

Leave the ducks, take up golf

Is there any comparison between a golf club designed to strike an inanimate object and a shotgun designed to kill the living?

Victorians could be forgiven for wondering what kind of person leads their incumbent government because Premier Andrews says he sees little difference between the two.

They might also be wondering what kind of leader puts a recreational activity involving lethal weapons ahead of the wider community's right to safety and mental health.

One in four Victorians are now living in regional areas and more folks than ever are interested in enjoying our natural assets for peaceful pursuits.

Less than half of one percent of the population shoot ducks, but they have access to do so at so many thousands of public lakes, streams, creeks, rivers, reservoirs and wetlands around Victoria (often near homes and other recreational users) that no government authority has been able to estimate their number, let alone signpost or monitor them.

The concern for safety around duck shoot-

ers is legitimate. Two walkers were shot by them in New Zealand just last year.

We are not aware of any public polls wanting golf to be banned, or for the need for vets to be on hand to euthanise wounded golf balls. Nor are we aware of residents needing to call police for illegal golfing causing angst to local community or destroying precious indigenous culture.

And we have never heard of other recreational users finding themselves trapped unawares on a golf course due to lack of signage, and fearing for their lives.

But we are aware (thanks to planning.vic.gov.au) there are 300,000 golfers sharing about 374 golf courses, a ratio which if applied to duck shooters means there would be 31 shooting waterways, not thousands.

We are also aware that golfers typically fund their own recreation as opposed to being funded by unwitting taxpayers.

The Premier needs to understand his birdies, and his voters, a lot more.

Sue Williams, Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting inc