



8 May 2023

**Re: Inquiry into Victoria's Recreational Native Bird Hunting Arrangements**

Dear Select Committee Members,

Safari Club International (SCI) urges you to support waterfowl hunting.

SCI is a nonprofit corporation with approximately 50,000 and advocates, many of whom live or hunt in Australia. SCI also has local chapters in more than 100 different countries, including Australia. SCI and its members support hunting as an effective and critical conservation tool worldwide.

SCI urges the Government, and the Select Committee specifically, to base its decisions on science. Although the Game Management Authority's recommendations for the 2023 duck season were not without fault—primarily because the GMA took an unnecessarily conservative approach—SCI is concerned that the Government did not follow those recommendations. Rather, the Government ignored the scientific information within the GMA's recommendations and did so without substantive explanation. Further, SCI is concerned that the Committee has been established simply as a means to ban duck hunting in Victoria. The Committee must be driven by science, not emotion or anti-hunting bias.

Hunters are ardent conservationists and the driving force behind many wildlife and habitat conservation programs, including the restoration and conservation of waterfowl habitat worldwide. The relationship between hunting and conservation is natural. Hunters work to sustainably manage waterfowl and other species to secure future hunting opportunities for themselves and other hunters. Hunters protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, watersheds, and grasslands, all of which conserves waterfowl habitat. This habitat work is critical as habitat loss is the greatest threat to waterfowl populations, not hunting.

For these reasons, SCI urges the Select Committee to recognize the importance of hunting for successful waterfowl conservation. Banning or arbitrarily limiting hunting in Victoria would be detrimental to these conservation efforts and Australia's waterfowl.

Enclosed are more than 680 letters from hunter-conservationists who oppose any attempt to prohibit waterfowl hunting in Victoria.