



Inc. #A0003010B

1 February 2026

Maree Edwards – MP

Suite 3, 16 Lockwood Rd. Kangaroo Flat

Maree.edwards@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Edwards,

The Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club is a community group that encourages community appreciation and knowledge of our natural environment. The club has over 100 members and around 250 additional supporters, mainly from the Castlemaine area.

We draw your attention to the increasingly poor state of wetlands and waterbird populations in our region. Much of this decline has been exacerbated by human induced climate change (higher temperatures, more erratic rainfall, etc) which has resulted in drying wetlands, lower water quality and less water overall for both environmental and human use.

Over recent years a large amount of evidence has been gathered showing that native waterfowl are declining across the nation. This decline in duck numbers can be seen clearly in central Victoria where low rainfall has resulted in wetlands drying and those water storages that still have water being at very low levels, e.g. Cairn Curran Reservoir is currently at 31%. Other areas of the State are experiencing similar drying of wetlands and similar declines in waterbird numbers. Those wetland-dependent birds that remain are being concentrated in ever declining wetlands, including farm dams and water storages, making them more vulnerable to disturbance and particularly so when duck shooting is permitted on these wetlands. It is not just the game species that are affected but all wetland-dependent species, many of which are listed as endangered. Each year many protected waterbirds are shot or wounded by hunters with little or no repercussions for the hunter. The impact of duck shooting extends to all species as they are all affected by noise and other human disturbances. Moreover, this impact extends beyond the end of the allowed shooting season as birds and other wildlife are now more easily disturbed by human presence.

Because of the dire state of so many wetland-dependent species, the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club asks that a game bird hunting season not be declared for Victoria in 2026 or in subsequent seasons. We also ask that should the government declare a duck shooting season in Victoria despite the evidence that current duck populations cannot support a hunting season, that lakes and wetlands in central Victoria remain closed to all shooting.

Our members, supporters and their friends normally enjoy visiting wetlands across the region at different times of the year, and in doing so patronise local businesses. However, they do not visit these areas during a duck shooting season. It is therefore not valid for the government to claim that duck shooting brings business to the area as such business is offset by the decreased spending by birdwatchers and other tourists.

We urge you to listen to the science and help turn around the disturbing trend of biodiversity decline in our state.

Yours sincerely,



Euan Moore

President,

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club

CC: Ms Jacinta Allen, Premier of Victoria,
Mr Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for the Environment
Mr Nicholas McGowan, Shadow Minister for the Environment