

Activists cry foul on hunting regulations



By [Geoff Adams](#)

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The Victorian Government's speed in changing hunting regulations has been uncovered in an FOI release.

An anti-duck hunting lobby group has accused the Victorian Government of acting in haste in adopting recommendations for changes to hunting regulations.

The Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting group has obtained documents under Freedom of Information law which expose the process the Victorian Government used to update hunting laws, mid last year.

Referring to the documents, the group has pointed out that within a day of receiving recommendations, Victorian Environment Minister Steve Dimopoulos had signed off on the rules.

The group said the time between the public consultation, and the department's recommendations, was too short for real consideration.

The minister had over-ruled the advice to ban electronic callers for duck shooting and to remove the blue winged shoveler from the game list.

The blue winged shoveler has not been permitted to be hunted for the last couple of seasons (at least) due to its threatened status.

However, it remained on the list of species classed as "game".

Group spokesman Tim Haddad said this meant it was still possible for the species to make it back onto the hunt list.

"That's why it's so ridiculous, it wasn't taken off the game list like the department recommended. If it's threatened, it should be protected."

Referring to the timing of the government's action, Mr Haddad said there was no way public feedback concerning important issues of animal welfare, environment, public safety and amenity, was read and considered by the minister, let alone the government departments responsible.

"It's concerning we have an environment minister who has over-ruled his own departmental advice, instead allowing known environmental hazards to continue.

"It's equally concerning the government is backtracking on important commitments."

"These regulations are published under the guise of promoting safety, sustainability and responsibility. But there is no consideration of the impact of recreational hunting on the basic human rights of thousands of regional communities having to live with it on their doorsteps, or the millions of Victorians who would like to enjoy their public outdoors in peace and safety. Is it any wonder tourists prefer the outdoors of other states?"

A recommendation to require duck hunters to register in advance with their intended shooting locations and wear visible identification numbers, was not pursued.

The advice to the minister was that this could be in conflict with the charter of human rights, a position challenged by the anti-duck hunting lobby.

"In NSW, deer hunters book in advance, so authorities know where they will be hunting in public areas," Mr Haddad said.

The regulations approved by the minister last year adjusted the duck hunting season start times, phasing out of lead ammunition for game bird hunting, banned the use of electronic acoustic lures for stubble quail, revised game licence fees, introduced powers to request presentation of a scent-trailing hound for inspection, increased the number of recognised deer habitats and increased the number of gun dog breeds permitted to be used for game hunting.

Last year's consultations attracted significant public interest, with 51,655 page visits and a total of 5521 submissions, including 570 written and 4951 survey submissions.

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