

Duck season exemption for Cairn Curran: no response



A pair of Australian Shelducks photographed by Eleanor Dilley.

REQUESTS for a list of 25 Victorian waterways, including Cairn Curran Reservoir, to be named as exempt from duck hunting have gone unanswered by the State Government as hunters in camouflage gear appeared at the popular recreation site over the weekend.

The group Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting Inc (RVOTDS), which has been lobbying for years to exclude Cairn Curran from hunting, says there is a precedent for exclusions after the Game Management Authority declared in 2019 that duck hunting at Brickworks and Cowanna Billabongs in Merbein Common near Mildura was permanently banned.

Compromise approach

The group says while it would like to see the end of duck season, it is attempting in the shorter term to restrict the areas of impact. "While we believe Victoria should follow the lead of other states which banned recreational native bird shooting decades ago, in the interim we believe it appropriate that the government at least closes public waterways to shooting where community have raised valid concerns," said Tim Haddad from RVOTDS. "99.8% of the population don't shoot birds. Most would like to be able to enjoy their public amenity in peace without boats of men in cammo gear with guns," he said.

Hunting impacts recreational use of Cairn Curran

According to the government's 'Map Share' internet site, duck hunting is allowed across Cairn Curran as well as numerous sites in this region including Muckleford State Forest,

Maldon State Forest and parts of Walmer State Forest. The map key for Cairn Curran Reservoir states: "Duck - Hunting - Gundogs allowed for Flushing or Retrieval - Check with Relevant Water Authorities". Meanwhile, the Goulburn-Murray Water web page for Cairn Curran describes the wide range of recreational activities that take place at the reservoir, including sailing, wind surfing and canoeing but does not mention hunting and it advises that visitors: "...don't feed the animals or wildlife, or interfere with their habitats". Residents who live near Cairn Curran have raised concerns that gunfire commences before the legal start time, the sounds impede their ability to live peacefully and that the sight of hunters with guns will frighten children and impact tourism; all in addition to the impacts upon native wildlife.

No response from department

RVOTDS says that decisions around hunting on waterways can only be made by Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), the Minister for Outdoor Recreation or the relevant water authority. RVOTDS provided a list of proposed exemption sites— which included Cairn Curran—to DEECA after a meeting about the issue in October 2024. The group says that DEECA indicated as recently as January 2025 that it was considering the request, but no official response was received prior to the Wednesday 19 March commencement of duck season.

"Whilst we were led to believe our requests were being considered, we've still received no actual response and the shooting has started yet again," Mr Haddad said. "It's extremely disappointing that regional communities appear to be being ignored."

DEECA and Goulburn-Murray Water have been approached for comment about duck hunting at Cairn Curran Reservoir.

Michelle Dorian

Emergency pushback



AT its Tuesday 18 March Alexander Shire Council a motion to write to the with objections to the proposal of the Emergency Services Levy (ESVFL) in its comes as Rural Council to push for a significant levy, which it calls "a

Council moved to Premier, Treasurer, Services, Leader of the Treasurer regarding Government has agreed of 1 July 2025. It negative financial munity, lack of clarity and fears that since collect the levy, the significant levy fee

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New crime stats get local