

# to drought

## 75% want permanent ban, says poll

By **MATHEW MURPHY**

DUCK hunting in Victoria could be banned for another year, with an influential report likely to show that there are fewer active wetlands across the eastern states than there were last year.

Waterbird expert Richard Kingsford's aerial survey of duck numbers and wetland areas is expected to be handed to the Brumby Government this week.

The Government relies on the survey, now in its 25th year, in deciding whether to proceed with a duck-hunting season.

Last year's report showed that wetland areas were at the lowest level recorded in Victoria and that waterbird numbers had fallen below 200,000, resulting in the Government banning duck hunting for a year.

Professor Kingsford told *The Age* that the results of the survey were still being tabulated, but it was clear that the drought was still biting hard.

"Last year was bad. We're expecting this year to be even worse because there are even fewer wetlands, particularly in

agreed that there shouldn't be a season."

With Environment Minister Gavin Jennings still a month away from making a decision on whether to allow duck hunting, a poll by Roy Morgan shows that 75% of Victorians want the activity banned altogether.

The result transcends party lines: 74% of those who identified as ALP supporters and the same percentage of Coalition supporters favoured the ban, as did 89% of Greens supporters.

Trevor Poulton, a spokesman for the group ALP Members Opposed to Duck Shooting, said Premier John Brumby had the chance to follow the lead of Queensland, NSW, Western Australia and the ACT in issuing a permanent ban.

"The Premier should not treat duck shooting as a political issue and look at the science and the environmental impact," he said. "If he does that, he has the chance to make his mark and show that the Labor Party is serious about dealing with climate change issues when it comes to how to manage environmental issues."