

## **Legislative Council of Tasmania**

### **Inquiry Into Finfish Farming**

Dear Legislative Council Members,

#### My background

I am a resident of Bruny Island and have been for five years, after having sailed around Australia, leaving Barnes Bay in 2003 and returning in 2014. Our yacht remains now on a mooring in Barnes Bay, a short distance from our home on the Bay, from where my partner and I run our small holiday accommodation business. I have been travelling across the d'Entrecasteaux Channel since 1976, by vehicular ferry, runabout, or sailing vessel. Even during the years of circumnavigation of mainland Australia, we would return to Tasmania and Bruny Island for a period, mostly around Easter time. So, I am well accustomed to the coastal environment of Tasmania in general, and Bruny Island in particular; and I am in a position to comment on the Tasmanian experience compared with that in other mainland States.

#### My observations over the years (1976- 2019)

In the seventies, the Channel was a largely pristine waterway, with free movement of marine vessels in most zones, major bays and estuaries. The Tasman Sea coast of Bruny was untouched and open waterway for all vessels.

The fish farms around Coningham/Sheppards Hill, Howden/Tinderbox and Barnes Bay/Roberts Point have become part of the seascape over the past 30 years or so, but do require additional obstacle considerations for marine traffic, particularly nighttime navigation. Over the past 20 years particularly, I have noticed a change in marine life, both plants and animals/fish. Although there are noticeable seasonal variations, I have found a reduction in traditional fish, such as flathead, and a seasonal flourishing of blue-green algae, to an extent that small boat propellers become unusable in shallow waters.

In 2003, while we were fairly green sizeable vessel sailors, preparing for our open waters venture, we travelled freely from Barnes Bay to

Dover, to Huonville and to Snug and Hobart, meeting few other vessels en route, bearing in mind that we sought to do so under sail, and thus often tacking from one side of the waterway to the other. Since returning to Bruny in 2014, we have made a number of journeys, including trips by our vessel to Recherche Bay, South Arm, Northwest Bay and around Bruny Island, and the navigational requirements have intensified substantially. There are fish farms to negotiate on both sides of the lower segment of the Channel, along with the passage of farm support vessels carrying out their routine work. After leaving the southern entrance to the Channel, sailors enter a zone of wilderness, with the exception of the dramatic Bruny Lighthouse and other welcome navigational aids, and so it remains along the Labillardiere Peninsula, Cloudy Bay, The Friars, Tasman Head, Cape Connella and then Fluted Cape into Adventure Bay, as occurred with the ancient mariners. Northward, along the east coast of North Bruny is a different story now, the fish farming there requires careful navigation, unless charting a course well out to sea.

#### My View of Desirable Planning

To a large extent, I acknowledge that, as with on-land locations, development is inevitable and often desirable, but advanced planning will minimise further intrusion into generic coastal marine activity. I am keen to see that further growth of fish farms be the product of widespread community input, reflecting an acknowledgement that our natural environment is a finite resource, currently subject to unchecked consumption by commercial interests. I wish to see that coastal and marine industries be regulated by a body which includes visible input from an entity driven by concern for environmental impact of such industries.

Yours sincerely

Jeff Self

17 November 2019

