

Game Management Authority No 1879

Legislative Council
60 Parliament First Session

Question - Asked: 18 March 2025

Questions on Notice

GEORGIE PURCELL — To ask the Minister for Skills and TAFE (for the Minister for Outdoor Recreation):

In relation to the Game Management Authority (GMA) and minute keeping:

- (1) Is the Department aware that the taxpayer funded independent regulator, GMA, has not kept minutes of its management and/or leadership meetings for many years.
- (2) What policy documentation can be provided to support the unusual way the GMA is operating by not keeping minutes of meetings.

Answer -Answered: 4 April 2025

The Department understands that the Game Management Authority (GMA) keeps a record of its board meetings in accordance with section 13(4) of the *Game Management Authority Act 2014* (GMA Act) and is otherwise entitled to regulate its own proceedings in accordance with the GMA Act (section 13(5)). The GMA Act does not have any requirements regarding record keeping obligations of non-board meetings.

As a public entity, the GMA has accountability measures and provides the public with detailed operational information available on its website. It prepares an annual report and business plan in accordance with sections 20 and 21 of the GMA Act. The 2023-2024 annual report provides information on governance, activities and performance, and included the 2024 VAGO audit which concluded that the GMA has acted in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 7 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and applicable Australian Accounting Standards. The business plan includes objectives, financial projections, budgets, activities such as the Hunting Reform – one of the GMA’s major projects, and a work program for 2024 – 2027

Steve Dimmock

Appears Minister may have been ill-informed. On “independent” regulator’s obligations.

Here is what a simple google search found:

Victorian public entity (statutory authority) directors must ensure proper, evidence-based decision-making by keeping records of meetings, including committees and key management meetings, as part of their accountability under the *Public Administration Act 2004*. While formal minutes are legally required for board meetings under the *Corporations Act 2001* or enabling legislation, maintaining records of non-board management meetings is essential for governance, managing conflicts of interest, and recording decisions.

Key Aspects of Record Keeping for Statutory Authorities:

- Accountability: The Board is responsible for ensuring that adequate records are maintained for all decisions, regardless of whether they are made at board or senior management level.
- Conflicts of Interest: Minutes of any meeting (including management meetings) are essential for recording the disclosure of interests, in line with VPSC guidelines.
- Standards: [The Victorian Auditor-General's Office \(VAGO\)](#) highlights that good governance requires maintaining proper

Duck Shooting No 1880

Legislative Council
60 Parliament First Session

Question

Asked: 18 March 2025

Questions on Notice

GEORGIE PURCELL — To ask the Minister for Skills and TAFE (for the Minister for Outdoor Recreation):

In relation to duck shooting in Victoria:

- (1) Why have regional communities' requests for a small number of exclusion zones been ignored, noting that less than one per cent of the population participates in recreational duck shooting and are permitted to do so at over half the State's public wetland areas as well as private land.
- (2) What quantitative data can be provided to show that —
 - (a) shooters shooting nine hardhead or pink-eared ducks every day for 86 days in Victoria is sustainable; and
 - (b) shooting pink-eared ducks or hardhead ducks is sustainable in Victoria when New South Wales does not allow them to be shot on rice fields and South Australia is not allowing them to be shot during their 2025 season.
- (4) Why is there no duck shooting permitted at Albert Park Lake.
- (5) What details can be provided on the number of regional residents and tourism businesses the Minister has met with to discuss the adverse effects of the recreational duck shooting season.

Answer

Answered: 4 April 2025

Question 1

The Victorian Labor Government is committed to ensuring that game hunting in Victoria is conducted in a safe, sustainable and responsible way with minimal harm to our environment. As the government announced in the response to Parliament's Inquiry into Victoria's recreational native bird hunting arrangements, we have introduced commonsense changes to make hunting even more responsible from 2025, which build on these existing laws for the protection of wildlife and the community.

Every year prior to the game duck hunting season, wetlands that are ordinarily available for game duck hunting are closed or partially closed for a variety of reasons e.g. threshold presence of threatened species. The wetlands closed or partially closed to game duck hunting prior to the start of the 2025 duck season are available on the Game Management Authority (GMA) website at <https://www.gma.vic.gov.au/hunting/duck/wetland-closures-duck-season>. Further wetlands may be closed or reopened to game duck hunting throughout the season.

Minister Failed to Answer.

In addition, firearm laws are designed to protect the community from the dangerous and unsafe use of firearms. There are significant penalties and possible jail terms for anyone who fails to use firearms in a safe and lawful manner. It is also illegal for a person to shoot onto or across private property without the permission of the landowner.

Irresponsible or illegal hunting behaviour is not tolerated. Inappropriate hunting behaviour can be reported to the GMA, which regulates hunting in Victoria, and in emergency situations Victoria Police can be contacted.

Any member of the Victorian community is encouraged to provide information to the GMA, or other departments and agencies, that it perceives as having bearing on any decisions related to any game bird season and recreational hunting more generally.

Question 2 (a) and (b)

The GMA commissions Annual Game Bird Harvest surveys and these are made public on their website at www.gma.vic.gov.au. These surveys indicate that a portion of hunters licenced to hunt game birds participate in any one season and that those that do participate do not participate for every day of a season.

The Annual Game Bird Harvest surveys show that the Pacific Black duck, Grey Teal and Wood Duck make up on average 90% of the annual take. The remaining four species of game duck (previously five when the Blue-winged Shoveler were permitted for hunting), including the Pink-eared Duck, make up the remaining 10% of the harvest.

The Pink-eared duck is listed in the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024 as a game species. The Pink-eared duck is listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as of Least Concern. The Pink-eared Duck is available for recreational hunting in Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory. The Pink-eared duck is listed under the NSW Native Game Bird Management Program as one of 10 game species that can be hunted under quota. For the 2025 game duck season in South Australia Pink-eared duck, Hardhead and Blue-winged shoveler cannot be hunted.

The Victorian Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recommended removing Hardhead (*Aythya australis*) from the State's Threatened Species List and consequently Hardhead was returned to the game duck list in the regulations as having an open season for hunting. The SAC recommendations are available at https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0037/699283/Nom-904-Hardhead-FRR-signed.pdf

Question 4

Albert Park Lake is managed by Parks Victoria. Hunting in Victoria is determined by land classification status and obligations under the *Firearms Act 1996*.

Albert Park, as with other public parks in metropolitan Melbourne, allows for a wide variety of recreational activities but this does not include recreational hunting due to the nature and use of this and other like parks.

In the case of the Albert Park, the Crown Land (Reserves) (Metropolitan and Regional Parks) Regulations 2023 apply. Under those regulations, the hunting of any animal is prohibited and the possession, carrying or use of firearms is restricted to circumstances not related to hunting.

Question 5

Both I and staff from my office regularly meet with a range of members of the community and businesses from rural, regional and metropolitan areas, some of whom have an interest in game

When the "nature and use" of regional and metro waterways are same, one can only assume that patrons at Albert Park Lake are more important than those in regional areas.

Minister Failed to Answer.

duck hunting and are either supportive or not supportive of game bird hunting. There is also significant correspondence which is directed to me from rural, regional and metropolitan stakeholders regarding game duck hunting and recreational hunting more generally.

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Outdoor Recreation

03/04/2025

Duck hunting No 2222

Legislative Council

60 Parliament First Session

Question

Asked: 28 October 2025

Questions on Notice

GEORGIE PURCELL — To ask the Minister for Skills and TAFE (for the Minister for Outdoor Recreation):

In relation to duck shooting:

- (1) How is native duck hunting of benefit to regional communities.
- (2) Given the majority of the population do not hunt and do not support hunting, why does duck hunting take precedence.

Answer

Answered: 1 December 2025

The Victorian Government supports safe, responsible and sustainable hunting and has recognised hunting as a legitimate recreational activity that brings social and economic benefits to our regional and rural communities. There are currently more than 59,000 licensed game hunters making a significant economic contribution to the state, especially in regional Victoria.

A report commissioned by the former Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (now Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions) in 2019 estimated that deer and duck hunting together contributed \$356 million gross to the Victorian economy and supported 3,138 jobs. An estimated 69% of the expenditure occurred in regional Victoria.

DJSIR will commission a further report in 2025 to assess the economic impact of hunting as part of the second Sustainable Hunting Action Plan.

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Member for Oakleigh

Minister for Outdoor Recreation

Minister Failed to Answer.

Native waterfowl populations No 2223

Legislative Council
60 Parliament First Session

Question

Asked: 28 October 2025

Questions on Notice

GEORGIE PURCELL — To ask the Minister for Skills and TAFE (for the Minister for Outdoor Recreation):

In relation to native waterfowl populations, particularly the hardhead and shelduck, which have declined significantly and been removed from South Australia's shooting list in 2025: Given that much of the State has been experiencing extreme drought since the beginning of 2025, how does allowing a full duck hunting season, especially when species like the shelduck and hardhead are not easily distinguished in the field, contribute to preventing these taxa from becoming threatened.

Answer

Answered: 1 December 2025

The Victorian Government supports safe, responsible and sustainable hunting.

As part of the Government's response to the Legislative Council Select Committee into Native Bird Hunting Arrangements in Victoria, the Government committed to, and is now implementing, a science-based Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) approach to guide the setting of annual game duck hunting arrangements from 2025.

Hunting of hardhead was precluded from 2022 to 2024 because it was listed as a threatened species. In 2024, however, the hardhead was removed from the threatened species list on the basis that it did not satisfy the criteria for listing. Accordingly, it was available for hunting in 2025.

The Australian shelduck is not listed as a threatened species and remains available for hunting consistent with its status under the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024.

Impacts on non-target species, including threatened species are managed through several measures. These include hunter education initiatives, waterfowl identification testing and the closure or regulation of hunting at wetlands where significant numbers of threatened species and breeding waterbird colonies are recorded to minimise risk and support species protection.

Steve Dimopoulos MP
Member for Oakleigh
Minister for Outdoor Recreation

Fact Check:

1. Shelduck is not listed as a threatened species because the Minister didn't approve submissions to list it.
2. Most wetlands are not closed where there are numbers of threatened species.

Plains Wanderer No 2224

Legislative Council
60 Parliament First Session

Question

Asked: 28 October 2025

Questions on Notice

GEORGIE PURCELL — To ask the Minister for Skills and TAFE (for the Minister for Outdoor Recreation):

In relation to the critically endangered Plains Wanderer for which there is a national recovery plan in place and is known to be collateral damage in quail shooting: Why was this omitted from the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024 and any considerations of the Regulatory Impact Statement.

Answer

Answered: 1 December 2025

The *Wildlife Act 1975* (Wildlife Act) provides a regulatory framework for various matters relating to wildlife, including both game hunting and the protection of wildlife. The Act provides protection for the critically endangered Plains Wanderer. As a listed threatened species under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act), the hunting, taking or destroying of the species attracts significant penalties, including fines and imprisonment under the Wildlife Act.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Zoos Victoria and Melbourne University, in conjunction with landowners, have been working on conservation programs to recover the species.

The Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2024 provide for matters relating to game hunting under the Wildlife Act, including game bird hunting. As the Plains Wanderer is not a game bird and is protected under the Wildlife Act and the FFG Act and other initiatives, the Regulatory Impact Statement did not include specific consideration of this species and focused on game birds. The multi-criteria analysis assessments in the Regulatory Impact Statement also incorporated a criterion on environmental impacts, including biodiversity.

The Game Management Authority provides information to hunters on differentiating between game bird species and non-game bird species, including the Plains Wanderer in its hunting manual and online education modules. From 2026, all applicants for new or renewed bird licences must also complete training and testing which includes modules on identifying game and non-game species, including the Plains Wanderer.

Steve Dimopoulos MP
Member for Oakleigh
Minister for Outdoor Recreation

Minister forgets his commitment:

"Sitting in front of a computer won't cut it, you can't be a better marksman and actually be able to cause less suffering from an animal just by (sitting at) a computer,"

— Steve Dimopoulos, The Canberra Times — 29/1/25