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I have recently started shooting Sporting Clays. I have an old Browning Field Model Under and Over Shotgun which seems to recoil very hard against my face and shoulder. It weighs just over 3kg. Is this too light and would there be an advantage for me applying for a special licence to use a semi auto to lighten the recoil?

Peter Crosswaite, Kennsington, Vic

Semi autos are very popular for use in Sporting Clay events overseas, particularly in the United States. Obviously these days in Australia you have to prove to the police a special need to own and use a semi auto for competition clay target shooting. Personally I would not go through the hassles of bothering if you believe you are only doing this to try and overcome recoil. Your Browning is far too light at 3kg; 4kg is far more reasonable for the average under and over to absorb recoil. The other advantage with an under and over is that you get much more versatility in the choking, particularly if you have a model with screw in chokes. Solutions for your current shotgun would be to add some weight to the stock by inserting some lead internally and this may have to be countered by additionally adding some lead strips along the sides of the barrel to keep the gun well balanced. Any reasonable gunsmith can do this quickly and cheaply.

I want to go to New Zealand and hunt some geese early next year. What do I have to do to get my gun into their country and back into ours?

Allan Harris, Mildura

Firstly Allan you need to apply to the Victorian Police for a form called a B709 which will allow you to show customs that the gun you are leaving the country with can be legally brought back in. The Firearms Registry in Melbourne processes this. Secondly you need to contact the New Zealand Police well before you leave Australia so a New Zealand permit can be arranged for you to be collected at the New Zealand Airport of your arrival. Check the New Zealand Police website for the relevant contacts. Allow 28 days to be safe for this paperwork. Finally on your day of departure you need to visit customs at the airport to get their relevant export forms. Without these you will not be allowed to re import your firearm back into the country. You will need your current Australian Shooters licence here and you will have to physically display the gun and identify its serial numbers. Allow an hour for this process. More if you are travelling with fellow shooters.

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