

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FinFish](#)  
**Subject:** salmon farming inquiry  
**Date:** Friday, 1 November 2019 11:53:10 AM

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I would like to provide the following submission to the inquiry:

#### Submission

1. My name is Chris Wells and I have been a resident of Tasmania for twenty one years. Prior to move this I was active in large scale planning across Australia. Some of the work of my company was planning for aquaculture development in South Australia (Two examples are The Eyre Peninsula Aquaculture Development Plan and a catchment to coast plan for the far south of New South Wales. I have also been a passionate recreational angler throughout my life. Some of the following reflects my experience as an aquaculture planner and other comment and observation reflects my recreational fishing activities
2. Prior to moving to Tasmania I toured the salmon farms and would like to offer the following observations:
  - 2.1 There was never any serious attempt in this State to address site selection criteria such as water depth, water movement, fallowing to enable dispersal of nutrients loaded from farming activity. Instead legislation was passed fast tracking salmon farming development and bypassing normal planning processes. This very poor start to the industry did not immediately cause problems in the environment because farms were small, pens were small and stocking densities limited. Lease were granted in areas of little tidal movement, that were conveniently located for business owners and the business of salmon farming begun.
  - 2.2 As years went by pens became larger, biomass of fish increased and companies listed on the ASX. As this occurred nothing changed in terms of regulation by State Governments and Local Government s were bypassed. The marine environments were compromised by large scale farming, overstocking became the norm to increase profits and the regulators at DPIPW and later the EPA turned a blind eye to the problems.
  - 2.3 Twenty years ago there was a terrific seatrout fishery in the Lune and Esperance rivers. Each spring the trout would follow the whitebait migrations. The rivers were tannin stained but clean. The pebbles clearly defined on the river bottoms. In twenty years the nutrient loading from the adjacent farms has destroyed the whitebait runs, the trout no longer run and the river bottoms are covered in a green - brown scum. This is not due to warming as the whitebait and sea trout runs still occur (although less frequently)in the bigger catchments of the Huon and Derwent rivers. It is observable to anyone who has seen these rivers deteriorate so markedly as the fish farms have expanded.
3. Numbers of people have made similar observations of the deterioration of water quality around and adjacent to salmon farms all across the south of the state.
4. What I would like to see from this inquiry is a moratorium on any expansion of fish farming in this State until the following occurs:
  - 4.1 Site selection to include issues of tide, current, wave activity as well as convenience to farmer. This site selection to be undertaken by independent professionals and not by the

business owners.

- 4.2 Federal Environment department to place water quality inspectors on all sites
- 4.3 Renegotiation of leases to include net depth and stocking density limits based on a formula including tide, depth and current. Lease costs to be addressed after densities agreed.
- 4.4 An inquiry into the conduct of all senior public servants and Ministers involved in the oversight of the industry over the past twenty five years.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission

I am happy to discuss any or all of the above.

Chris Wells

