

LOWCoAU (Leave Our Waters Collective Australia) is an independent Tasmanian grassroots collective driven by a deep love for our oceans, rivers, coastlines and communities. Through volunteer-led filmmaking, storytelling and collaboration, LOWCoAU shines a light on the environmental, cultural and social impacts of industrial open-net salmon farming, giving voice to the people and places too often unheard. Bringing together filmmakers, artists, scientists, writers, chefs, musicians, First Nations supporters, environmental advocates and community members,

LOWCoAU creates powerful documentaries and short films that inform, connect and inspire action. Free from corporate influence and sustained largely by donations, volunteer effort and community support, LOWCoAU is committed to protecting Tasmania’s marine environment through truth-telling, education and independent storytelling.

LOWCoAU feels compelled to submit this proposed framework to build on the work currently being undertaken by your Study. The expectations of affected communities and the broader voter base were for a comprehensive investigation of the Tasmanian scale-fish aquaculture industry. The failure of successive governments to manage relationships with Tasmania's internationally owned fin-fish aquaculture industry is contributing significantly to the loss of trust in government within the community.

To protect our health and the state's sustainable future, we need an Inquiry, with the support of Parliament and with the power to enforce reforms, building on the Study's research and stakeholder input.

Through working extensively and at the invitation of concerned communities, around Lutruwita, to Truwana and Pulingina and internationally in the Mediterranean and with the Global Salmon Farming Resistance, LOWCoAU has gained an understanding of the critical level of distrust and apprehension experienced by communities and individuals impacted by the unregulated expansion of open pen atlantic salmon farming by overseas corporations in local waters.

Tasmania's salmon farming industry has been the subject of growing public debate and concern in recent years. For good reason; human health and environmental impacts, poor regulatory oversight, serious animal welfare and mortality issues, regional economic vulnerability and impacts on Indigenous and broader local communities have sparked interest in a formal, independent inquiry with legislated powers.

A Commission of Inquiry has the powers to ensure compliance by industry, government, research bodies, communities, and individuals to report on the serious issues of human health and animal welfare, environmental sustainability, the industry's immediate and long-term economic viability and the sustainability of Tasmania's clean and green burgeoning economic base.

A Commission of Inquiry would provide a transparent and evidence-based way to examine these issues, helping Tasmania make decisions that protect the environment, support communities, and secure long-term sustainability. The Commissioner is answerable to the Governor-in Council, Parliament and the people. She/he has the powers defined in legislation to provide Tasmania with clarity, accountability, and equitable solutions to deliver stronger protection, for the environment and wildlife, safer food and healthier communities, transparent and trusted decision-making and sustainable pathways for industry, communities, and ecosystems.

It would have the full powers conferred by the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995 (Tas)*, including the powers to:

- call for persons and papers;
- summon witnesses;
- compel the production of documents;
- take evidence under oath
- refer people and entities for action if necessary.

The Commission could build on the work currently being undertaken by the Study. It would identify and recommend to Parliament, policy and legislative reforms that would strengthen public health awareness, as well as environmental protection, transparency, economic returns and viability and accountability.

Appendix 1

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TO HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

Commission Of Inquiry into The Tasmanian Salmon Aquaculture Industry

MOTION

We, the Members of the House of Assembly, request that the Governor-in-Council establish, under the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995 (Tas)*, a Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry, with the following Terms of Reference:

1. Terms of Reference

The Commission shall inquire into and report on the environmental, economic, human health, employment, animal welfare, social sustainability, governance performance, and long-term viability of the Tasmanian Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry, including:

1.1 Environmental Impacts

(a) environmental impacts on marine ecosystems, water quality, benthic environments, biodiversity and threatened species, including nutrient loading, sedimentation, algal blooms and cumulative ecosystem effects;
(b) disease transmission, bio security performance and risks associated with open-pen farming systems;
(c) impacts on wild fish populations and marine food webs, including effects on the quality, safety, availability and long-term sustainability of fish taken for recreational fishing and consumption;
(d) opportunities for sustainable aquaculture, regenerative marine industries, and improved stewardship of marine resources;

1.2 Human Health and Animal Welfare

(e) human health risks associated with farmed salmon and wild fish in adjacent areas, including antibiotic use and overuse, potential exposure pathways to humans, consumption safety, and the adequacy of public notification and risk communication systems for recreational fishers and local communities;
(f) animal welfare concerns affecting both farmed and wild animals, including clear mechanisms for independent oversight, monitoring, reporting and accountability to the Tasmanian public;

1.3 Regulatory Oversight and Governance

(g) the adequacy, transparency and independence of regulatory oversight, including the performance of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), the Department of Natural Resources (NRE), and relevant Commonwealth regulatory bodies;
(h) regulatory clarity, accountability and environmental responsibility in licensing and lease-related decisions, and the capacity of the State to discharge these responsibilities;
(i) compliance monitoring, enforcement, data transparency, timeliness of public reporting, and the

accessibility of this information to the community;
(j) industry transparency obligations, public reporting requirements and opportunities to strengthen accountability;
(k) the influence of industry lobbying, political donations and other external pressures on the development of Tasmanian government policy and regulatory decision-making processes;
(l) licence termination obligations, liability, sovereign risk considerations and site rehabilitation requirements;
(m) legislative and policy reforms required to strengthen environmental protection, regulatory independence, transparency and public trust, including an "Extinction Trigger" mechanism;

1.4 Economic and Social Impacts

(n) economic contribution of the industry compared with its public cost, including environmental remediation, infrastructure impacts and public health implications;
(o) impacts on Tasmanian industries and regional economies, including tourism, hospitality, commercial and recreational wild fisheries, and the livelihoods and resilience of coastal communities dependent on these industries;
(p) how any degradation of Tasmania's clean, green platform reduces the value, competitiveness or market position of surrounding local industries;
(q) ownership structures, industry accountability, distribution of benefits, and the role of the Foreign Investment Review Board in approving offshore control of natural resources;
(r) impacts on the amenity, public health, cultural rights and social wellbeing of Traditional Owners and local residents, including effects on access to waterways, recreational use, cultural heritage and quality of life;
(s) opportunities for enhanced community involvement in policy development and environmental performance assessment;
(t) constructive, solutions-focused and future-oriented transition pathways, including feasible timelines for transitioning away from open-net pen systems;
(u) support for affected workers, dependent communities and local businesses.

1.5 Employment

The Inquiry to commission independent research into the direct employment profile of regional industry employment and related subcontractors against the regional employment impacts on the fishery, hospitality, tourism, and high-end ventures built on the state's marketing image.

2. Composition of the Commission

The Commission shall consist of one Commissioner, who may appoint experts and staff as required. The Commissioner shall appoint a Specialist Reference Group of not fewer than three (3) and not more than seven (7) members, possessing expertise relevant to the matters under inquiry, including marine science, ecology, environmental regulation, public health, economics, bio-security, animal welfare and sustainable aquaculture.
The Reference Group shall include community representation.

3. Powers of the Commission

The Commission shall have the full powers conferred by the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995 (Tas)*, including the powers to:

- call for persons and papers;
- summon witnesses;

- compel the production of documents;
- take evidence under oath
- refer people and entities for action if necessary.

All hearings and evidence are to be public and accessible, except where confidential submissions are necessary in the public interest.

4. Reporting Requirements

(a) The Commission shall provide an Interim Report within nine (9) months of commencement;
(b) The Interim Report shall be released to community, government and industry representatives and be subject to three (3) months of public consultation;
(c) The Final Report, including Recommendations for Action, shall be presented to Her Excellency the Governor within fifteen (15) months of commencement.
(ci)

5. Moratorium

For the duration of the Inquiry, there will be no new aquaculture infrastructure construction or additions, no licence or lease expansions, and no increases to stocking levels.

Appendix 2

Link to LOWCoAU films made for community groups

https://www.youtube.com/@lowcoau
https://linktr.ee/lowcoau

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