



# Select Committee on Victoria's Recreational Native Bird Hunting Arrangements

**Hearing Date:** 16 June 2023

**Questions taken on notice**

**Directed to:** Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)

**Received Date:** 29 June 2023

## 1. JEFF BOURMAN Page no. 35

**Question asked to Daryl Snowdon:**

Have you got any data to show that from ... the Danish model, which you can provide?

**Response:**

SSAA Victoria notes that while Victoria's draft *Waterfowl Wounding Reduction Action Plan* (WWRAP) was developed cognisant of best practice and successful equivalents internationally (particularly in Denmark), it is a uniquely Victorian plan. The draft plan was developed by a panel of subject matter experts and led by a Victorian expert in Professor Andrew Fisher, Director, Animal Welfare Science Centre at the University of Melbourne. Within said document, Professor Fisher describes it thus:

*The Waterfowl Wounding Reduction Action Plan accordingly represents a structured and comprehensive set of actions to drive down wounding rates arising from hunting, and thus to enable improvements in animal welfare as a result.*

In Denmark, an initiative to reduce the wounding of pink-footed geese commenced in 1997, with first effect on the hunting season in 1998. The results of education programs such as this are best measured over an extended period, particularly when dealing with dynamic wildlife populations.

Statements made in the media by a member of the Select Committee in recent weeks, namely that the Danish initiative "took 25 years to reduce wounding", are demonstrably fallacious.

A review of the Danish initiative was published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology* in 2007, assessing its impact after the first seven hunting seasons of it being in effect. The paper by Aarhus University researchers Noer, Madsen and Hartmann, *Reducing Wounding of Game by Shotgun Hunting: Effects of a Danish Action Plan on Pink-Footed Geese*, found "a significant decrease in the proportion of geese carrying shot... [and that] reductions of at least 50% appear to have resulted from the plan".

## **2. MICHAEL GALEA Page no. 37**

### **Question asked to Barry Howlett:**

In relation to the public polling on, I think, page 26 of your submission, firstly, would it be possible to get a copy of that polling data on notice?

**Barry Howlett:** We would be happy to provide most of it. The only caveat I would put on it is there is some polling there about the personal popularity of individual members, which I would doubt they would want made public, so we would reserve the right to redact that.

### **Response:**

In February 2023, prior to the open season, Community Engagement was engaged to conduct a survey of Victorians of voting age in several electorates held by government members in peri-urban and suburban Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Overall, 39% of those people who indicated that they voted for a Labor candidate at the 2022 State election stated that they 'oppose' or 'strongly oppose' a ban on duck hunting. A further 29% hold a neutral position.

15% of Labor voters stated they would be 'likely' or 'very likely' to change their vote if the Government permanently banned duck hunting in Victoria.

Of the respondents, just 15.3% were themselves hunters. More than one in four people said they did not hunt themselves but had friends or family who did.

Of note, the survey identified a base level of opposition to hunting of any kind within the community, with approximately 25% opposed to the hunting of deer and the hunting of pests, such as foxes and rabbits.

A copy of the report, with limited redactions, is attached for the Select Committee's reference. (See attachment 1)

### **3. SHEENA WATT Page no. 43-44**

#### **Question asked to Barry Howlett:**

Do you think that these electorates provide an accurate mapping of Victorian communities and their attitudes as reflected in this survey?

**Barry Howlett:** I do not think they provide a mapping, to the extent that that is at all possible, of the entire population of Victoria. I think they provide snapshots. An electorate like Bass provides a snapshot of people in that outer-suburb urban fringe and their attitudes; I think that provides a very decent snapshot of that. I am quite familiar with that because it neighbours where I live.

**Sheena Watt:** What about the sample size? Can you talk to me about the sample size for each of those polls?

**Barry Howlett:** I cannot talk – I am happy to take that on notice.

#### **Response:**

In February 2023, prior to the open season, Community Engagement was engaged to conduct a survey of Victorians of voting age in several electorates held by government members in peri-urban and suburban Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The study was conducted among a sample of n=2,003 people, with an effective margin of error of +/-3.2%. 50.6% of respondents were reached via mobile phone.

Of the respondents, just 15.3% were themselves hunters. More than one in four people said they did not hunt themselves but had friends or family who did.

The survey identified an apparent base level of opposition to hunting of any kind within the community, with approximately 25% opposed to the hunting of deer and the hunting of pests, such as foxes and rabbits.

Overall, 39% of those people who indicated that they voted for a Labor candidate at the 2022 State election stated that they ‘oppose’ or ‘strongly oppose’ a ban on duck hunting. A further 29% hold a neutral position.

15% of Labor voters stated they would be ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to change their vote if the Government permanently banned duck hunting in Victoria.