

Submission to Legislative Council Committee Inquiry into Finfish Farming in Tasmania

27 November 2019

As an employee of the Tasmanian aquaculture industry with an interest in the Legislative Council Committee Inquiry currently being conducted into finfish farming in Tasmania, I would like to make the following submission in relation to points contained in the Terms of Reference.

To preface, throughout school I was a passionate recreational fisherman and had ambitions to study a university degree, but I was unsure at the time which career pathway best suited my interests and aptitudes. I chose to study a Bachelor of Aquaculture at the University of Tasmania – a qualification which has opened many doors for me within the growing Tasmanian industry. Despite also gaining a Graduate Diploma in Education from the University of New England and a subsequent period working as a teacher, I was drawn back to the Tasmanian aquaculture industry and I have been fortunate enough to work for two of its largest aquaculture companies over the last 15 years.

My current position is Planning and Development Manager at Petuna in Launceston, though this submission contains only my personal views and opinions and is not endorsed or authorised by my employer.

My role covers the short and medium-term operational planning of biological assets, ensuring we get best performance and utilisation of these; this extends to diet selection and other key technical elements. Within the planning context also lies a component of reporting on *performance vs plan* to update the business on how biological assets are tracking, any opportunity for improvement, or any requirement to adapt future planning to accommodate unexpected performance outcomes. In addition, the role also extends to planning biological and operational details for future expansion of the business.

This is highly relevant to the Inquiry and sustainable growth of the industry itself, and I think it is important to note that as employees and stakeholders who rely on, and enjoy working in, the aquaculture industry, we are doing everything possible to ensure proper regulation and that growth of the industry is developed in a really responsible and sustainable way.

Whilst the Tasmanian industry is the only aquaculture industry I have worked in, I have toured through sectors of the Norwegian and Scottish industries, and the snapshot I saw showed a similar drive for technological improvements in production techniques. Our industry is still quite new, though the global-need for aquaculture – to feed growing populations – means the industry must continue to adapt and improve, not only production techniques, but responsible practices that ensure long-term sustainability, whilst minimising environmental impact.

Within the biological context, our biggest opportunity to minimise environmental harm is through feed management. This includes both the delivery of feed to fish populations and the selection of diet types. Intensive focus on feeding to fish appetite, with no wastage, minimises any impact on the seabed. This focus of minimised wastage also drives cost efficiency, so it is important to our team for both environmental and economical reasons. Diet selection also provides opportunity to minimise environmental harm. We currently select

diets with high-grade raw materials that have high digestibility, meaning less waste is produced by the salmon.

Within the operational context, we conduct regular shoreline clean-ups for any debris that has been dislodged in rough weather, we follow strict protocols around bunding and spill prevention for fuels and oils for vessels, and we have stringent regulatory standards around wildlife interaction that are high priority for us and serve to minimise risk to native species in the surrounding environment.

To conclude, I would like to thank you for allowing employees of the industry to provide input to the Inquiry into finfish farming in Tasmania. Hopefully some of the insights provided will help the Committee to gain an understanding of the ways in which the industry is supporting sustainable growth from management to frontline employees.

Regards,

Johnny De Deuge