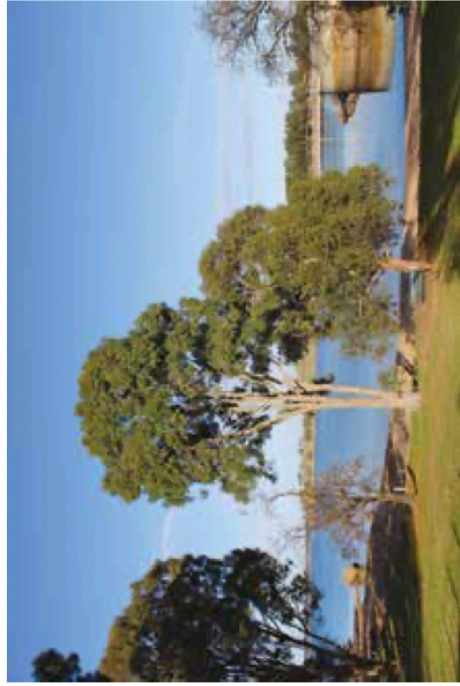


## Dangerous levels of lead in wild ducks



cartridges and used to kill small targets such as waterfowl. Shotgun ammunition containing lead is permitted to be used in some circumstances, such as clay target shooting or shooting quail. Lead ammunition, however, has been banned from use while shooting waterfowl in Victorian waterways since 2001. Duck shooters must now use steel shot.

Waterbirds ingest lead shot while feeding from lake bottoms and streams or swallowing lead shot along with pebbles to grind food in their gizzards. As an article published by the University of Melbourne points out, any person or animal who eats the meat of an animal shot with lead is at risk. At greatest risk of lead poisoning in the food chain are scavenging birds. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that animals with, by far the highest levels of lead exposure detected in Australia, have been wedge-tailed eagles from Victoria.

Why, then, are ducks still being poisoned by lead?

Firstly, unlike steel shot which simply rusts away, lead pellets can exist in the environment for many years. A recent Danish

study dredged up wetland sediment from popular waterbird hunting sites 30 years after a ban was imposed on the use of lead shot. They found that up to 250kg of lead per hectare remained. This was similar to densities found in the 1970s before the ban.

The second reason is that, despite the fact that lead ammunition has been banned, duck hunters with 'old school' shotguns may still be using it. And this poses a major concern, as it means that lead concentrations in the State's waterways will continue to increase.

The solution to the lead problem in waterways, according to Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting, is simple: ban duck shooting. Ms Williams said, "Any further shooting, particularly with lead ammunition, poses more risk to people and our protected wildlife. When will the Victorian Government just tell bird shooters 'no'?"

☆ A 2017 EPA report found low levels of lead in water and sediments in Cairn Curran.

**IT took a recent Freedom of Information request for documents to be released from the EPA stating that dangerous lead levels in wild ducks have been found in tests at four of 23 Victorian shooting waterways across Victoria. The documents were obtained by a not-for-profit group called Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting.**

Testing on ducks took place in 2018, but the EPA did not make the results of the dangerous lead levels public. Sue Williams, who is Project Manager for Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting, said, "It is simply unfathomable that the Government has not issued any public warnings about the lead levels found in ducks across our State. Four recreational duck and quail shooting seasons have been allowed to proceed since the lead levels were first identified."

A 2017 EPA report found low levels of lead in water and sediments in Cairn Curran.

Lead is a highly toxic metal, and in past decades it has been removed from everyday items where it created a risk to human health, most notably petrol. Lead poisoning is a cumulative and sometimes fatal illness, and in children under the age of five, it can cause profound and permanent damage to the brain and nervous system.

Lead is still used in the manufacture of some ammunition, and that includes the tiny pellets that are contained in shotgun

## Book in now for small business support opportunities

**MOUNT Alexander Shire Council's small business support continues into the second half of 2022 with free workshops and one-on-one sessions.**

Mount Alexander Shire Council will be hosting a range of free workshops and one-on-one sessions, in partnership with Business Victoria, starting this month.

The first small business workshop is 'Winning Government Grants and Tenders', on Monday 22 August 930am-11.30am. This workshop is designed to give small businesses the confidence needed to engage in government work by providing practical tips and simple strategies on how to respond to government tenders, quotes and grants.

The 'Micro Business Health Check' workshop will run in September, and is aimed at micro businesses and helping them to understand how regular self-assessment will set businesses up to identify key issues before they arise.

The last workshop, Innovators Mindset, will run in October and assists small businesses to connect themes of innovation,

time management and leadership in business and building systems for a more efficient and effective workplace.

There will also be another two visits from Business Victoria's Small Business Bus this month.

This is a great opportunity to receive one-on-one tailored advice from business advisors from Monarch Institute to help you start, build or transform your small business.

The sessions are confidential, 45 minutes and free of charge. Bookings are essential.

Walk-ins are welcome on the day for the Bus Concierge service which provides general information about Business Victoria as well as the Planning and Starting Your Business pack.

The Small Business Bus will be outside the Kangaroo Hotel, Maldon on Thursday 25 August 10am-4pm and outside the Market Building, Castlemaine on Monday 22 August 10am-4pm.

To book now or learn more visit: <http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/BusinessResources>.