



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

## Additional questions

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

1.

State of preparedness to run additional training programs for Native Bird Hunting should that become a requirement of licensing.

### Response:

SSAA Victoria operates a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The Association employs an RTO Manager, a Training Development Manager, and an Administration Officer full-time; together with sixteen casual trainers (Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualified) across our network.

SSAA Victoria is well positioned to quickly bring online new training offerings and make them available across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Whilst longer lead times are ideal, some courses have previously been conceived, developed, and successfully delivered within just a few months.

The Association stresses that if additional training programs were to become a requirement of obtaining a Game Licence, the focus should be on 'training and assessment' rather than simply 'proficiency testing'. Best practice training courses, such as the Shotgunning Education Program and Practical Firearms Training Program, go beyond testing a baseline level of marksmanship or theoretical knowledge. Put simply; testing is an event; assessment is an educative process.

## 2.

Current training offerings.

### **Response:**

SSAA Victoria's training department offers both accredited and non-accredited courses covering a range of needs and recreational and occupation-specific obligations. Courses include:

#### Recreational

- Course in Practical Firearm Training (RTO accredited; recognised by Victoria Police)
- Firearm Safety Course (recognised by Victoria Police)
- Introduction to deer hunting (collaboration with GMA)
- Advanced deer hunting
- Introduction to duck and quail hunting (collaboration with GMA)
- Shotgunning Education Program / Gamebird Hunting Essentials
- Waterfowl Identification Course training
- Advanced centrefire rifle shooting
- Advanced shotgun shooting

#### Occupational

- Humane dispatch of animals (RTO accredited)
- Use of firearms on an airfield (RTO accredited)
- Practical Firearm Training Course for Airport Officers
- Practical Firearm Training Course for Council Officers
- Practical Firearm Training Course for Zoo Rangers
- Commercial Kangaroo Firearms Proficiency Accreditation Course

#### Internal

- Range officer training
- Conservation and Pest Management Accreditation (collaboration with Parks Victoria)
- Thermal optics training (collaboration with Parks Victoria)

### 3.

Availability of trainers and training locations.

#### **Response:**

SSAA Victoria operates a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The Association employs an RTO Manager, a Training Development Manager, and an Administration Officer full-time; together with sixteen casual trainers (Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualified) across our network.

In addition, SSAA Victoria has a similarly sized pool of experienced trainers who do not hold this formal qualification.

We currently operate, or have access agreements with, fifteen shooting facilities located across Victoria that are suitable for shotgun training.

SSAA Victoria's new, purpose-built training centre at the Eagle Park complex (near Avalon Airport) is due to open later this year. Classroom-type facilities are also available at most of the Association's other venues.

### 4.

Indicative pricing.

#### **Response:**

As a not-for-profit association, SSAA Victoria offers training to recreational hunters and shooters at a low cost.

The Association's Practical Firearm Training Program (PFTP), for example, is an intensive, one-day training course aimed at ensuring that new firearm licence holders are suitably skilled to use firearms safely and effectively. PFTP is labour and resource intensive (2 x Trainers, plus 1 x Range Officer administers each practical session). The cost to participants is just \$160.

SSAA Victoria has a proven history of delivering quality training for recreational hunters at a minimal cost.

## 5.

Any further details that you can provide about the ‘Hunting Opinions Victoria’ research into support in the Victorian community for new rules for native bird hunting, including but not limited to methodology, allowance for limitations, sample size.

### **Response:**

In February 2023, before the open season, Community Engagement was engaged to survey 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.

Question 4.4 of the *Hunting Opinions Victoria* survey asked:

*“Would you support new rules on duck hunting to protect native species and allow hunting to continue, such as introducing mandatory training for duck hunting licence holders?”*

56% of respondents (redistributed) stated “yes”.

In response to questions on notice, RSPCA Victoria supplied the Select Committee with research it commissioned in early 2022. The *Duck Hunting - State-Wide Poll* was conducted by Redbridge among a sample of n=1,908 people, with an effective margin of error of +/-3.2%. 40.9% of respondents were reached via mobile phone.

Redbridge asked an identical question:

*“Would you support new rules on duck hunting to protect native species and allow hunting to continue, such as: Introducing mandatory training for duck hunting licence holders?”*

62% of respondents (redistributed) stated “yes”.

Both surveys had a minority of respondents who were hunters themselves. 15.3% of respondents to the Community Engagement survey reported that they “participate in recreational hunting”. A further 26% said they had friends and

family who did. 16% of respondents to the Redbridge survey reported “ever participat[ing] in duck hunting”.

Other similarities exist between these separate research projects.

The Community Engagement survey identified a base level of opposition to hunting of any kind within the community. Approximately 25% of respondents opposed the hunting of “non-native species, like rabbits, foxes, pigs or deer”.

The RSPCA Victoria-commissioned research similarly asked:

*“Do you support or oppose hunting of feral species, like rabbits, foxes, pigs or deer?”*

11.7% of respondents to that survey said they opposed such hunting, while a further 17.9% expressed a neutral position.

With respect to recreational native bird hunting, Redbridge’s statewide survey found that 26.2% oppose a ban on duck hunting in Victoria.

However, in the Community Engagement survey of people of voting age living in electorates held by government members in peri-urban and suburban Melbourne and regional Victoria, a much higher 44.9% of respondents said they oppose a ban on duck hunting (less than 28% support a ban).

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.