-back program for newly prohibited firearms were asked: ***You stated that you do not agree with a firearms buy-back program. Please explain why.***

This section presents an analysis of the key themes articulated by respondents concerning their attitudes towards the federal government's planned buy-back program.

#### Inappropriate use of tax dollars

Many respondents said that the federal government's planned buy-back program is an inappropriate use of tax dollars. Others noted that spending tax dollars on a buy-back program is inappropriate in the current economy. They said this funding should be allocated to the pandemic recovery or projects that tackle the root causes of crime.

Other respondents disapproved of their tax dollars being used to buy-back their firearms. One respondent said:

*I strongly disagree with using my own tax dollars to buy-back my own firearm. It is not a sale, it is theft.*

Conversely, some respondents said the federal government should not provide compensation for the newly prohibited firearms and that individual firearms owners should absorb the cost.

### **Confiscation**

Many participants indicated that the federal government's buy-back program constitutes confiscation of firearms.

One respondent said:

*This is not a buy-back program. This is a confiscation of my personal property and an attack on my right to hold private property. This program will do nothing to stop crime as claimed by the federal government. This is an attack on lawful Canadian gun owners, sportsmen, farmers, and hunters.*

Some respondents said their firearms are not for sale.

### **Insufficient compensation**

Many survey respondents expressed concern that the amount of money they expect the federal government will provide for compensation will be insufficient to cover the actual cost of their firearms.

Some respondents specified they do not expect the federal government to accurately assess the value of their firearms or provide compensation for accessories they can no longer use (e.g., scopes, ammunition).

Other respondents said banning certain firearms immediately reduced their value, raising concerns over how the federal government intends to determine the value of a firearm that can no longer be bought or sold in Canada.

Some survey respondents said their firearms have sentimental or historical value, and that it is not possible to compensate for losing them.

### **Policy alternative: grandfathering**

Some respondents who disagreed with the federal government's planned buy-back program suggested that those who owned the newly prohibited firearms prior to May 1, 2020, should be allowed to keep and use them, even if they cannot be purchased or sold any longer.

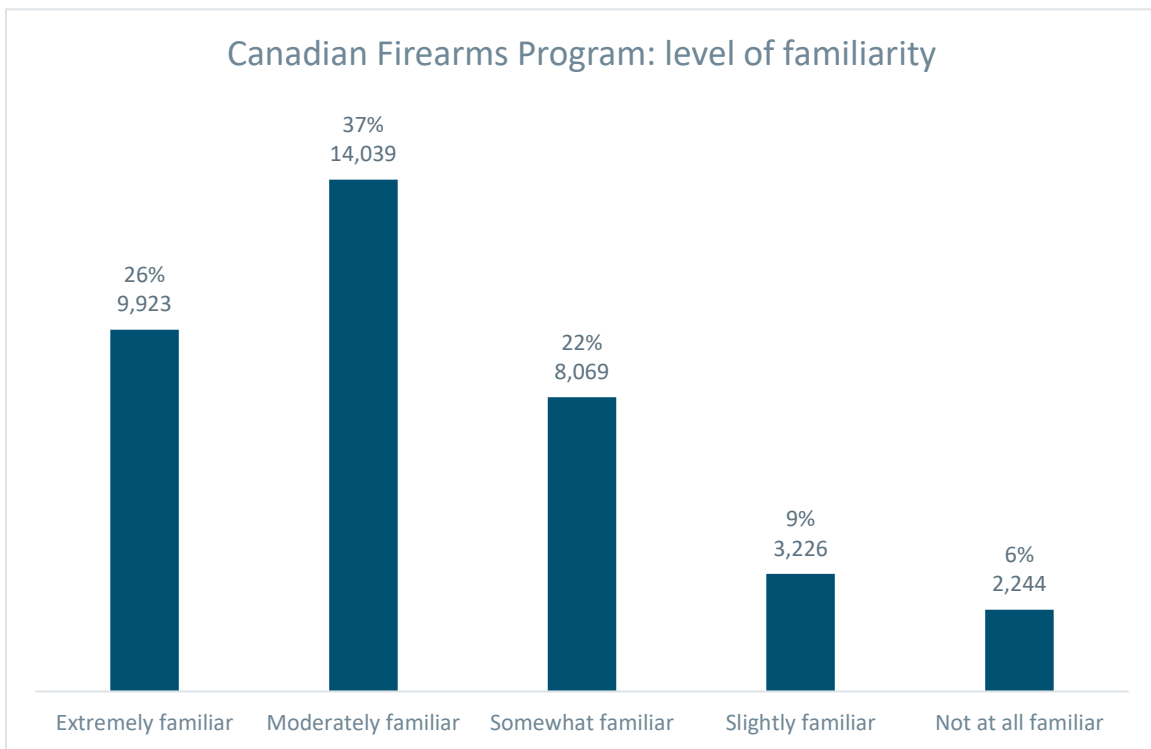
A section of these respondents said a grandfathering clause would be less expensive than a buy-back program and would be fairer to lawful firearms owners who legally possessed the newly prohibited firearms before the ban.

## Total counts: attitudes towards the Canadian Firearms Program

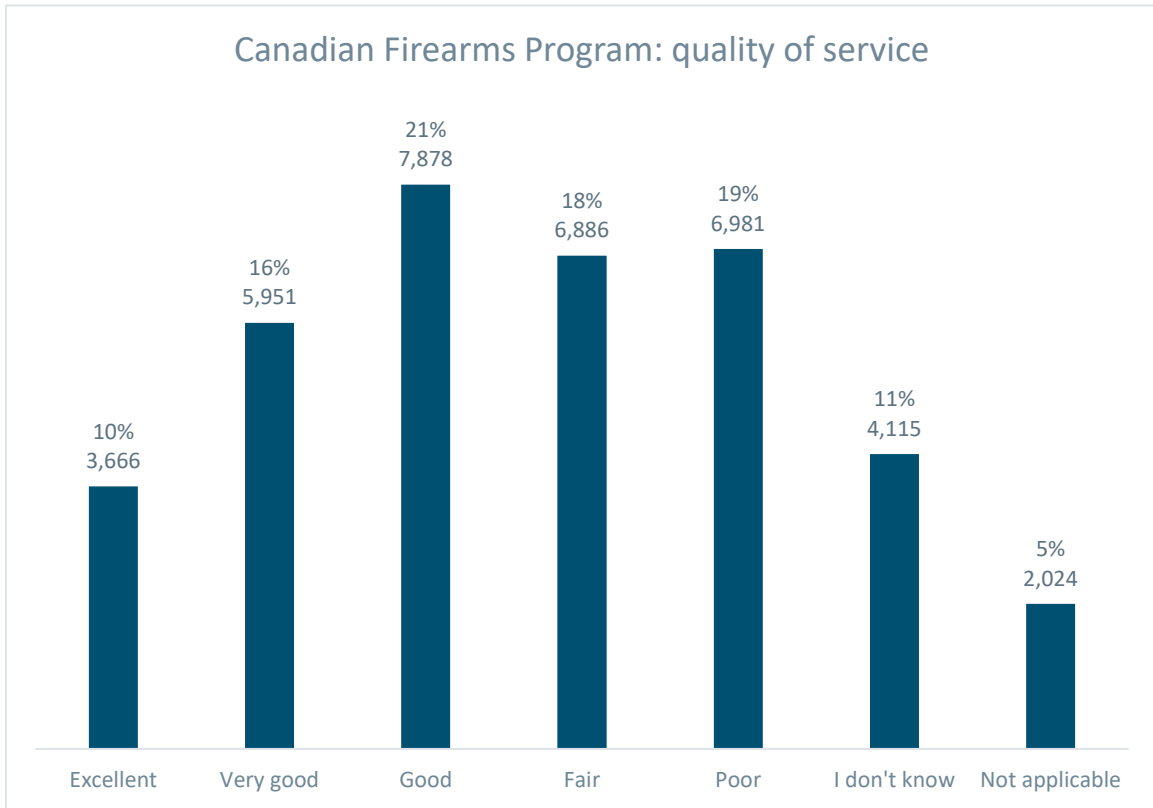
Respondents were asked about their level of familiarity with and attitudes towards the Canadian Firearms Program, such as quality of services and levels of satisfaction.

The following section includes total counts for responses.

### How familiar are you with the Canadian Firearms Program?

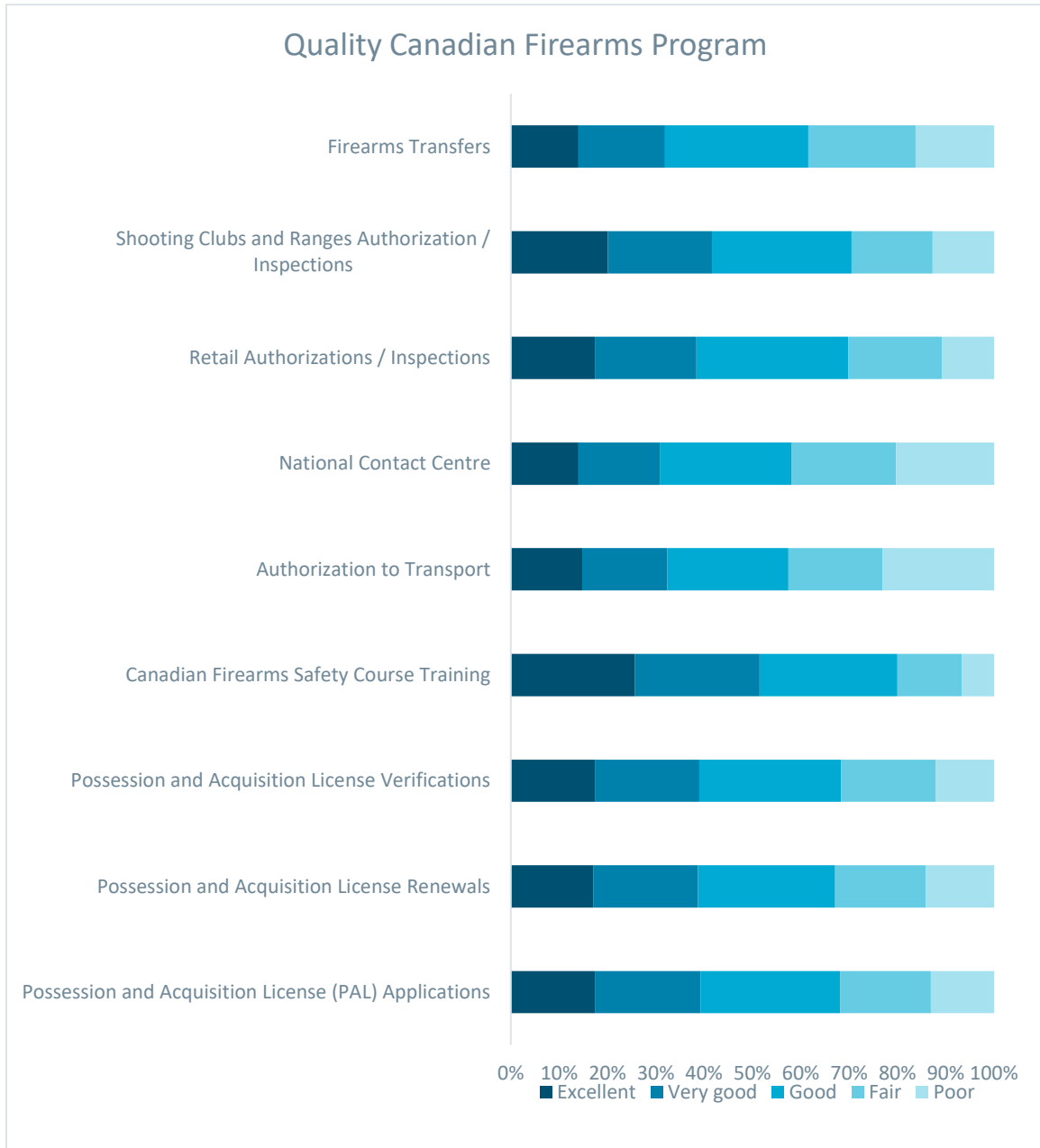


**Based on your own experience, how would you rate the overall quality of services provided by the Canadian Firearms Program?**



**Respondents were asked to rate the quality of specific services provided by the Canadian Firearms Program.**

On average, few respondents describe the quality of specific services provided by the Canadian Firearms Program as fair or poor.



# In their own words: role of the chief provincial firearms office

All survey respondents were asked to share their expectations for the chief provincial firearms office. This office will be created in fiscal year 2021/22.

Respondents were asked: ***A new provincial firearms office is being created. What role would you like this office to fulfill on behalf of lawful firearms owners?***

## **Advocacy for lawful firearms owners**

Many people who responded to this question expressed a desire to see a chief provincial firearms officer advocate for lawful firearms owners.

One respondent said:

*This position should advocate for firearms enthusiasts and hunters alike. It should seek the least restrictions possible for users while keeping safety a priority.*

Some respondents said they want the chief provincial firearms office to stand up for lawful firearms owners, by for instance, advocating against the federal government's May 2020 firearms ban and any future federal policies that would further limit or unreasonably limit lawful ownership of firearms.

## **Improve service delivery**

Many respondents said they would like the chief provincial firearms office to make improvements to service delivery, such as wait times for applications and licence renewals, response times to questions, and the accuracy of information provided by staff. Some participants reported it can take six months to renew a PAL.

## **Public education**

Another theme discussed by survey respondents relates to firearms education.

Many respondents want to see better education for firearms owners on existing rules, such as safe storage and handling. Others want the chief provincial firearms office to provide timely and comprehensive information to firearms owners on any rule changes.

Other respondents want more public education for Albertans to, as one participant put it, *“dispel the negative misconceptions of gun ownership.”*

## **Safety and enforcement**

Many respondents said a chief provincial firearms officer should enforce existing rules for firearms. This sentiment has different meanings to different respondents. Some respondents expressed a feeling that the existing rules were adequate and should be followed. Others felt the existing rules go beyond the federal *Firearms Act* and its regulations, and any additional rules beyond those defined in the legislation should not be enforced.

Some respondents said the chief provincial firearms officer should work to further limit access to firearms or should increase safety measures. One respondent said:

*I want them to introduce a physical assessment component to firearms acquisition licensing, with a periodic re-certification. I want them to coordinate improved enforcement, particularly during hunting season and increase the severity of sanctions for hunting while impaired and trespassing/illegal hunting on private, residential land.*

## **Legislative framework for firearms**

Some respondents said they expect the incoming chief provincial firearms officer to advocate for evidence-based firearms laws in Canada. One response stated:

*Advocating for evidence-based firearms laws in Canada. Advocating that all rules that apply to firearms owners are discussed and voted on in the House of Commons. Our freedoms should not be left up to unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats or the RCMP. Advocating for actions that will actually reduce gun crime in Canada.*

Other respondents used this question to discuss the overall legislative framework for firearms in Canada and Alberta rather than their expectations for the chief provincial firearms office. Some of these respondents said that municipalities should not be allowed to ban handguns. Others said firearms should be legislated by the province rather than the federal government.

## **Opposing the creation of a chief provincial firearms office**

Although the question asked what role the chief provincial firearms office should perform, many respondents expressed their opposition to a provincial office.

Some regard it as a waste of money, particularly in the context of the current state of Alberta's economy and the pressing issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some respondents view the office as a duplication of services, pointing to the existing federal program and noting that firearms are under federal jurisdiction.

## In their own words: other feedback

At the end of the survey, all respondents were asked: ***Do you have any other feedback you would like to share about the 2020 firearms ban or other issues related to firearms ownership?***

This section provides an analysis of the key themes articulated by respondents.

### **Crime and safety**

Many people used the final question in the survey to further discuss their opposition to the federal government's firearms ban.

Many respondents said that the firearms ban will not increase public safety. Similarly, some respondents said authorities should focus on addressing illegal firearms and criminal gangs, rather than targeting law-abiding firearms owners. One respondent said:

*The ban will not work as it targets the wrong people. We need something that goes after criminals, not law-abiding citizens.*

Conversely, some survey respondents used this question to discuss their support for the firearms ban, such as for public safety reasons. One respondent said:

*Access to firearms, including legal firearms, increases the likelihood that family violence and suicide will be fatal. Reducing the number of highly lethal firearms that are legal in Canada will help to keep Albertans safe.*

Some respondents used this question to say that more or all firearms should be banned. Similarly, some respondents said there are limited reasons to own or use firearms, such as for hunting.

### **Use of government resources**

Many Albertans said focusing on the firearms ban is not an appropriate use of government resources. Some said the provincial government should focus on other policy issues, such as health, education or the pandemic rather than the federal ban. Others said the federal government's resources would be better spent on addressing the root causes of crime than banning firearms.



### Additional feedback on the chief provincial firearms office

Although the question asked for other feedback, many respondents took the opportunity to emphasize or clarify their reasons for opposing the creation of a chief provincial firearms office. Some respondents said it is not necessary to appoint a chief provincial firearms officer because firearms are a federal responsibility. Others do not feel it will bring meaningful changes to firearms policy in Alberta.

## Comparative analysis

This section compares the attitudes of several groups of respondents on the firearms ban and the buy-back program.

Groups compared in this analysis include male and female respondents, rural and urban respondents, and respondents who own a firearm and those who do not own a firearm.

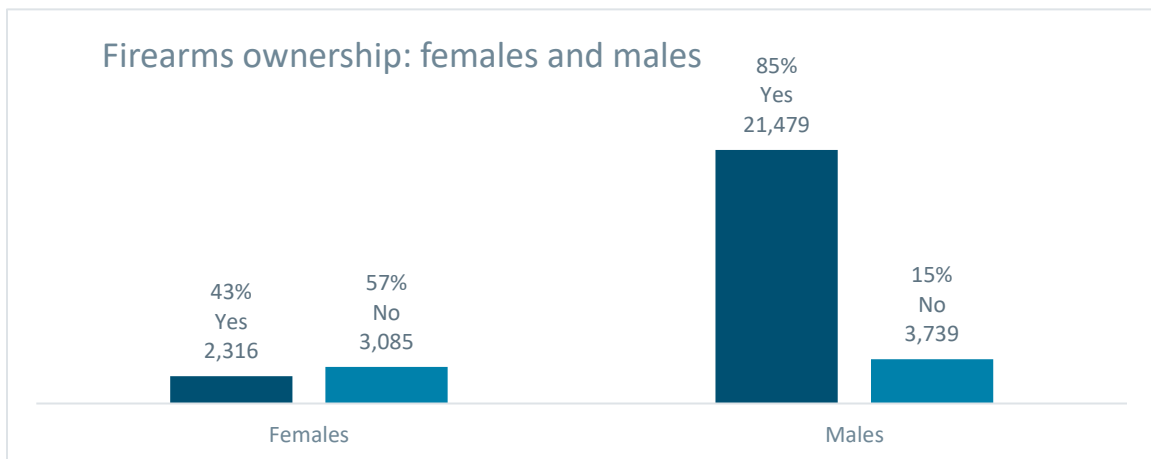
### Comparison: male and female respondents

The following section compares responses among female and male respondents.

Fifty-three participants identified as “other,” 2,681 preferred not to answer and 151 respondents did not specify a gender. These responses were excluded from the comparison between male and female respondents.

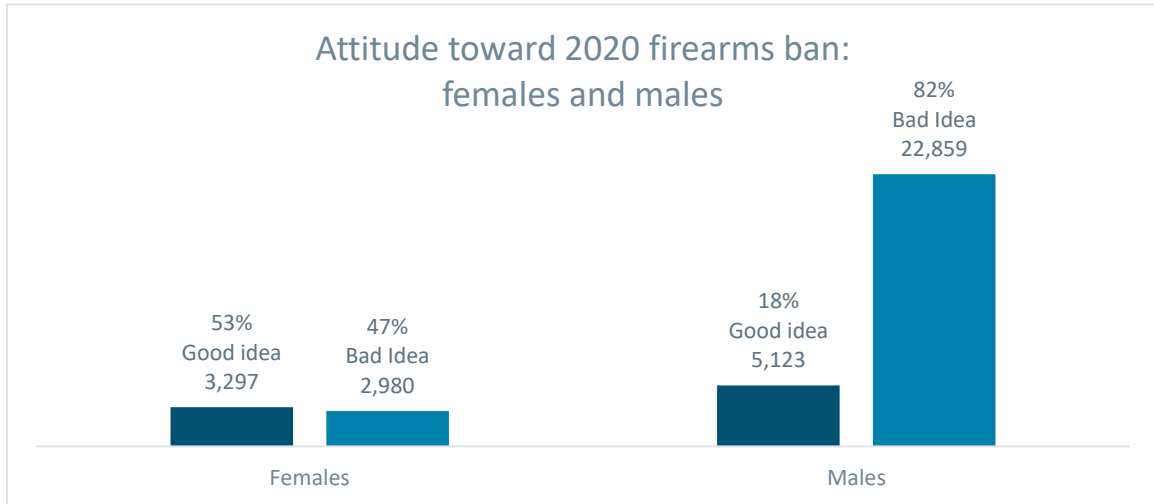
### Male vs. female: firearms ownership

Levels of firearms ownership differ dramatically between male and female survey respondents. While fewer than half of female respondents stated they own firearms, almost six out of seven male respondents said they owned at least one firearm.



### Male vs. female: attitude towards the federal firearms ban

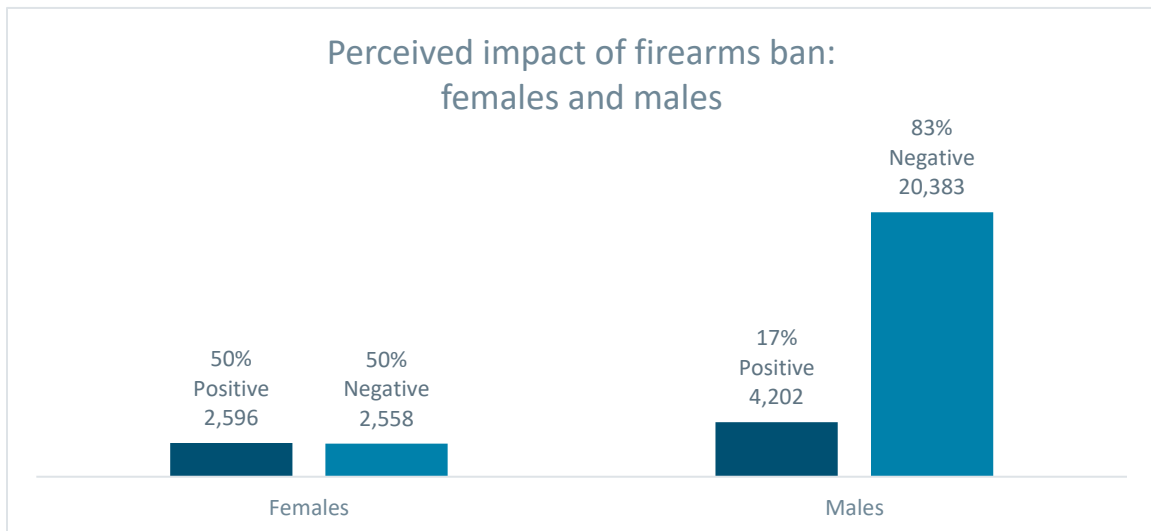
Whether a respondent is male or female relates to their level of agreement with the federal government's firearms ban. Slightly more females believe the firearms ban is a good idea than a bad idea. In contrast, males were much more likely to state the firearms ban was a bad idea (four



out of five) than a good one (one out of five).

### Males vs. females: perceived impact of firearms ban

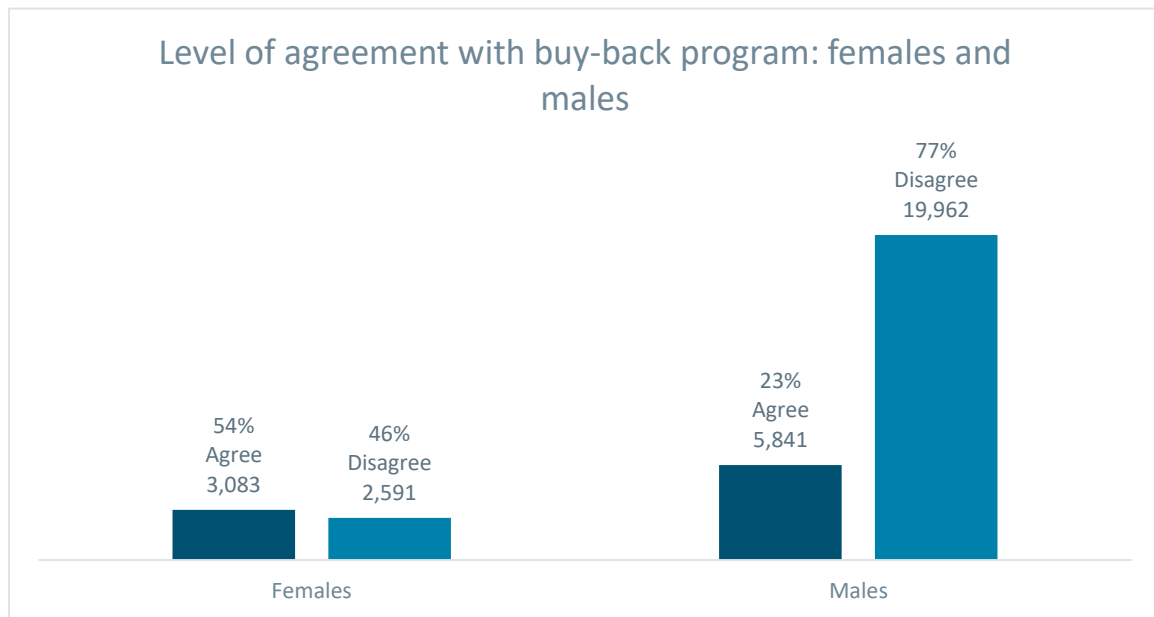
Whether a respondent is male or female relates to their perceived impact of the ban. Nearly equal numbers of female respondents perceived the firearms ban as positive and negative. Conversely, 83 per cent of male respondents perceived the firearms ban as negative and only 17 per cent perceived it as positive.



### Males vs. females: attitudes towards the federal government's planned buy-back program

Levels of agreement with the federal government's planned buy-back program for newly prohibited firearms mirror the same trend as attitudes towards the firearms ban.

While slightly more than half of female respondents agreed with the planned buy-back program, only one out of five males agreed.



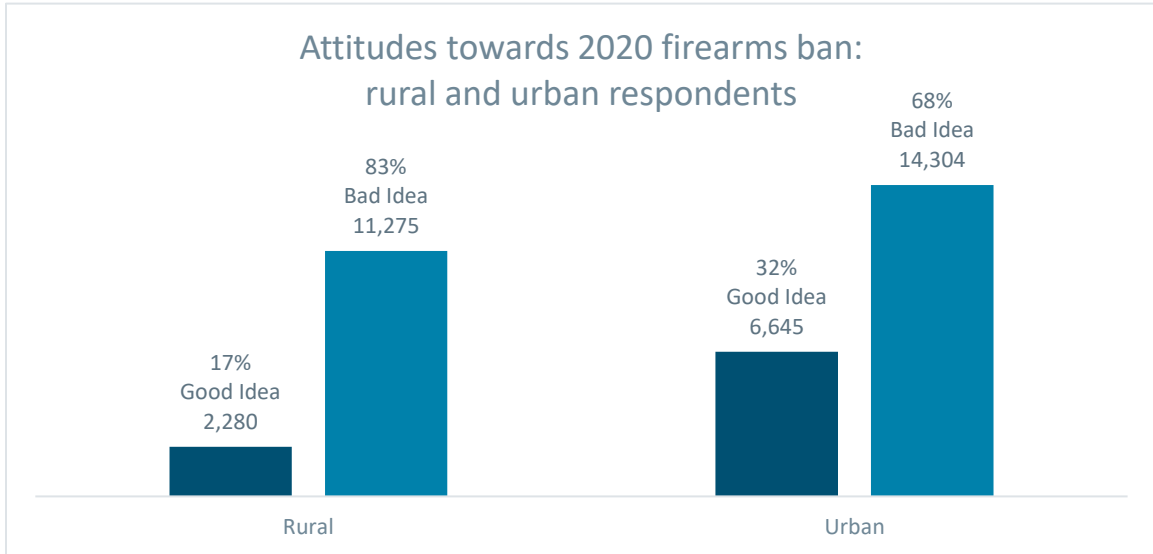
### Comparison: rural and urban respondents

The following section compares responses between those who said they live in a rural area and those who said they live in an urban area.

Respondents who said, "I prefer not to answer" are not included in this analysis. There were 2,635 people who preferred not to answer.

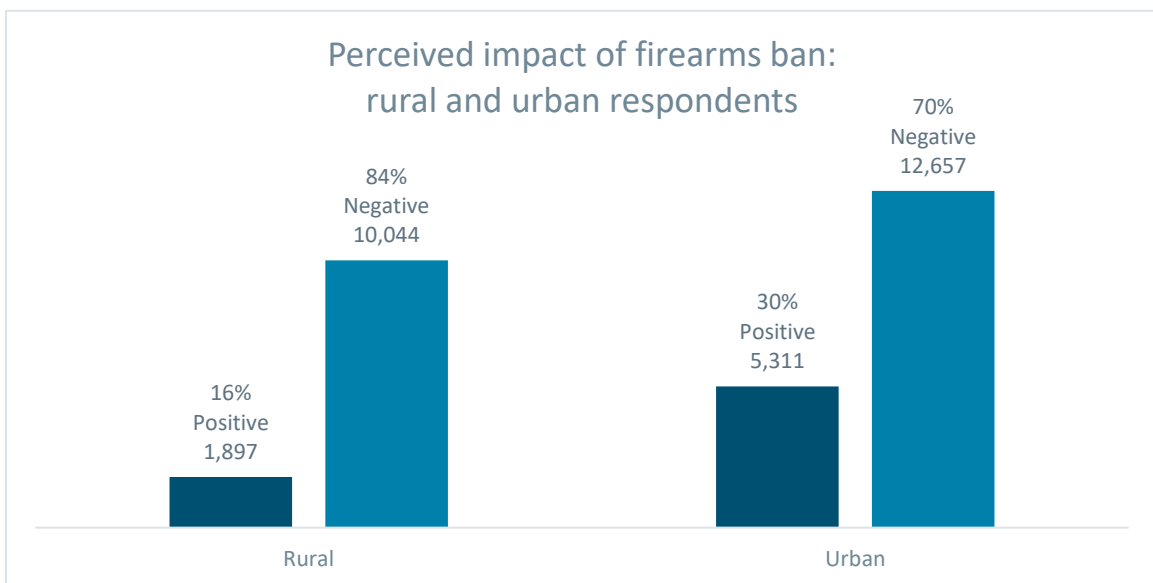
### Rural vs. urban: attitudes towards 2020 firearms ban

Survey respondents living in rural areas are more likely than their urban counterparts to believe the 2020 firearms ban is a bad idea.



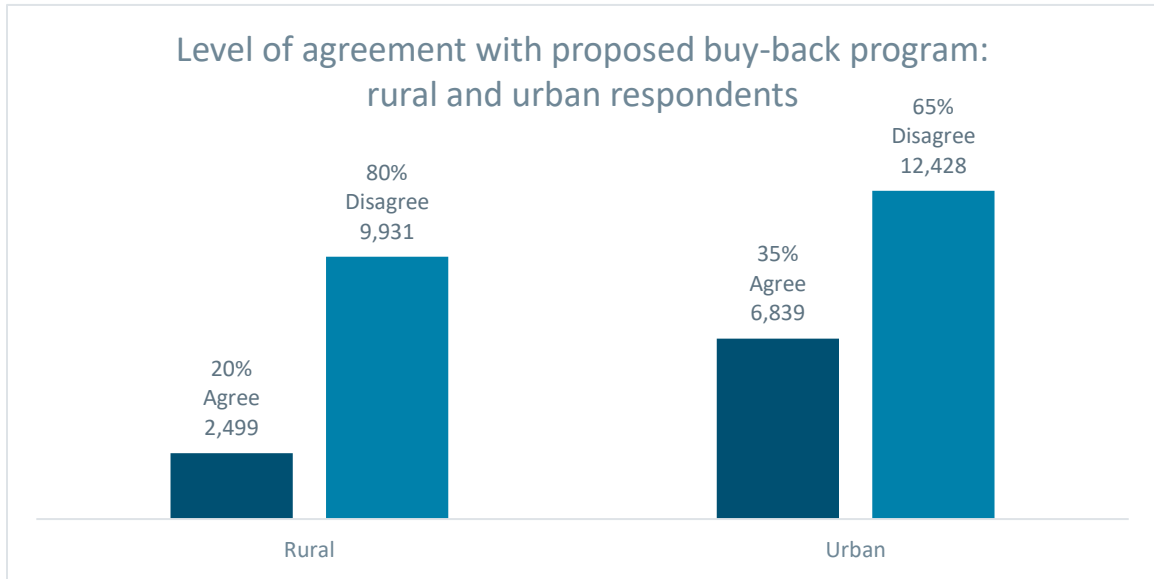
### Rural vs. urban: perceived impact of the firearms ban

On average, both rural and urban respondents tend to regard the firearms ban as having a negative impact on them. However, those living in urban areas are much more likely to believe the firearms ban will have a positive impact on them (14 per cent difference).



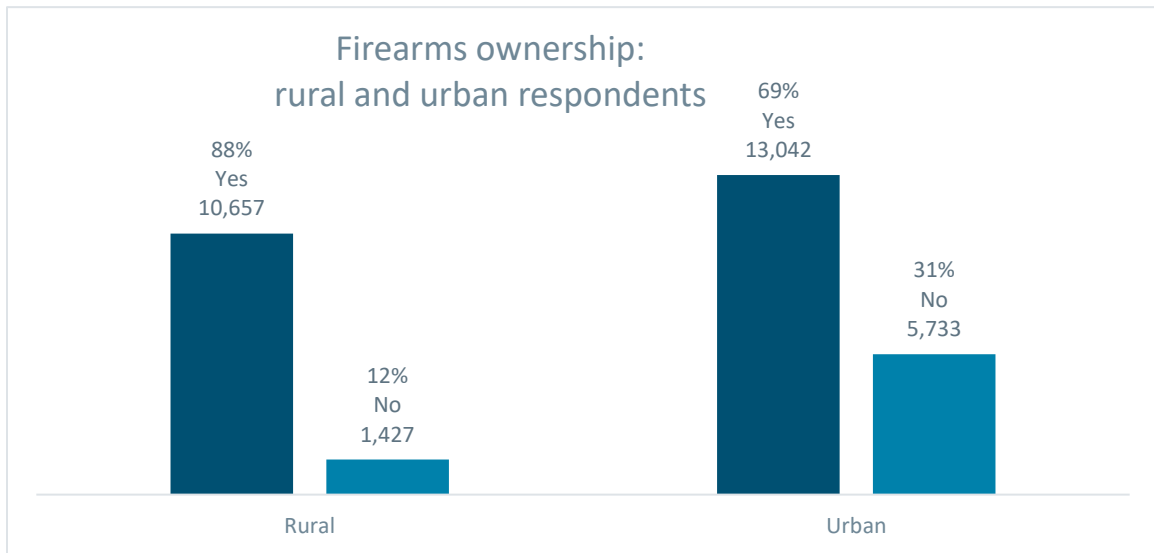
### Rural vs. urban: attitudes towards the federal government's planned buy-back program

On average, both rural and urban respondents tend to disagree with the proposed buy-back program. However, those living in urban areas are much more likely to agree with a buy-back program (15 per cent difference).



### Rural vs. urban: firearms ownership

Respondents living in a rural area are much more likely to own firearms than those living in urban areas.

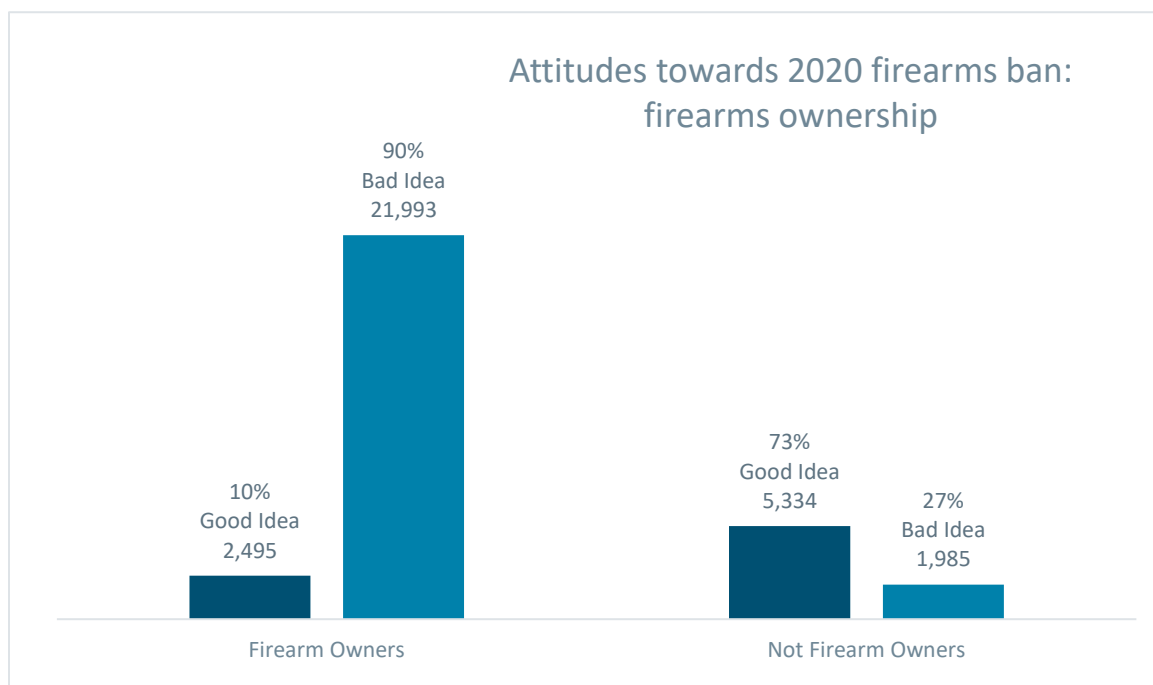


### Comparison: firearms ownership

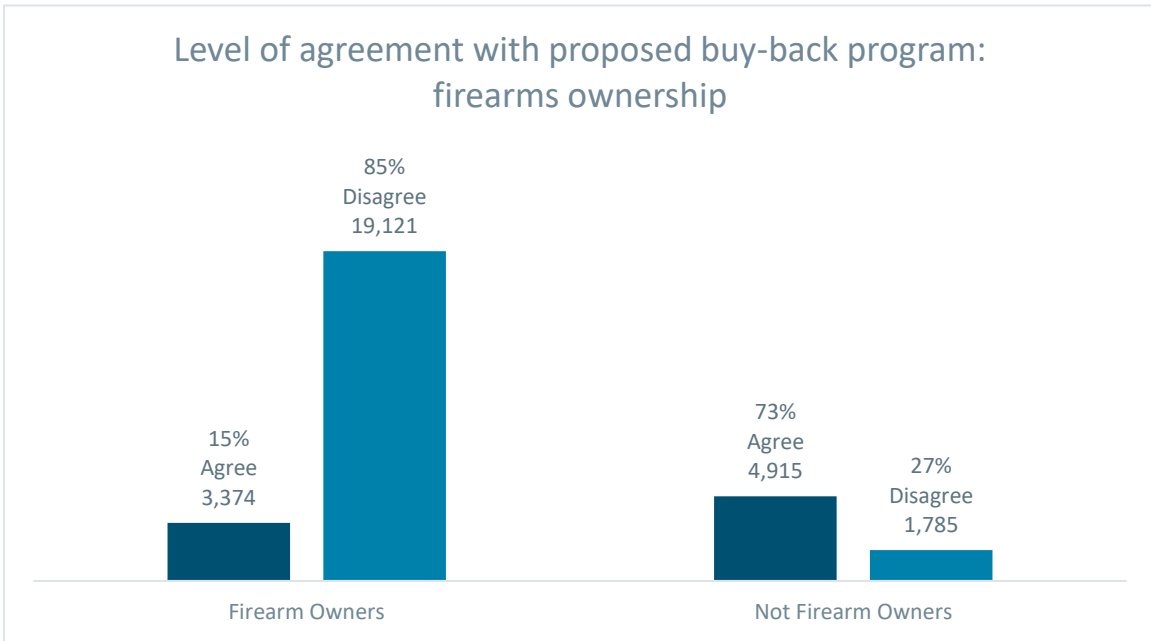
The following section compares responses between those who said they own at least one firearm and those who said they do not own any firearms. Whether a person owns firearms is associated with their level of support or opposition to the firearms ban and its impact, as well as agreement with the proposed buy-back program.

On average, those who own at least one firearm asserted that the ban is a bad idea and has a negative impact on them, while also disagreeing with the buy-back program. Respondents who do not own firearms shared opposite opinions.

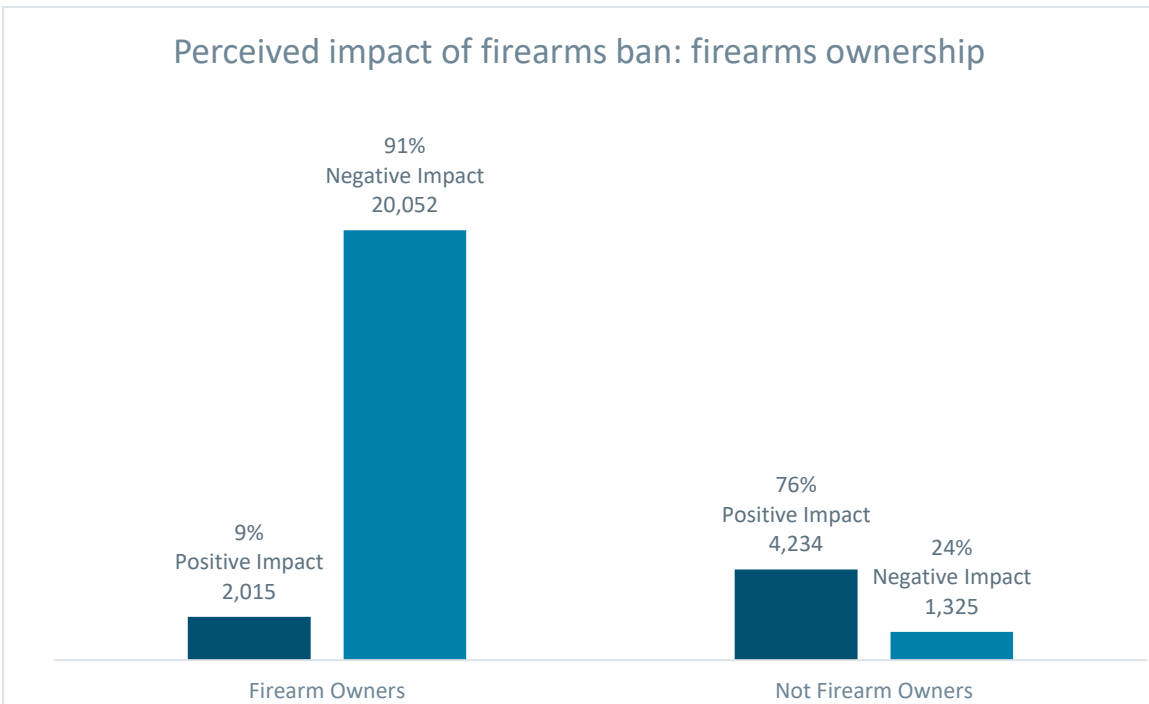
### Firearms ownership: attitudes towards the firearms ban



### Ownership: attitudes to the federal government's proposed buy-back program



### Firearms ownership: perceived impact of firearms ban



# Appendices

## A: Committee terms of reference

### Working Group Name

Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee

### Accountability

The Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee (the committee) is established by the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) and is facilitated by JSG's Public Security Division (PSD). The chair of the committee (chair) will be appointed by the Minister of JSG and is accountable to the Minister of JSG for the deliverables as stipulated in the committee's mandate.

### Context

Bill C-71: An Act to amend certain Acts and Regulations in relation to firearms, passed June 21, 2019, and is focused on licences, registrations, and records pertaining to legal owners of firearms. Law-abiding Albertan firearms owners are frustrated with the provisions in Bill C-71 for a variety of reasons:

- It will negatively impact their rights.
- It failed to address firearms violence committed by gangs and organized crime.
- It will be administratively burdensome (more red tape) to law-abiding firearms owners.
- Its definitions of prohibited/not prohibited firearms are unclear, and
- It was not properly debated in the House of Commons before onerous requirements were enacted.

Further, there has been strong opposition to the federal government's 2019 campaign promise to ban (and buy back) semi-automatic assault rifles and enable municipalities to restrict or prohibit handguns, with many feeling it is an overreach of parliamentary power. On May 1, 2020, the federal government announced the ban of around 1,500 models and variants of firearms; the Government of Canada enacted this change via an Order in Council under the authority of the *Criminal Code*.

As of November 2019, there were approximately 23,000 restricted or prohibited firearms registered in Alberta.

The banned models represent nine categories of firearms and two types identified by characteristic. Some of their components are also prohibited. The newly prohibited firearms and components cannot be legally used, sold, or imported. Owners must continue to safely store them



and may only transfer and transport them under limited circumstances. These measures will have unintended consequences for law-abiding firearms owners, many of whom are hunters, trappers, farmers, ranchers, and sports enthusiasts.

### **Purpose / Mandate**

The committee will provide recommendations on firearms policy that will better assert areas of provincial jurisdiction and maintain greater control over gun regulation while respecting law-abiding Albertans' long history of responsible firearms ownership.

The committee will also make recommendations in relation to how a chief provincial firearms officer can strengthen the administration of the firearms program in Alberta, while improving services for responsible gun owners. These include recommendations on licensing, transportation of firearms and in what condition, as well as potential issues involving licensed ranges.

### **Authority, Decision Making and Record of Decisions**

- The committee has authority to make recommendations to the Minister of JSG regarding firearms policy.
- Decisions that are the prerogative of the committee will be made by consensus. Should there be no consensus or alternate solutions arrived at, the details of the matter will be referred to the chair for consideration. Decisions will be documented in the committee's minutes.
- The chair will advise the committee of any recommendations that will be advanced to the Minister of JSG.

### **Timeframes and Reporting**

- The committee shall meet monthly or at the call of the chair. The committee's JSG facilitator will report to the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of PSD (JSG) once a month or as required.
- Recommendations may be provided to the Minister at any time at the discretion of the chair.

### **Confidentiality**

Deliberations of the committee are confidential. Meeting materials shall be prepared by the JSG facilitator, and approved by the committee chair prior to their circulation outside its members. Members may report to their respective departments or agencies, as required, however meeting minutes shall not be circulated outside of those organizations.

## **Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee Dissolution**

The committee will end its operation upon completion of its mandate or direction from the chair. A final report will be provided to the chair for advancement to the Minister of JSG. All members will then cease to perform activities in relation to the committee.

### **Membership**

The Minister will appoint a chair of the committee. The committee members will be drawn from major stakeholder organizations representing a broad sector of stakeholders in Alberta.

### **Responsibilities of the Chair**

It is the responsibility of the chair to:

- chair meetings and facilitate consultation, information sharing, and collaboration among members; and
- provide recommendations to the Minister of JSG and champion the recommendations of the committee for ratification and support.

### **Responsibilities of the Facilitator**

The Ministry of JSG will appoint a facilitator who will support the committee and the chair by:

- collating and preparing the meeting and video/telephone conferencing requirements;
- maintaining all documentation;
- supporting the preparation, organization, and documentation from committee meetings; and
- facilitating sessions and maintaining real-time documentation of decisions and actions.

### **Remuneration of Expenses**

Travel expenses will be covered in accordance with Government of Alberta policy.

### **Responsibilities of Alberta Firearms Advisory Committee Members**

- Active participation
- Prepared, informed, timely completion of action items
- Liaison between the committee and area(s) represented, and
- Making decisions or recommendations on behalf of area(s) represented.

## B: Committee members

The committee represented a wide range of Albertans, including farmers and ranchers, hunters, collectors and shooting sports enthusiasts.

### **MLA Michaela Glasgo, chair**

Michaela Glasgo was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on April 16, 2019, representing the newly-formed constituency of Brooks-Medicine Hat. Prior to her election, MLA Glasgo owned and operated a small business. As an undergraduate, she took special interest in studying previous federal government overreach with the long gun registry. MLA Glasgo is also an avid hunter and passionate advocate for responsible firearms ownership.

### **MLA Shane Getson**

Shane Getson was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on April 16, 2019, representing the constituency of Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland. Prior to serving in the legislative assembly, he spent 15 years in the construction industry. MLA Getson is a private pilot and firearms enthusiast.

### **MLA Todd Loewen**

Todd Loewen was first elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta on May 5, 2015, representing the constituency of Grande Prairie-Smoky. Born and raised in rural Alberta, MLA Loewen owned a small outfitting business and an operational farm prior to his election. He owns several handguns and rifles, and to this day regularly hunts deer, elk, moose and other animals.

### **Andrew Blundell**

Andrew Blundell is vice-president of the Canadian Historical Arms Society and range safety officer at the Genesee Range, a certified gun range. The Canadian Historical Arms Society was founded in 1967 by a group of people interested in the collection, preservation, and application of all categories of arms, from bayonets and samurai swords, antique and modern military arms and accoutrements to black powder muzzle-loaders.

### **Teri Bryant**

Teri Bryant is an associate professor emerita of strategy and global management at the University of Calgary. She has been at the Haskayne School of Business since 1990, teaching international business and Japanese business courses. She is the president of the Military Collectors' Club of Canada, an avid firearms collector and sport shooter.

### **Linley Coward**

Linley Coward is a co-owner of Bullets & Broadheads Shooting Centre in Grande Prairie, a locally-owned and operated facility including an indoor gun range, firearms retailer and learning

facility. Linley has been involved with firearms for more than 25 years and enjoys hunting. She is a strong proponent of education in the firearms industry and has a passion for local entrepreneurship and the community.

### **Gail Garrett**

Gail Garrett is the vice-president of the Alberta Federation of Shooting Sports. In the past, she has served as a range safety officer and match director at numerous tournaments around the province, as well as president of the Alberta Handgun Association.

### **Bob Gruszecki**

Bob Gruszecki is president of the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, which administers the delivery of the Canadian Firearms Safety Course in Alberta. He is also chairman for multiple hunting-related charities, including the WISE Foundation and the Hunting for Tomorrow Foundation. In 2009, Bob was named the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Outdoorsperson of the Year.

### **Rick Hanson**

Rick Hanson, former chief of the Calgary Police Service, has worked more than 40 years in law enforcement in a variety of operational and administrative areas. He was one of the founding board members of the Calgary and Area Child Advocacy Centre and co-chaired the Calgary 2013 United Way campaign. He is a past president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

### **Phil Harnois**

Phil Harnois retired from the Edmonton Police Service at the rank of sergeant after 25 years of service. Along with his wife Dianne, he owns and operates P & D Enterprises, which sells firearms, ammunition and accessories. The business has been a fixture in the Edmonton area for more than 30 years.

### **Lynda Kiejko**

A member of the Canadian Olympic team at the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro, Lynda Kiejko started shooting at age 11 and comes from a shooting family. Her late father, Bill Hare, was a three-time Olympian and her sister, Dorothy Ludwig, competed at the 2012 Olympics in London after competing at the 2007 and 2011 Pan Am Games. The sisters competed together at the 2010 and 2014 Commonwealth Games, creating a moment to remember in 2010 when they won bronze in the 10-m air pistol pair event. Kiejko has three additional Pan Am Games medals to her credit: golds in the 10-m air pistol and 25-m pistol at Toronto in 2015, as well as a bronze in the 10-m air pistol competition at Santo Domingo in 2003.

**Nicholas Lui**

Nicholas Lui is a software engineer and competitive shooter from Calgary. He served in the Canadian Armed Forces as a signals operator and held the rank of second lieutenant in the Canadian Army Reserves Communications and Electronics Branch. Nicholas has been involved with the Buffalo Target Shooters Association for more than 10 years, most recently serving as the Young Guns Youth Shooting program director.

## C: Federal Order-in-Council

### Prohibited firearms

On May 1, 2020, the Government of Canada banned the following nine types of firearms:

- M16, AR-10, AR-15 rifles and M4 carbine
- Ruger Mini-14 rifle
- M14 rifle
- Vz58 rifle
- Robinson Armament XCR rifle
- CZ Scorpion EVO 3 carbine and pistol
- Beretta CX4 Storm carbine
- SIG Sauer SIG MCX and SIG Sauer SIG MPX carbine and pistol
- Swiss Arms Classic Green and Four Seasons series (as specified in former Bill C-71)

The federal government also prohibited firearms with the following characteristics:

- firearms capable of discharging a projectile with a muzzle energy greater than 10,000 joules.
- bores of 20 mm or greater.
- upper receivers of M16, AR-10, AR-15 and M4 pattern firearms.

### Amnesty order

An amnesty order is in effect until April 30, 2022, to protect individuals who were in legal possession of one or more of these newly prohibited firearms or devices on May 1, 2020, from criminal liability for unlawful possession. It also provides owners with time to comply with the law.

At a later date, the federal government intends to implement a buy-back program, and is considering a range of options.

For more information, visit [Public Safety Canada's website](#).