

Friday February 21  
Finfish Farming Inquiry  
Legislative Council Government Administration Committee "A"  
C/O Mr. Stuart Wright Inquiry Secretary  
Parliament House  
HOBART 7000

Via email:

Dear Committee members:

**Addendum to original submission - Tassal must address breach of agreement with Killora residents**

I am writing this as an addendum to my submission to the Inquiry. I am a landholder at 459 Killora Road, North Bruny Island and also Vice President of the Friends of North Bruny, a local community organisation.

I made a formal submission to the Legislative Council FinFish Inquiry regarding the effect of expanded industrial finfish farming at Tassal's Shepherd's site, and more generally, the impact a dramatic increase in finfish farming is having on our ability to enjoy the amenity once offered by our place at Killora. Local Killora landholders have been in active consultation with Tassal and previous leaseholders Nortas for nearly 20 years around these issues and shown good faith in engaging with Tassal.

Overall, our view is expansion is having a deleterious effect that we believe must be curtailed with a legislated framework involving a set of specifications for operation of the industry and incentives to drive behaviour. This view has been reinforced by an "incident" on the weekend of February 15 and 16 that must be addressed urgently. I want to include this information in the submission to the Inquiry.

**Tassal have promised to limit noise and light pollution**

As I detailed in the earlier submission, Tassal have for over a decade promised to limit and reduce impact on Killora residents and they consistently break that promise. It leads us to believe they are an operator whose word is worth nothing.

Tassal have previously made commitments to limit impact of operations on Killora residents in recognition of particular amenity of the coast. Killora lies at the North end of Bruny Island approximately 4.5 km South of Dennes point. This was in recognition of the fact that Killora experiences "deep quiet" as established by acoustic specialists hired by the community and also Tassal's own acoustic specialist.

Gerard Castles

The “contract” we had with Tassal was well documented in my original submission. Tassal had agreed to limit noise and light pollution from their lease and inform residents of any major lease activity involving harvesting or major activity.

As a result, the Killora community believed they had what amounts to a “contract” with Tassal and reached a point with Tassal where noise from the site was tolerable.

### **Tassal breaches commitments – most recently on Feb 15 and 16 2020**

However, ongoing issues with Tassal and foreshadowed industry growth with operation of factory ship Aqua Spa and its attendant vessels as well as increased marine finfish industry traffic in the channel cause concerns that must be addressed.

Tassal consistently evades its responsibility to run the facility in a responsible fashion that keeps noise and light pollution under the levels Tassal itself has referred to in its good neighbor policy. In so doing they are destroying the values for which the area is prized. If we cannot take Tassal at its word over noise and light pollution it also raises questions about the pollution of the waterway. We have in the past had information that the site has at times been overstocked. At the time Tassal began operating the site it was never foreshadowed that it was to become a 24/7 fish factory. If that had been foreshadowed Tassal would never have been able to develop the site. Tassal has to accept and operate within the values of the Channel and the broader community – not impose their factory operating schedule on local residents.

Breaches are still occurring. Multiple well documented noise complaints from Killora residents concerning lease machinery, attendant vessels have been made over the years. The system relies too much on residents complaining before action happens rather than Tassal ensuring that ALL machinery is silenced before it comes near the site.

***The operation of the Aqua Spa factory ship provides a case in point. On the recent weekend (February 15 and 16) Tassal carried out 24-hour operations to treat fish disease and transfer fish using the Aqua Spa.*** The noise and light was so bad at night we complained to Tassal and were told in writing to basically accept the noise and light and they were within EPA limits. This is after over 20 years of consulting with Tassal and their own stated good neighbor policy.

We are of the belief it is highly unlikely that Tassal’s operations are within EPA limits and outside the limits agreed with us and in breach of their own good neighbor policy. It represents a major industrialization of the Channel. It comes after we met with senior managers from Tassal in 2019 to raise our concerns about the Aqua Spa and request that the Aqua Spa be effectively noise dampened BEFORE it began operation. This is patently not so. It represents a breach of trust.

It appears that far from seeking to reduce noise, Tassal now is happy to run for extended periods of time their Shepherds Lease as a non-stop source of excessive noise and light pollution in direct contravention of written promises made to us by Tassal. This is despite Tassal knowing that Killora is deathly quiet of an evening and even a small amount of noise has the effect of being very noisy when the background noise level is as low as 18db (by Tassal’s measurements). We have asked (repeatedly) that Tassal treat this with the utmost seriousness.

## Strong regulated action required

This most recent breach again raises significant questions for Tassal, the Regulator, the Government and the community. It reinforces the need for strong regulated control and action to protect the rights of the community to enjoy the amenity of their local environment in the face of continued expansion and industrialization of finfish production at the Shepherds lease, in the D'Entrecasteaux and around Tasmania. We have a series of questions we believe the Inquiry members could and should direct to Tassal:

- In the past residents were advised of any activity out of the normal. Why has this stopped?
- Will the practice of Aqua Spa working overnight at Shepherds continue?
- Why after so many years of complaints of noise pollution was such a major piece of equipment as Aqua Spa allowed into service without adequate noise proofing?
- On what grounds can Tassal justify light pollution of the Channel so extreme it disturbs the sleep of residents' on the opposite side of the Channel?
- On what grounds does Tassal think the lighting of the farm all night as if it were a major industrial facility enhances an area known for its serenity and natural qualities, including its night light?
- Does Tassal and the Government understand the public relations catastrophe that will ensue if it persists with these practices which, it was warned, are unacceptable, and the further reputational risk that will involve?

If the State Government is of the opinion that the Finfish industry must be supported it must accept that the standards fall far short of what would be acceptable. For those members of the committee that support the finfish industry they must demand greater regulation and accountability stringently policed of noise and light pollution by existing facilities.

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I am happy to discuss this issue in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Gerard Castles



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