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News

Vaccinators For Victoria

The Victorian Government will train up to 1000 new vaccinators to be deployed across state-run centres to boost vaccination efforts.

Millions of Victorians will become eligible for their third dose in the next month, and a new pool of trained vaccinators will enable a broader workforce to administer vaccines.

They will join nurse and pharmacist immunisers in state-run vaccination clinics for up to six months and will be supervised by experienced clinicians.

Over the next few months Victorians with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience will be encouraged to join the COVID-19 vaccinator workforce as required.

Victorians with experience working in a health or community service setting, or who are enrolled in a health-related course, are desired. They can review local health service job advertisements and Department of Health jobs and careers websites. Applications opened yesterday. Victorians aged 18 years and older are eligible to get their third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine four months after their second dose.

Book an appointment through your local GP or pharmacy, or visit: coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine to book at a state-run clinic.

First Nations clans join call for ceasefire

In ever-increasing numbers, the voices of multiple First Nations clans, businesses, unions, environment and wildlife groups are shouting out in support of regional Victorians' plea for a ceasefire on the gunning down of native birds.

Half-page ads running in major papers show an alliance of more than 60 organisations, representing hundreds of thousands of Victorians, expecting elected members of parliament to heed their citizens and legislate an end to the annual recreational shooting of Australia's native waterbirds – many species unique to our country.

Sue Williams, a spokesperson for Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting, explains why.

"Each year, the Victorian Government allows thousands of normally peaceful public waterways to become what many call bloodbaths for up to three months, due to what is essentially a hobby for a small minority and no longer acceptable to most," the spokesperson said.

"Known as duck hunting to some people, the practice is detrimental to others including those living nearby who call it by a different name – a living hell.

"From an Indigenous people's perspective, many areas used for shooting are of significant cultural heritage.

"Recreational native waterbird shooting is not compatible to numerous First Nations clans' cultural aspirations. To some, duck species may be a sacred cultural totem."

Ms Williams said witnessing living wildlife was a major reason tourists were drawn to the regions, while the violence of shotguns and the cruelty inflicted on dwindling bird populations turned people away.

"It's well known in the tourism indus-

try and an unacceptable loss to regional economies," she said.

Sounding alarm bells, the 39th annual Eastern Australia Waterbird Survey, which is the largest, most long-term dataset available regarding waterbird indices, shows waterbirds have declined up to 90 per cent in just four decades.

"'Game' bird numbers dropped by over half (58 per cent) from just the previous year, now only 25 per cent of the long-term average," Ms Williams said.

"There is little if any breeding despite the La Nina effect and accompanying rain."

RVOTDS was one of several stakeholders who made a submission to Game Management Authority last Thursday, calling for a close of the 2022 recreational shooting season of native duck and stubble quail. In it are the testimonies of those significantly adversely impacted.

Recreational duck shooting is banned in QLD, ACT, NSW and WA. In Victoria, less than half of one per cent of the population are licensed to shoot ducks while professional polls have repeatedly shown most Victorians – particularly regional – want the activity banned.

In 2021, Victoria was the only state to allow recreational shooting of native stubble quail.

Paul Haw of the Yung Balug Keeping Place and Wetland Tours said it was more than just shooting waterbirds.

"It's the destruction of aboriginal cooking mounds by (duck shooters) camping on them, burying rubbish, burning scarred trees at their campfires and loss of habitat around the wetland," he said.

"It's sad to see protected species of birds floating to the water's edge."

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