

Who could argue?

M Mack, Bendigo

I write to support the campaign for a bird sanctuary at Cairn Curran Reservoir ('Call for sanctuary', *Midland Express*, November 9). As Goulburn-Murray Water referred to the government's 'Water for Victoria' policy document, I googled to see what that says.

There's nothing about duck shooting. However it does make the contentious claim that "Recreational users of waterways such as anglers and hunters also have a strong history of working to conserve and restore habitat for native fish and game".

If duck shooters were engaged in conservation and restoration at Cairn Curran I'm sure we'd hear about it.

Shooters promote their wetland restoration near Sale but never mention the stream of government money and water allocations

that support it. Their 'conservation' involves building breeding boxes to ensure a supply of gun fodder.

I do know that regional residents are sick and tired of cleaning up the mess left behind by duck shooters. They're fed up with the noise of the shooting, day in day out for a quarter of the year. Native birds of all varieties are either wounded, killed or scared away so that birdwatchers find little joy for months after the guns fall silent.

So I'm left wondering why Goulburn-Murray Water is so wedded to duck shooting. A conflict of interest perhaps? Taxpayers foot the bill for this agency, yet we are not told how many of its key players are duck shooters themselves. With wildlife battling against climate change, who could seriously argue against converting the lovely Cairn Curran Reservoir from a shooting range to a sanctuary?