

**From:** ABC Corporate\_Affairs8 <[Corporate\\_Affairs8.ABC@abc.net.au](mailto:Corporate_Affairs8.ABC@abc.net.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 11 February 2021 1:01 PM  
**To:** Hunting Manager <[hunting.manager@ssaavic.com.au](mailto:hunting.manager@ssaavic.com.au)>  
**Subject:** re: Duck hunting article inaccuracies and bias

Dear Mr Laird

Thank you for your email regarding a 20 January ABC News online story about the 2021 Victorian duck hunting season.

Your complaint has been considered by Audience and Consumer Affairs, a unit which is separate to and independent of content making areas within the ABC. Our role is to review and, where appropriate, investigate complaints alleging that ABC content has breached the ABC's editorial standards. We have sought comments from ABC News and assessed the article against the ABC's standards for accuracy, which are explained in section 2 of the ABC Editorial Policies: <https://edpols.abc.net.au/policies/>. Most relevant to your complaint:

*2.1 Make reasonable efforts to ensure that material facts are accurate and presented in context.*

Audience and Consumer Affairs agree that the article incorrectly reported the results of a GMA survey and was not in keeping with the ABC's standards for accuracy. ABC News accept this and as a result of your complaint, the headline, a key point, the introduction to the article and elements within the story have now been [corrected and updated](#). The reference to duck hunting being banned in NSW has also been corrected. An Editor's Note has been appended to the article and, in keeping with our usual processes, a summary of this finding will be published here:

<https://about.abc.net.au/talk-to-the-abc/editorial-complaints/upheld-complaints/>

With regard to your concerns of bias, Audience and Consumer Affairs note that the original story made the Victorian government's position on duck hunting clear, included comments from the GMA and the Minister, and that further views were available through links to other articles. I am advised that the reporter contacted Field and Game Australia for comment for inclusion in the original story, but did not receive a response before the publication deadline. It is also important to note that the ABC's editorial standards for impartiality do not require that each and every report provide all relevant perspectives, rather, the standards require that a diversity of perspectives *over time*. Nonetheless, ABC News have now updated the story to include comments from an open letter published by Field and Game Australia.

Thank you again for providing the ABC with an opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Yours sincerely

Denise Musto  
Investigations Manager  
Audience and Consumer Affairs

To: Audience & Consumer Affairs  
From: David Laird ([hunting.manager@ssaavic.com.au](mailto:hunting.manager@ssaavic.com.au))  
Subject: Duck hunting article inaccuracies and bias  
Date: 22-Jan-2021 13:16

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by David Laird  
([hunting.manager@ssaavic.com.au](mailto:hunting.manager@ssaavic.com.au))

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ABC program: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-20/pressure-builds-on-victorian-government-to-ban-duck-hunting/13070716>

Response required: Yes

Date of program: 20-Jan-2021

Contact type: Complaint

Location: VIC

Subject: Duck hunting article inaccuracies and bias

Comments: To whom it may concern,

The above article contains inaccuracies, provides a misleading view of the competence and knowledge of hunters and is biased due to the fact that hunting organisations were not contacted for comment.

The key points headline states that "About 80 per cent of respondents failed a bird identification test". That is wrong.

Ref: <https://www.gma.vic.gov.au/media-releases/2021/statement-from-the-gma-duck-season-advice> (the last 4 paragraphs)

Additionally, duck hunting is not banned in NSW. Recreational duck hunting is banned but hunting ducks for crop protection is allowed for roughly nine months of each year (depending on duck numbers.) There are a number of articles supporting this, but [https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/748655/dont-wing-it-booklet.pdf](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/748655/dont-wing-it-booklet.pdf) is the NSW Government's pamphlet explaining how to be a safe and ethical game bird hunter.

If SSAA Victoria had been contacted before the article was published the inaccuracies could have been highlighted and a counter view to the anti duck hunting agenda provided.

As the National Broadcaster, it is expected that the ABC presents factual, fair and balanced news content. That has not occurred in this instance.

It is requested that the ABC publicly corrects the misinformation that has been disseminated in this instance and in future contacts SSAA Victoria on any hunting related stories to seek comment, balance and clarification of the facts before publishing or broadcasting those stories.

Yours sincerely,

David Laird

Hunting Development Manager

SSAA Victoria

Network - ABC Online

RecipientName - Audience & Consumer Affairs

Referrer - Complaint