

Treasurer
Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal
Leader of the House

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Mr Rob Fairs MP
Chair
House of Assembly Estimates Committee B
By email: fiona.murphy@parliament.tas.gov.au

APPROPRIATION BILLS 2026-27

Dear Mr Fairs

Please find attached the following responses to questions raised in the examination of the Environment portfolio.

Question 1:

What is the total budget allocation over the forward estimates, for monitoring and enforcement of air quality and dust regulation in Tasmania? What has been the total cost over the past 5 years? Are companies that emit dust required to pay for any of the monitoring that is involved?

Answer:

The Budget allocations and direct costs for air monitoring are funded out of the EPA's appropriation funding. The four-year total for air monitoring, enforcement and dust regulation over the forward Estimates is \$5.55 million. Prior costs from the first full year of an independent EPA in 2022-23 to 2025-26 were \$5.03 million.

The EPA has been provided with \$1.4 million over four years as is in the budget papers to refurbish and upgrade the existing Tasmanian air-quality monitoring network.

The EPA sets out monitoring requirements for facilities that the EPA regulates via instruments such as environmental protection notices. The company is required to pay for costs associated with undertaking the monitoring, maintaining the monitoring instruments and providing the EPA with the monitoring data.

Question 2:

What has been the total amount of annual fees, levies or cost-recovery charges paid by Tasmanian Advanced Minerals (TAM) to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and do those payments fully recover the cost of the EPA's compliance, inspection and air-quality monitoring activities associated with the TAM facility?

Answer:

The TAM Stennings Road facility paid annual fees for 2025-26 of \$24,803.68, and 2026-27 of \$25,334.24. Annual fees are returned to consolidated revenue and not retained by the EPA.

The EPA's compliance and enforcement activities are covered within its existing base operational budget. If a site requires the EPA to increase compliance activities or issues additional environmental protection notices the EPA can charge additional fees for those activities.

Question 3:

Does the Government intend to respond to the Climate Change Action Report, and if so, when? And if not, why not?

Answer:

The 2024-25 Independent review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008 (the Act) (the Review), completed by independent consultants Ricardo and Era Advisory, found that "the Act provides a strong foundation for climate action". The Review made seven recommendations, including options to strengthen governance of the Act, further embed climate adaptation and resilience alongside emissions reduction, and improve reporting.

This government's priority is to continue delivering strong climate change outcomes for Tasmania. The government is committed to embedding the independent review's findings and recommendations in the work program.

The government has already identified a range of opportunities and actions in response to the Review, including the following commitments made on 25 March 2026:

- Strengthening climate governance by reviewing and refreshing the Climate Change Reference Group, updating its Terms of Reference, and increasing transparency through more public reporting of meetings.

- Maintaining the existing four-year independent review cycle for the Act to ensure regular oversight and accountability.
- Enhancing consideration of climate adaptation and resilience through current policies and programs, and elevating adaptation priorities in the next five-year climate action plan and sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans.
- Improving sectoral emissions oversight by continuing to implement sector-based actions and reporting and considering updated technical and economic analysis to identify new emissions reduction opportunities.
- Embedding climate considerations in major government decisions by progressing the Government Climate Capability Framework, the government operations sector plan, and actions addressing the findings of the first statewide climate change risk assessment.
- Improving consultation processes and ensuring broader, more inclusive, ongoing participation across stakeholder groups.
- Improving climate communications and transparency through an updated communications and engagement strategy and developing a standalone website for climate information.

The government will continue working with the community and stakeholders in responding to the Review's findings and recommendations and implementing the requirements of the Act – including ongoing engagement with the Climate Change Reference Group.

The government is continuing to deliver ongoing and longer-term actions in the climate change action plan, along with those in the six sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans, and the government's response to the first statewide climate change risk assessment, which were released in late 2024. In line with the Act, the government will also continue reporting on its climate change actions, the state's greenhouse gas emissions, and progress on its legislated net zero target.

This government is committed to ongoing engagement with our stakeholders to ensure Tasmania's climate change response remains practical, evidence based and aligned with its legislated objectives.

Question 4:

Can you please explain the risk assessment released on 20 May 2026 relating to the salmon industry's use of florfenicol? How does it compare with research undertaken globally? How much florfenicol is used in aquaculture and other primary production globally (estimates are fine)? How does that compare with the amount used by the salmon industry over summer?

Answer:

The EPA completed and published its environmental risk assessment for florfenicol in marine salmonid farming in Southeast Tasmania, on 21 May 2026.

The EPA's environmental risk assessment includes the establishment of an interim default guideline value (DGV) for florfenicol for the protection of aquatic organisms.

The interim DGV has been determined by following the national approach to dealing with toxicants in the environment, as described in Australia's National Water Quality Management Strategy. The EPA had this work peer reviewed by a recognised expert in aquatic ecotoxicology.

The interim DGV applicable to slightly to moderately disturbed ecosystems, such as the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, is 50 mg/L. This value can be used to evaluate the risk of unacceptable environmental effects.

A total of 4,240 individual analytical results for sediment (1,680) and water (2,560) samples collected under the Therapeutant Monitoring Schedules have been included in the EPA's environmental risk assessment.

No analytical results for water samples exceeded any of the interim default guideline values established by the EPA, including the default guideline value established for pristine ecosystems (7 mg/L).

The findings of the environmental risk assessment highlight that the use of florfenicol in Tasmania's marine waters between November 2025 and March 2026 posed a low risk of causing unacceptable environmental harm.

The EPA is not aware of a more extensive monitoring dataset of florfenicol residues anywhere in the world, despite florfenicol being used extensively across agriculture and aquaculture globally.

The EPA can only provide amounts of antibiotics utilised in aquaculture.

Table 1: Total amount (tonnes) of Antibiotics used in Salmon Farming 2015 - 2025

Total amount of antibiotics used 2015 - 2025 (in Tonnes)					
Year	Chile ¹	Scotland ²	Norway ³	Canada ⁴	Tasmania
2015	557.20	0.70	0.27	NP	0.03
2016	382.50	1.60	0.20	16.74	0.80
2017	393.90	3.19	0.61	14.39	0.00
2018	322.70	1.16	0.93	13.94	0.00
2019	334.10	2.93	0.22	12.68	2.19
2020	379.60	5.76	0.22	7.66	1.44
2021	463.40	8.98	0.59	6.34	0.15
2022	341.50	3.15	0.43	10.39	1.58
2023	338.90	3.79	0.55	4.91	0.37
2024	351.10	1.65	0.71	19.18	0.18
2025	415.40	NP	NP	NP	3.948*
Total	4,280.30	32.91	4.71	106.12	6.74

1 - 87 - 97.8% comprised Florfenicol (2015-2025).

2 - 13 - 87% comprised Florfenicol (2015-2024)

3 - 43.5 - 99.5% comprised Florfenicol (2015-2024)

4 - 18 - 78% comprised of Florfenicol (20156-2024)

* - 61.4% comprised Florfenicol (2025)

NP - Not published as of 16 June 2026

Question 5:

Can the Minister table an updated version of the document provided to Estimates on 4 June 2026, with the new document to include an extra column detailing what the current level of funding is per project, and new rows populated by any new projects that have commenced subsequent to the 2023 publication of this document's data?

Answer:

The document provided to Estimates on 4 June 2026 is titled 'Summary of funding for existing climate change commitments across government in Tasmania's climate change action plan'.

It includes the detailed breakdown of expenditure on climate change mitigation and adaptation across the Tasmanian Government referred to in the question.

This list was compiled when the action plan was released in 2023. It does not reflect newly funded commitments in Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2023-25 or in the six sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans released in 2024.

I have requested that the Climate Change Office prepare a similar list, current as at May 2026, that includes updated information about the programs still underway from the 2023 list, along with any new climate change related commitments that have been initiated subsequent to this date. This will be provided as soon as possible.

Question 6:

Please detail fossil fuel boilers that have been replaced as part of the Government program and the emissions reductions that have been achieved.

Answer:

Government procurement continues to support the bioenergy sector by promoting the adoption of bioenergy in relevant infrastructure projects. This builds familiarity with bioenergy technology adoption processes in Tasmania and is an important practical step to reduce the government's greenhouse gas emissions.

Expert advice has been provided to government on the best renewable alternative for displacing fossil fuels across government-owned boilers. Based on this advice, ReCFIT identified priority sites.

For example, ReCFIT developed a detailed project plan for the Risdon Prison site to displace LNG boilers used to provide heat to the prison laundry with biomethane generated by an anaerobic digester powered from organic waste from the prison kitchen and yard.

ReCFIT will continue to work with agencies across government to consider boiler replacements and other bioenergy investment opportunities as they arise and in accordance with the budget priorities of each agency.

Question 7:

With regards to the investigation into unauthorised land reclamation in the Derwent River at Derwent Park, when did the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) become aware of the allegations, and when did it commence the investigation?

Answer:

The EPA became aware of this matter in December and engaged with Glenorchy City Council from thereon. Council formally referred the matter to the EPA on 21 May 2026 due to the complexity of the matter asking that the EPA take over the investigations. The EPA Director wrote back to the Glenorchy City Council on 27 May 2026 outlining that the EPA had commenced preliminary enquiries.

Question 8:

- A) Regarding the Tasmanian Advanced Minerals (TAM) silica processing facility emissions stack: what types of particulate emissions are emitted out of the TAM emissions stack into the environment, under the current Environment Protection Authority (EPA)- issued permit?**
- B) The Managing Director of TAM said they monitor any emissions that come out of the stack, so does silica dust come out of the emissions stack?**
- C) What are the minimum and maximum size of the particles that come out of the stack?**

Answer:

- A) Dust particles, predominantly of silica, are emitted. The process airstream from the TAM facility passes through a filtering process, known as a baghouse.

The type of baghouse installed at TAM typically removes more than 99% of dust prior to exhaust being emitted from the stack (commonly 99.5% to 99.9% particulate removal).

The in-stack compliance limit for TPM is 100 milligrams/cubic metre (mg/m³) in accordance with the Environment Protection Policy for Air Quality. However, a 10 mg/m³ limit is applied to the TAM facility because most particulate emissions can be expected to be silica. After air has been filtered through the baghouse it moves past a continuous emissions monitor (CEM) that measures the concentration of particulate matter before the exhaust exits the stack. If the CEM records an average concentration above 10 mg/m³ for 2 minutes, the facility automatically shuts down.

- B) Yes, noting that the baghouses typically remove 99% or more of dust prior the exhaust being emitted from the stack.

C) In 2008 the Particle Size Distribution of the particles exiting the TAM stack was measured. The smallest particles detected were 0.5 microns in diameter, while the largest particles were 355 microns in diameter. Thirty-one (31) percent of the particles, by volume, were 4 microns or smaller.

Question 9:

Does the Government have any plans to support the cost to vehicle dealers of electricity infrastructure to support electric vehicle fast charging, given BEV/PHEV sales are around half of new vehicle sales and costs to TasNetworks can be around \$1 million per dealership?

Answer:

In May 2026, around one quarter of Tasmanian new car sales were battery electric (BEV) or plug-in hybrid (PHEV). The share of sales increases to around half of all new sales when hybrid vehicles are included, which do not require external charging (Source: VFACTS supplied by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries).

The Australian Government has previously announced financial support for automotive dealers and EV repairer sites through its DRIVEN Charger Grant Stream. The objectives of the program are to:

- Deliver charging stations at automotive dealership and EV repairer premises
- Encourage installation of charging stations in regional areas of Australia
- Support automotive dealerships and EV repairers looking to host charging stations
- Facilitate partnerships between Australian automotive dealerships or EV repairers and EV charging businesses (eg Charge Point Operators).

Under the program, eligible expenditure for grant funding includes electricity network connections specific to the project site (including associated network upgrades).

Further details can be found at <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/driven-charger-grant-stream> .

Question 10:

Can the Government provide an indication of the total number of BEVs and PHEVs expected in the Government fleet at the end of the budget period?

Answer:

Recent advice received from Department of Treasury and Finance states that, as of May 2026, there were 41 battery electric vehicles and 38 plug-in hybrid vehicles in the government fleet. A further 18 battery electric vehicles and eight plug-in hybrid vehicles were on order.

Question 11:

Please provide the letter from the Environment Protection Authority to the Glenorchy City Council in response to its letter regarding the investigation into its potential unauthorised reclamation of the Derwent River in Derwent Park?

Answer:

Please find attached the letter requested.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Abetz', written in a cursive style.

Hon Eric Abetz MP
Treasurer

Environment Protection Authority

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28 May 2026

Emilio Reale
Chief Executive Officer
Glenorchy City Council
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GLENORCHY TAS 7010

Email: mandy.henderson@gcc.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Reale

REQUEST FOR EPA ASSISTANCE - [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter dated 21 May 2026 regarding activities at the [REDACTED].

I acknowledge Council's referral of this matter and appreciate the information provided to date, as well as the cooperation of your officers.

The EPA has commenced preliminary enquiries to better understand the circumstances associated with the land reclamation activities, including the use and management of fill material and any potential environmental impacts, particularly in relation to the River Derwent.

This initial work will involve a review of information already gathered by Council, engagement with relevant stakeholders where appropriate, and targeted enquiries to inform the EPA's assessment. The purpose of these enquiries is to determine whether any further regulatory response by the EPA is warranted.

EPA officers will liaise with your nominated contact, Ms Amanda Wieland, to obtain and consider relevant material, including the information outlined in your correspondence.

The EPA will keep Council informed as this work progresses.

Thank you again for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Murdoch
DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

cc: robbie.shafe@gcc.tas.gov.au