

GAA/FIN 197

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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

Since I moved to this area, I have visited Wedge Bay almost every day. I am aware that there are always fluctuations in natural cycles, but I have witnessed an ongoing increase in the growth and strength of seasonal algal blooms, including wash-ups of filamentous algae on White Beach. When kayaking in the bay I have also been disturbed to see considerable die-off on the sea bed, with huge areas now being grey and dead - or covered in slime. Without clear baseline studies there is no way to directly attribute this to the introduction and ongoing expansion of heavily stocked fish pens at the entrance to the bay, however it would appear that a causal link is highly likely.

Aside from my concern about the impact of increased nutrient load on the surrounding ecosystem, I am also distressed to find, on a daily basis, plastic debris from the intensive caged fish industry washed up on the beach. This I collect and photograph before sending it to landfill. The larger pieces of heavy black plastic are dangerous for marine sports and the plastic rope offcuts are visible in bundles and also broken down to tiny filaments that are spread throughout the beach and would clearly be damaging to any creature ingesting them.

I also find myself impacted by the public relation campaigns run by this industry; our small community could do so much better than being 'bought' by an environmentally damaging industry. I find it appalling that the government school accepts funding from TASSAL - this puts students and teachers in an uncomfortable position when raising concerns about the negative impacts of the industry and is very divisive for the community.

I endorse the following recommendations by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust 1. Complete independent water quality and environmental studies, before any environmental licences are issued (not an "adaptive management" approach)., 2. Environmental licences must set a hard cap on biomass and dissolved nitrogen and other pollutants emitted into our waterways from pens, hatcheries and other infrastructure., 6. Mandate public reporting for disease outbreaks and other bio-security incidents., 7. Amend the Marine Farming Planning Act to require valuation and protection of social, recreational and visual amenity; and consideration of noise impacts on surrounding residents.

Thank you for reviewing my submission
Yours Sincerely
Wendy Armstrong