

Residents near Cairn Curran breathe a sigh of relief

RESIDENTS living around Victorian waterways are breathing a sigh of relief. June 13 was the final day of the state's three-month 'recreational' native waterbird shoot, a pastime in which less than half of one per cent of the population participates.

Government agencies have been unable to advise whether the number of public lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and reservoirs where duck shooting is allowed is closer to 8,000 or 15,000. Suffice to say; it is a far greater number than what can be monitored.

Residents around Cairn Curran Reservoir say this year's shooting was disappointing. 'It's like shooters made a bee-line for this area to try and intimidate the community who has spoken out against duck shooting. That's unfortunately the sort of behaviour we have come to expect from the shooting fraternity.'

Shooting was reported to have started half an hour before the legal start time on day one, upsetting children, animals and visitors for three months since. 'It finished with shooting on the final day in one of the thickest fogs we've ever seen.'

A quiet community petition in Mount Alexander Shire last year, attracted just under 500 signatures, mainly locals, who want to see their much loved Cairn Curran Reservoir and surrounding wetlands made free of shooting and instead considered for a sanctuary. Neither Maree Edwards (Bendigo MP), nor Mary-Anne Thomas (Member for Macedon and the Minister responsible), have responded.

A spokesperson for Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting inc said, "It's very disappointing for communities to feel ignored by their MPs."

A precedent was set in 2019 when two wetlands in Mildura were closed to duck shooting for community concerns and safety reasons without 500 signatures.

"How many thousands of public waterways does this tiny percentage of bird shooters need to be able to shoot at?" said a resident. "There are people living close to these wetlands who have a legal right to peaceful enjoyment of their properties. There are threatened species trying to survive here. We should be celebrating and protecting them, not decimating them."

Recreational duck shooting is banned in WA, QLD, ACT and NSW. In Victoria, professional polls continue to show most Victorians want it banned here too.