

GAA/FIN 141

Robin John Riley

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29 November 2019

Mr Stuart Wright
Inquiry Secretary
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Submission to Legislative Council Sessional Committee Government Administration A -Sub-Committee - Fin Fish Farming in Tasmania Inquiry

Dear Mr Wright

Fish farms have affected us for many years. Our first encounter was during the time we owned a property at Roaring Beach Road on the Esperance Coast Road from 1993 until we were driven out by the continual expansion of fish farms in 2009. The amount of pollution increased with each new pen until it was a constant job to remove plastic pipe, rope, netting, buoys and even headless seals from the beach. Early in our time there we were able to catch enough flathead for a meal, but that slowly reduced and it wasn't because of overfishing. Over time the rocks at the eastern end of the beach gathered more slime and the abalone which lived there disappeared.

We now have a property at Sloping Main and are worried about the amount of fish licences in Norfolk Bay. Many of these were issued many years ago as shellfish licences but have been changed to accommodate fin fish apparently without any research to determine whether the relatively shallow Fredrick Henry and Norfolk bays can survive the extra pollution load. Add to this the fact that there is only one entry and exit for water to these bays adds up to a recipe for disaster.

On a grander scale, we think the issue of fish farm approval and monitoring is being looked at from the wrong direction. At present the attitude seems to be 'push the system until it breaks'. Clearly the more obvious and practical direction is to scientifically determine what is allowable so that fin fish production can live in harmony with nature.

I endorse the following recommendations by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust 1. Complete independent water quality and environmental studies, before any environmental licences are issued (not an "adaptive management" approach)., 2. Environmental licences must set a hard cap on biomass and dissolved nitrogen and other pollutants emitted into our waterways from pens, hatcheries and other infrastructure., 3. Require all licences and licence amendments (marine and land based) to be referred to the EPA board so that the community can have a say., 4. Commission an independent review of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel, focusing on its membership, governance and ties to industry., 5. Improve transparency and enforcement by prosecuting fish escapes, fish kills, marine debris and seal and cetacean interactions., 6. Mandate public reporting for disease outbreaks and other bio-security incidents., 7. Amend the Marine Farming Planning Act to require valuation and protection of social, recreational and visual amenity; and consideration of noise impacts on surrounding residents.

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Thank you for reviewing my submission

Yours Sincerely

Robin John Riley