

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 4 November 2003

LABOR ON A WING AND A PRAYER OVER DUCK HUNTING

Member for South West Coast Denis Naphthine has called on Premier Steve Bracks to pull one of his Parliamentary Secretaries into line over his stand on duck hunting.

In the Sunday *Ballarat Courier* and on state radio last week, Labor Member for Ballarat East Geoff Howard called for the Bracks Labor Government to implement a total ban on duck hunting in Victoria.

Mr Howard has written to Environment Minister John Thwaites calling for a total abolition of duck hunting in this state.

This has prompted Dr Naphthine to call on Premier Bracks to censure Mr Howard over his comments.

“Whether Mr Howard likes it or not, duck hunting is a legal, legitimate sport in country Victoria which many thousands of people enjoy each year,” Dr Naphthine said.

“Not only is it a legitimate sport, but it also provides many thousands of dollars to the economies of numerous towns throughout rural and regional Victoria when hunters visit each season to participate in this perfectly legal sporting activity.

“The worrying thing is that Mr Howard is the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture. Premier Bracks should not only censure Mr Howard, but I think the Premier should also put someone else into this important position who is more in touch with the vast majority of people throughout rural and regional Victoria.

“This is a traditional sporting activity that has been carried on for generations in Victoria. A great many people look forward to duck season each year, and I believe it is a sport that should be allowed to continue.”

Dr Naphthine noted that many of Mr Howard’s colleagues on Labor’s Country Caucus were firmly against his call to ban duck hunting.

“Look, this guy can’t even get support from the majority of his Labor mates on this issue, so I think that demonstrates quite clearly that Geoff Howard’s views are in the minority.”

Dr Naphthine called on the Bracks Labor Government to:

1. Reject completely any calls to ban duck hunting in Victoria.
2. Censure Mr Howard over his call to ban duck hunting.
3. Promote someone else to the position of Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture whose views are more in tune with the majority of people in rural and regional Victoria.