

Anti-duck shooter fires up at Bill

In taking a shot at Liberal colleague James Newbury, Bill Tilley might take a quiet look in the mirror.

Supposedly paid to represent regional constituents, Mr Tilley continues to thumb the best interests of most of them, in promoting a minority, cruel, destructive and expensive "recreation", aka native bird hunting.

Taxpayer funding for hunting/shooting has clocked up over \$100 million since 2014. Despite the recent parliamentary inquiry recommending the pastime be banned like it is in other states, native bird hunting continues to drain the public purse in Victoria - the latest \$11 million to "improve compliance".

Government data shows less than half of one per cent of the population shoot birds for fun. The number of licensed bird shooters has plummeted almost 20 per cent in seven years.

Professional polls continue to show most Benambra voters want bird hunting banned.



Benambra MP Bill Tilley. File picture

A UComms poll in 2020 showed Benambra voters were in favour of it ceasing, and not just on animal cruelty grounds.

Impacts of "recreational" bird hunting on regional communities include trespass and damaged fences, distressed animals and stock, inability to work from home or for shift workers to sleep, thwarted tourism, plastic ammo shells and wads left littering the land-

scape, and goodness knows what level of toxic lead left to pollute our environment.

In a generic response to concerned constituents, Mr Tilley's office justifies the carnage by using the same old tired myth of "hunters' economic benefit".

There has been no cost-benefit analysis of bird hunting, only a voluntary survey of hunters to guesstimate their own expenditure.

A parliamentary budget office report estimated the net "benefit" of bird hunting at just \$10 million to the entire state.

Across the border in NSW, "recreational" native shooting is banned. Their economy is doing better than ours, and nature-based tourism is booming.

Victorians aren't stupid. Over a quarter of us live regionally, and we are still waiting for a political party that is less interested in political point-scoring than actually getting on with the job of representing us.

**Kerrie Allen, Regional Victorians
Opposed to Duck Shooting, Castlemaine**