From:	John Hepper
To:	Tasmanian Salmon Study Secretariat
Subject:	Salmon Review Draft Study Plan - Feedback Comments
Date:	Wednesday, 1 July 2026 11:19:15 AM
Attachments:	Hepper Submission to the Salmon Review Draft Study Plan.pdf.docx

Please find attached our feedback comments on the draft Study Plan and draft Engagement Plan.

Regards

John and Kim Hepper

Submission to the Salmon Review Draft Study Plan July 2026

We are supportive of the State Government's commitment to undertake the Salmon Study Plan and the engagement of Dr Wendy Craik and Dr Russell Reichelt to be the joint Study Leads.

We have reviewed the draft Study Plan and draft Engagement Plan and have concern that the process is skewered towards achieving a favourable outcome for the Tasmanian salmon industry without providing balanced engagement with all interested parties within the Tasmanian community.

Our views and concerns are listed below.

1. The process does not seek to address the fundamental differences that exist between the desired vision for Tasmania's waterways given the primary interests of the industry (e.g. profit return on investment), State Government (e.g. jobs and donations) and the Tasmanian communities (e.g. achieving sustainable management practices, protection of environmental and social values).

2. The process and engagement places greater emphasis on the outcomes for the industry whilst placing the wider community at arm's length. There appears to be an unwillingness to have face to face discussions and listen to the wide-ranging views and concerns. This is important if the Study is to be truly honest in adopting the Guiding Pronciples of independence, transparency, evidence-based, inclusive and safety with the views expressed. For example, there appears to be no face to face discussions with:

    - the recreational fishers who have witnessed loss in species and biodiversity;
    - commercial fishers who have had sanctions affecting their supply and brand;
    - sailors who have lost safe anchorages and face navigational issues;
    - nearby residents who suffer from noise and other effects related to industrialisation of the waterways;
    - local communities who find ongoing marine debris and fish wastes degrading the foreshores;
    - local people who have suffered health and trauma related to the industry operations;
    - divers, surfers and swimmers who have seen the water quality decline over time and hold fear about the future quality of the waterways;
    - the younger generation who will inherit the consequences and burden of unsustainable use and management of our natural resources; and
    - recreation and tourism operators who recognise the degradation of natural values risks the potency of Tasmania's brand values.

3. The process allows months (Nov 2026- March 2027) for intensive evidence collection including ongoing site inspections and discussions with the salmon industry. However, the process does not acknowledge or specify time to arrange site visits and discussions with others within the wider community. The listed

modes of engagement are not fair or balanced if you choose to favour the industry and not arrange on-site visits, discussions and allow listening to those who have knowledge, evidence and experience of the impacts concerning what has already taken place over time.

4. The allowance of only one month (April 2027) for public review and comment of the Phase 1 Findings is too limited, given the significance of the project to the Tasmanian community. Sufficient time must be allowed to all interested parties to critically assess the outcomes. The occurrence of Easter effectively reduces available time. At least 6-8 weeks for public review and comment would be more consistent with many other major projects during planning approval stages.

5. The process does not embrace consideration of all possible options for the future of salmon farming in Tasmania and seems constrained to growth rather than reduction, continue as is rather than options for relocation or transition over time, given the potential impacts of climate change and unsustainable industry operations.

6. Public health is paramount (Topic #3) to understanding the overall potential benefits and costs of the Tasmanian salmon industry. The process of investigation should include the potential for adverse public health risks in waterways including downstream of the salmon farm hatcheries where local communities are sourcing water for consumption and irrigation purposes.

7. The draft Engagement Plan mentions differing names for involvement of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community e.g. Tasmanian Aboriginal groups, First Nations and Indigenous Peoples. It is important to alter this terminology to better understand the situation in Tasmania by clearly identifying who this represents and how you intend to engage with these people. Engagement with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community has often failed and consideration should be given to involving community members that have the respect and capacity to facilitate the engagement process.

8. The cumulative impacts – social, environmental and economic - must be considered otherwise the process may be judged as just being an incremental assessment without really having the scope to provide strategic guidance for the future.

9. Striving for improved integrity and communication must underpin the process – the State Government, EPA and Tasmanian salmon industry have demonstrated an appalling lack of honesty and accountability for the operations and management of impacts, recently demonstrated through use of excessive use of antibiotics last summer (e.g. 5.4 tonnes of florfencicol, 9000 tonnes of framed fish deaths).

10. The process must allow for release of information papers and preliminary findings before the conclusions are determined. Effective engagement requires a more open and honest approach during many steps of the process.

We have lived in Tasmania for 70 years and have observed the changes that have been occurring to the inherent natural and cultural values of Tasmania.

John was an environmental planner involved in extensive range of projects across Australia that all involved community engagement. The projects included many of the treasured natural places found within Tasmania.

John and Kim Hepper

