



Monday 29, January 2024

GOVERNMENT DECISION ON DUCK HUNTING PROVIDES CERTAINTY AND ENABLES REFORM

The Victorian Government's decision today to continue with native bird hunting under new rules has met with approval from the state's leading shooting body. SSAA Victoria Hunting Development Manager David Laird said, "We are reassured that the government has listened to the evidence and committed to a path forward for native bird hunting that provides certainty and addresses community concerns".

Last year, a select committee of Victorian Upper House MPs conducted an inquiry into native bird hunting, resulting in a report making eight recommendations. Most of the MPs on that committee recommended that hunting continue. "Many of those recommendations will be challenging for hunters, but the only one that we cannot live with is a ban on hunting," Mr Laird said. "Along with some hyped rhetoric, the inquiry did hear genuine concerns about sustainability and animal welfare. Those concerns are being addressed through key initiatives such as the Adaptive Harvest Model and the Waterfowl Wounding Reduction Action Plan," Mr Laird said.

Mr Laird also called on the RSPCA to work with hunters to improve hunting. "After pulling their horns in a few years back, the RSPCA's rhetoric on ducks over the past couple of years has drifted further and further away from the factual and closer and closer to alignment with the radical extremist animal rights movement. The elected government now has had its say, and the RSPCA needs to respect that," Mr Laird said.

SSAA Victoria thanked the thousands of Victorians who supported hunting over the past twelve months. "The response (to the select committee) from hunters and ordinary Victorians, in general, has been nothing short of exceptional," Mr Laird said. "It is really on us as hunters now to show the Government and the community that their trust is well placed and hunting and hunters will continue to live our tradition with respect for the wildlife, the wild places and the community".

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