

Submission to Finfish Farming in Tasmania Inquiry

For the attention of the Legislative Council Committee

C/- Mr Stuart Wright

Inquiry Secretary

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I am a resident of Eggs and Bacon Bay, my wife and I have owned a property here for more than thirty five years, during that time we have seen the introduction and, more recently, the expansion of fish farming in the Huon River estuary. This has brought with it:

1. Vast numbers of unsightly fish pens
2. A significant reduction of native fish
3. Increased quantities of 'slime' on the rocks
4. Watercraft noise
5. Continuous hum of machinery
6. Bright lights at night, and
7. Large quantities of rope and plastic debris washed up on local beaches.

I will address in more detail each of the above dot points which relate to the Terms of Reference 2c and 3.

1. Unsightly fish pens

Before the introduction of fish farming the approach road to Randall's and Eggs and Bacon Bays, the drive down Randall's Bay Road, offered unrivalled panoramic views of the Huon River estuary for visitors and locals alike. Today as one takes in the vista from the Channel Highway one sees vast numbers of unsightly fish pens scattered and stretching for many kilometres into the distance past Garden and Huon Islands towards Bruny Island.

My phone camera pictures are not able to show any significant detail from a distance so the photo below was taken from Cray Point Parade, Eggs and Bacon Bay.



2. A significant reduction of native fish

A noticeable reduction in the numbers of flathead, rock cod, flounder and other species is being reported by local recreational fishers over the past ten to fifteen years, I believe this is largely due to increased seal activity around fish pens, faeces and other pollution from the fish farms leeching into the Huon River and neighbouring bays,.

3. Increased quantities of 'slime' on the rocks

My wife and I take regular walks around Eggs and Bacon Bay on the beach and on the surrounding rocks which have become noticeably more slippery over the past ten to fifteen years, at times they become extremely hazardous to negotiate on foot.



4. Watercraft Noise

The peace and tranquillity of this area (which was one of our main reasons for moving here) is regularly disturbed by noise made by watercraft both large and small which frequently attend to a range of activities including feeding, harvesting, maintenance and towing pens up and down the river.

5. Continuous hum of machinery

In addition to the noise made by watercraft, the hum from machinery emanating from the direction of Police Point can be heard around the clock 24/7 which can be quite irritating. The noise pollution is more of a concern to residents living close to the river.

With regard to my points 4 and 5 I note that Section 4.1.2.2 Motor Vehicles and Motor Vessels – Sport and Recreational Use of the Draft Environmental and Pollution Control (Noise) Regulations 2016 state: *“Commercial operations that use motor vessels such as tourist operations and fish farmers are not covered by these regulations”* (Tasmanian Government, 2016, p. 15).

Why are fish farmers not covered by these regulations given that they operate in rural residential areas where they have a significant and ongoing impact on residents?

6. Bright lights at night

I am aware that Huon Aquaculture recently, although unsuccessfully, attempted to reduce the visual impact of their work lights at Police Point; however, the glare of these lights can still be seen across the river throughout the night and is most annoying especially to residents who live by the river. Yet another reminder of what has become an industrial zone from what was once an idyllic and pristine place of beauty that encouraged residents to live here.

7. Large quantities of rope and plastic debris washed up on local beaches.

I am not a scientist so will not provide commentary on the pollution caused by fish faeces, fish food waste and oxygen levels etc; however, I will draw your attention to the vast amounts of discarded rope and plastic debris which I personally find washed up on the various beaches around Eggs and Bacon Bay, Randall’s Bay, Mickey’s Beach and other inlets in this area. I have been collecting debris over the past year or so and have filled a wheelie bin (photos attached). Some lengths of rope if caught on a boat’s propeller could easily disable a motor vessel rendering it un-steerable with potentially disastrous consequence. Other items of rope and plastic can be easily consumed by marine and birdlife, therefore reducing their capacity to process actual food.

The photos below show quantities of debris collected during the past twelve months. Note the three small plastic pellets (top of first photo) which I believe to be remnants of slugs/bullets used to deter seals.



In summary

I congratulate the Tasmanian Government for conducting this inquiry, however, it is particularly relevant and necessary given that “the Tasmanian Government is the custodian of the public natural resources that the industry uses and is responsible for ensuring strong environmental performance” *Source: Executive summary; A sustainable industry growth plan for the salmon industry.*

Further, I strongly believe that the Tasmanian Government can and should do more to ensure that the salmon industry operates in an environmentally responsible manner and that environmental outcomes are monitored much more effectively. Furthermore, I also believe that there should be a moratorium on any further expansion of salmon farming in Tasmania until all environmental concerns are addressed and resolved satisfactorily. Until these and other concerns are addressed the Tasmanian Government’s top priority actions “Maintaining public confidence in the salmon industry”, *Source: A sustainable industry growth plan for the salmon industry P. 5.* These goals will not be attained.

I sincerely hope that this inquiry will address and achieve these concerns and result in satisfactory outcomes such as no pollution, no noise or visual impact on residents and visitors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to this inquiry.

John Redgrove.

[Redacted signature block]

30th October 2019.