

The Honourable Roger Jaensch MP
Minister for Environment and Climate Change
Parliament House
Hobart TAS 7000



**Tasmanian Independent
Science Council**

info@tassciencecouncil.org

11th July 2023

Re. Expiration of Salmon Lease at Long Bay

Dear Minister Jaensch,

For the past five years, Long Bay - near Port Arthur - has been chronically polluted by salmon farming wastes, resulting in unacceptable environmental degradation in areas well beyond the lease boundaries.

The shallow, poorly flushed ecosystem of Long Bay is simply not suited to open pen salmon farming which both physically reduces circulation while releasing vast amounts of nutrients. The result has been water pollution, persistent nuisance algal blooms and damage to fringing reef and seagrass communities. The EPA's 2023 report on sensors deployed near the lease also demonstrates periods of alarmingly low oxygen levels and elevated phytoplankton that appear to be related to farming operations at the lease. Other problems include fish escapes, recent disease and mortality events, use of limited freshwater supplies, and discharges of desalination and well boat wastewater.

The Tasmanian Independent Science Council (TISC) has undertaken a detailed scientific review of the various monitoring programs and investigations carried out in Long Bay by Tassal's consultants (Aquenal), the EPA and IMAS over the past 5 years, as summarised in the attached report. Despite several design flaws, these monitoring programs and studies collectively demonstrate that the aquaculture operations are clearly resulting in *'significant visual, physico-chemical or biological impacts at or extending beyond 35 metres from the boundary of the Lease'* in contravention of Condition G 1.1.1 of the Environmental License (9959/2 (r1)). These impacts include elevated nutrients and chlorophyll a, periods of low oxygen, extensive blooms of nuisance macroalgae, and degradation of reef and seagrass habitats.

Furthermore, a detailed nutrient loading analysis (attached) clearly identifies salmon wastes as by far the largest source of bioavailable nitrogen – comprising well over 90% of the nitrogen loading to Long Bay. This is the equivalent of the sewage discharged by at least 25,000 people.

Concerns about environmental degradation and loss of amenity have been raised repeatedly by the community and in the media since the lease was occupied in 2017/18. In October 2022, a petition signed by nearly 1300 people was tabled in Parliament asking that salmon farming operations be removed from Long Bay. The Government's response to this petition acknowledges the sensitivity of low exposure sites with reduced flushing – such as Long Bay – to nutrient enrichment and indicates that a management response will be forthcoming.

In summary, the shallow, poorly flushed waters of Long Bay are not a suitable location for open pen salmon farming and the operations over the past 5 years have resulted in environmental harm.

The TISC strongly recommends that the current Environmental License (due to expire on 30 November 2023) and the associated Marine Farming License (expiring on the same date) for the Long Bay lease not be renewed. We also recommend that the Tasman Marine Farm Development Plan be modified to exclude finfish aquaculture as a permissible use at this lease.

We look forward to your response and would be pleased to meet with you to provide further information, if that would be useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Kirkpatrick', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jamie Kirkpatrick AM

on behalf of the Tasmanian Independent Science Council