



# MEDIA RELEASE

19 May 2023

## THE TIME HAS COME TO DESTOCK SALMON LEASES IN MACQUARIE HARBOUR

The recently released IMAS report on the Maugean skate confirms that this endangered species is now on the brink of extinction with the population reduced by nearly half over a period of seven years.

This extinction trajectory is being driven by a drop in oxygen levels that commenced with the expansion of salmonid farming in the Harbour. Oxygen levels have not recovered, even following a reduction in the allowable farmed salmon biomass.

Leading water quality expert Christine Coughanowr said, “The [Tasmanian Independent Science Council](#) (TISC) calls on the State and Federal Governments to act immediately to prevent the extinction of this unique species on our watch. They must implement the following actions:”

- Destock and fallow all salmon and ocean trout leases in Macquarie Harbour. This will remove an estimated 2000 tonnes/year of faeces and uneaten feed that are a primary cause of reduced oxygen levels at the bottom of the harbour.
- Ban recreational gill netting in the Harbour. Gill-netting for flounder and escaped salmon has resulted in the accidental death of these increasingly rare skates.
- Work with Hydro Tasmania to manage Gordon River flows to maximise dissolved oxygen recovery and reduce the risk of catastrophic low oxygen events.

Coughanowr said, “The current Environmental Licenses are due to expire on 30 November of this year. Given the high likelihood of extinction of the skate, we urge the Director of Tasmania’s independent EPA not to renew these licenses until and unless oxygen levels have recovered and the Maugean Skate population has shown clear evidence of recovery.”

### EVENT

Christine Coughanowr is available for an interview on behalf of the TISC

Noon Friday 19 Parliament House Gardens

**Contact: Christine Coughanowr E: [cacoughanowr@gmail.com](mailto:cacoughanowr@gmail.com), M: 0408 596 736**



### Christine Coughanowr TISC Spokesperson

Christine Coughanowr is an independent scientist with over 35 years’ experience in water quality management. She established the award-winning Derwent Estuary Program partnership in 1995, from which she retired from the DEP in 2018 to pursue other interests. These include consulting and provision of science advice to conservation and community groups. She has also worked internationally as a water-resources consultant and is a Churchill Fellow.