

Regional issues overlooked

There is a whole other side to the duck hunting debate that is neither science nor ideology that seems to have been totally disregarded in the government's recent announcement. This relates to the serious issues that regional residents and landowners are forced to live with as a result of the shooting. Some of these issues include trespass (by armed offenders whose acts cannot be prosecuted as they aren't able to be identified), theft of firewood (most often habitat timber), littering and contamination to what is often food producing land (plastic shot guns shells and wads, lead, human excreta), dead and injured birds washing up that have to be then managed by landowners and the very loud and disturbing gunfire noise at all times of the day and night that scares animals (causing fleeing) and children (often sleeping), not to mention if you are working from home (as is the nature of farming) and trying to conduct a Zoom meeting. Can you imagine for a minute trying to go about your daily business with this occurring in your backyard?

Regional Victorians have been ignored in this decision to continue the killing of native birdlife for recreation. Regardless of many invitations no MP has bothered to visit

these people to experience it for themselves. If they did while they are there they can see the wonderful work these landowners are doing for regeneration of the natural environment on their properties using their own money. This is clear evidence that no, Minister Dimopoulos, you have not listened to regional people when making a decision that affects these people's livelihood, safety, homes, recreation and peace for a quarter of the year. Regional folks are now left feeling helpless, abandoned and unworthy. It would appear the hypothetical decline in mental health of city-based union members, (who have a choice to move on to many other recreational activities) is more important than regional landowners who cannot simply pack up and move on. All this at a time when we have a worsening mental health crisis in the bush for farmers dealing with everything from extreme weather events to price gouging.

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