

GAA/FIN 204

Dave Nelson

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29 November 2019

Mr Stuart Wright
Inquiry Secretary
Parliament House, HOBART 7000
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Submission to Legislative Council Sessional Committee Government Administration A -Sub-Committee - Fin Fish Farming in Tasmania Inquiry

Dear Mr Wright

This is not a 'story', it is my experience, my understanding and my opinion.

When I moved from the city to Nubeena six years ago the thing that I enjoyed the most was the quietness. At night it was silent. At that time there was five pens at the Tassal salmon farm, tucked neatly into the side of Parsons Bay. Since that time the farm has expanded dramatically. With more than \three times the number of pens the farm now sprawls across the bay and well beyond. The beautiful vistas across to Bruny Island and beyond are now obscured by many, many pens with quite a few boats.

My main point is the loss of amenity especially in regard to noise. There has been a dramatic increase in industrial noise. A persistent, intrusive, pulsating very low frequency hum emanates from the farm for a large proportion of the time. Often during the day but also at night. Sometimes more obviously than at other times. It is clearly coming from the direction of the fish farm. Other people I know are also affected and although they are in different areas they assure me that the noise is coming from the direction of the farm. Sometimes I wake in the early morning and the noise is very obvious. When I come inside my house during the day away from the ambient sounds I can hear it clearly. I suspect it is from the vessels they use although some have suggested it may be generators or compressors. I know many people who complain that they are affected by the noise. It is maddening. It cannot be good for any biology.

Furthermore we experience light pollution. At night there are many lights and sometimes enormous bright lights are used as well as flashing lights from time to time.

It seems that the fish farm industry feel it is OK to do as they please. To use our land (sea) for their own profits.

Beyond the impact of my own amenity, health and well-being it is apparent that the fish farms are not sustainable. The amount of fresh water that is required is enormous and we are already feeling the impact of water shortages which will, no doubt, get worse in the coming years. Desalination is hardly a good answer as the amount of energy required is huge. They clearly use enormous amounts of fuel, onsite but also to transport the product. I believe they do not have enough electrical power so they have chosen to use diesel generators to provide power.

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The amount of nutrient that is released into the bay is huge and is clearly having an impact on the health of the bay. We have seen that intensive fishing in this way has affected Macquarie Harbour severely.

Tassal do not make any real contributions to the community. There is a suggestion that the sponsorship of the local school is a good thing but this is a very questionable practice in my mind. They are attempting to purchase social license. There are no other benefits provided to the community as far as I know. There may be a few jobs provided by this enterprise but the community on the whole is against the farm. These jobs are only partly accounted for by local people. Many of their workers travel here from much further away. With increased automation it is likely that the number jobs will decrease.

Fish grown in this way is unnatural and they are susceptible to disease so the fish farms are forced to combat this with antibiotics and other treatments which has an impact of the environment. They also need to bath the fish in fresh water further increasing the usage of water and energy.

Altogether the industry is not sustainable, not healthy, not world's best practice and should not be allowed to expand. Furthermore they must improve there practice to be more sustainable, less polluting and more sensitive to the needs of the community.

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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., 3. Require all licences and licence amendments (marine and land based) to be referred to the EPA board so that the community can have a say., 4. Commission an independent review of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel, focusing on its membership, governance and ties to industry., 5. Improve transparency and enforcement by prosecuting fish escapes, fish kills, marine debris and seal and cetacean interactions., 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

Dave Nelson