

GAA/FIN 165

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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

My name is Felicity and I live near both Huon Aquaculture and Tassal finfish operations. I am appalled at the governance (or the lack thereof) of salmon farming in Tasmania. I have many concerns that have never been suitably addressed ranging from environmental issues to legislative problems. As a member of the local community I feel that environmental monitoring is either astoundingly lacking or that the results have been kept confidential. My main concerns include effects of faeces and excess fish feed on the environment surrounding fish pens, changes to nutrient loads in nearby areas including seaweed overgrowth and the abundance of other organisms. I'd like to know how the sea floor looks below fish pens (previous pens and present pens) and whether plant and animal life is smothered, absent or dead beneath salmon nets. How independent are environmental monitoring studies? Are samples taken by fish farm employees or by unbiased collectors? Do the organisations who investigate the samples have any funding provided by fish farming bodies? Fish Farming operators are very happy to indicate that they operate within all legislations and guidelines. While we know that some infringements occur, it appears that repercussions are either inadequate or absent. The state government appears to do everything in its power to facilitate and support the salmon industry in its growth despite the concerns by scientists and the local community. Additional concerns I have include noise pollution by vessels in particular outside stipulated working hours. Environmental pollution continues despite ongoing efforts to reduce it. I am also concerned that the local councillors have no ideas about fish farm legislation which makes it hard to adequately report and get a response to issues raised locally. I have no faith in the EPA because I do not believe it operates independently of the state government. All in all I think the entire finfish farming industry is a farce and policies do not adequately protect the environment or the community from ongoing issues.

Regarding public hearings, I would like more information from the secretary about opportunities to present to the committee.

Thank you for reviewing my submission
Yours Sincerely
Felicity Holmes