From:	Renee Melkert
To:	Tasmanian Salmon Study Secretariat
Subject:	Submission by Renée Melkert
Date:	Sunday, 5 July 2026 7:52:51 PM
Attachments:	Image.png Image.png Document.pdf

Dear Dr Crain and Dr Reichelt,

Hereby I send you my Submission for the salmon study you are leading. I would like to thank you for your efforts and thoughtfulness to work with so many different groups involved with salmon.

I would also like to share my availability for further conversations as the study progresses.

Kind regards,

Renée Melkert (she/her)

PhD Candidate

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

CMS
CENTRE FOR MARINE SOCIOECOLOGY

I acknowledge the palawa/pakana peoples as the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of lutruwita and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and future. I am a visitor on Aboriginal land, sovereignty was never ceded

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Submission to the salmon study

By Renée Melkert

PhD Candidate

5/07/2026

My name is Renée Melkert, and I am a PhD candidate affiliated with the University of Tasmania, IMAS and the Centre for Marine Socioecology. I am part of a wider project Governing during an ocean climate crisis: building integrative capacity project - https://www.utas.edu.au/research/projects/governing-during-an-ocean-climate-crisis-building-integrative-capacity/_nocache. My research investigates power relations at play, influencing whose knowledge and experiences counts in research, and whose knowledge is silenced. Specifically how these relations in the context of salmon aquaculture in Lutruwita/Tasmania.

First of all, I appreciate your approach in acknowledging the struggles that come with global warming of the ocean, and how you seek to speak a wide range of communities. I look forward to seeing the process of this study. Thank you for putting in the work to listen to the many stories and experiences, including mine. In the following paragraphs, I mostly foreground issues that became most important to me during my PhD work.

Historically rooted injustice

While the Terms of Reference foregrounds mostly positive aspects about the salmon industry, in this submission I would like to stress the importance of highlighting the injustices that have been, and continue to be, produced. First is to consider injustices regarding caring for country by the palawa people as ongoing knowledge holders and caretakers of land, sea and sky Country. The east coast of Tasmania, where the majority of salmon production takes place, is still an important place that embodies palawa connection to Country (Lee, 2017).

In my PhD, I conducted a historical analysis by analysing archival documents related to salmon. This investigation brought up a history wherein the presence of salmon is intertwined with violence against Tasmanian Aboriginals (Melkert, unpublished work). Before the salmon industry sought to expand and modernise in the 1980s, it was the Inland Fisheries and the Salmon Commission who were in charge of decision making around salmon. The salmon Commission emerged at the Salmon Ponds in New Norfolk in the 1850s. One Salmon Commissioner, Morton Allport, was involved in the trade of Aboriginal bodies. Another Salmon Commissioner, surgeon Joseph Milligan, was an appointed superintendent and oversaw the displacement of Tasmanian Aboriginals from Finders Island to Oyster Cove. These histories are important to consider when thinking about injustices in current systems of governance. Current day practices still reflect the exclusion of palawa voices from ocean management.

Injustices in scientific studies

Second, I encourage you to consider injustices in the production of scientific studies, and thus evidence about the sustainability of the salmon companies' presence in Lutruwita Tasmania. Injustices occur on the basis of exclusion.
My and previous studies on salmon industry reveals injustices in governance processes, see for instance Fudge (2020). Also Pecl et all. (2019) argue how power relations remain unaccounted for in the governance of fisheries, leading to the marginalisation of for instance Indigenous fishers. More specifically, I ask questions of whose problems framings are included in science and policy making and whose problems are not. I show how decision support tools developed by CSIRO, in collaboration with NRE, EPA and Salmon Tasmania and more, excludes questions posed by Derwent Estuary Program, who participated in the study as 'community representive' and ngo.

In my work I also show how government has normalised influence of salmon companies in government processes through neoliberal discourse. This becomes evident when a government official saying that 'investors don't want to complicate the development process with stakeholder engagement'. This says something about how investors priorities lays closer with a government official than engagement with communities, including palawa communities. Similarly, the privatisation of governmental bodies like the NRE through cost recovery removes the responsibility of government to act in relation to its citizens, and strengthen its relationship with private companies. This change in relationships is a shift away from democratic politics.

At the same time, problems posed by groups affected by salmon production, have been excluded from knowledge production. Like this ToR, processes leading to the production of knowledge are political. Who shaped the design of the ToR and thus whose problem framing is foundational? For instance, there is no mentioning of forms of ownership of salmon companies, and how that influences governance of salmon.

Some questions that could investigate to inequalities in knowledge production, and express this in numbers if necessary:

How much research has been published without centering industry's perspective of continuing development? How many studies have focussed on limiting production, and how did industry respond to that?

How and why have research relationships between IMAS, ngo's and communities have been de-funded? Comparatively, how much funding went through SMRCA and thus to strengthen IMAS and government and industry?

Kind regards,

Renée Melkert

References

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Pecl, G.T., Ogier, E., Jennings, S. et al. Autonomous adaptation to climate-driven change in marine biodiversity in a global marine hotspot. Ambio 48, 1498–1515 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-019-01186-x