

Group calls on councils to lobby for ban on shooting

HUNTING
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Group Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting (RVOTDS) has called on the Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields shires to ban duck shooting at a local reservoir.

A letter, co-signed by BirdLife Castlemaine District, Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club and Friends of the Box IronBark Forests — Mount Alexander Region, has been sent to the shires seeking support to have duck shooting banned at Cairn Curran Reservoir, which borders the two councils.

The move follows a community petition held in May 2021, to ban bird shooting in the area and turn it into a sanctuary, which obtained 483 signatures. According to the group, this compares to a petition by shooters to have duck shooting remain, which received 21 signatures.

A spokesperson for RVOTDS said the groups were calling on the councils to lobby for a ban to be put in place.

“It’s disappointing that Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) appear to be ignoring community sentiment, and safety risks. Since its construction, Cairn Curran now has many more residents living in proximity, and many more people keen to enjoy the amenity,” they said.

“The adverse impacts to community are clear, as the comments on our petition show.

“We understand council can’t ban it. We are asking them to lobby those

who can, and represent ratepayers and other recreational users who want a safer, more peaceful public amenity.”

GMW water storage services general manager Martina Cusack said they had received a petition to ban hunting at the res and that a number of groups work to ensure compliance.

“GMW Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP), Game Management Authority and Victoria Police work together to ensure compliance with hunting, animal welfare and public safety laws,” she said.

“GMW did not receive advice from DELWP or Game Management Authority that Cairn Curran Reservoir should be closed to duck hunting for the 2021 season (May 20 to June 14).

“Duck hunting is permitted at many GMW water storages during Victoria’s designated duck hunting season, including Cairn Curran Reservoir, however public recreational areas are off limits to hunters. GMW is not aware of any safety concerns.

“Cairn Curran Reservoir was constructed to harvest, store and deliver water for water entitlements holders.

“GMW provides access for various recreational pursuits. This aligns with the intent of the Victorian Government’s Water for Victoria, which sets the direction for managing the state’s water resources and acknowledges competing demands on the state’s

waterways.”

RVOTDS called for the reservoir to be “handed back to locals”.

“Less than half of one percent of the population, (about 25,000 people) are licensed to shoot ducks,” a spokesperson for RVOTDS said.

“About half that number again (around 12,000), actually participate in the activity. But there are anywhere between 8000 to 35,000 public waterways — no government authority has been able to quantify it for us yet — where they can go to shoot birds.

“Surely Cairn Curran could be handed back to the local residents and the 99.98 percent of the non-shooting public to enjoy in peace.”

Mount Alexander Shire Council said in 2019 the council resolved to advocate for the banning of duck hunting at the reservoir.

“Since then, council has lobbied the State Government to consider banning duck shooting at the site, and also provided letters to ministers, the Gaming Authority and Goulburn Murray Water to seek their consideration of this request,” a statement from the council read.

It is important to recognise that Mount Alexander Shire Council has no decision-making authority in regards to banning duck hunting at Cairn Curran.

“Considering this, and the efforts undertaken to date by council, we are referring petitioners to take up the matter with local member for Bendigo West, Maree Edwards.”

Central Goldfields Shire Council declined to comment.