**MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Shooters welcome Premier’s pledge on public land access**

Victoria’s leading shooting and hunting organisation, the Sporting Shooters Association (SSAA Victoria), has welcomed Premier Allan’s pledge not to “put a padlock on our public forest”.

“Access to public land for hunting is one of the most important issues to our forty-four thousand members”, SSAA Victoria Hunting Development Manager David Laird said. “This is the clearest statement that we have heard from the Government on this issue in over a decade, and as we commence working with the new Great Outdoors Taskforce, it gives us the confidence to put the case for hunting in good faith”.

Mr Laird said that the Premier’s pledge is consistent with recent conversations with the Government. “We are pleased with the Premier’s statement but not surprised. It is consistent with the approach she and Senior Ministers have taken to hunting issues since the leadership change a little over a year ago”.

The place of recreational hunting across public land tenures has been a live issue since the early 1970s. “SSAA Victoria has been actively advocating on these issues for over half a century”, Mr Laird said. “It hasn’t always gone our way. However, it is worth noting that over the past ten years, more than half a million hectares have been added to the public land available for deer hunting in Victoria”. SSAA Victoria has also been active on this issue throughout the year, “we started the year with an [opinion piece](https://ssaavic.com.au/fighting-to-save-public-land-access-for-outdoor-recreation/) on this issue,” Mr Laird said, “that woke a lot of people up”. Victoria’s shooting and hunting organisations combined to release a [joint statement](https://ssaavic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Joint-statement-from-Victorias-hunting-organisations-May-2024-1.pdf) on land access in May, “we played a leading role in bringing that together,” Mr Laird said. “Public land access is one of those issues where there is so much common ground”.

SSAA Victoria expressed its support for access to other outdoor recreation activities. “The Association’s position is clear”, Mr Laird said, “where there is no compelling, evidence-based rationale for excluding the public from public land, it needs to be available. That holds for deer hunting, fishing, four-wheel driving, mountain bike riding, rock climbing, camping and exercising the family dog. We prosecute our position based on our values and principles; we don’t horse trade”.

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Picture: SSAA Victoria staff with Premier Allan and Government MPs in Queens Hall in the Victorian Parliament in May this year.