From: Paul Thomas
To: Tasmanian Salmon Study Secretariat
Subject: Submission on Salmon Industry Study
Date: Sunday, 5 July 2026 8:27:31 PM
Attachments: Salmon Submission.docx

Submission attached

4 July 2026

To Dr Wendy Craik AM and Dr Russell Reichelt AO

Re Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Firstly, I welcome the opportunity to some input to this enquiry.

Secondly, I confirm this to be a personal perspective whilst advising that I am President of the community group Neighbours Of Fish Farming Inc. (NOFF). In fact, I was one of the founding members of this group in 2015. A group that was established due to community concerns with the environmental and social impacts being experienced by the expanding industrial Atlantic salmon industry primarily in the shallow waters of the Huon River and D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

I am now 70 years of age and have lived at the mouth of the Huon River all my life. As a younger person I had a thorough lay person's appreciation of the river fishing, swimming, sailing in the waterways, camping and harvesting the marine species that abounded. Where I and family could once catch a flathead for a meal, now there are none. When once I would see schools of baby fish on any given day, now there are none. I like to swim most days except through winter.

I have first-hand experience of the deterioration of our public waterways over that time. I was in fact a councillor on Huon Valley Council back in the 1990s when Peter Bender gave a presentation to Council about the Bender family proposal to establish an operation operating from their base at Surveyors Bay. At that time it was a much smaller operation espousing a 'trial' for six months.

Whilst I understand there is an imposed moratorium on the expansion of the industry while this enquiry is undertaken I am concerned the Terms of Reference and Stakeholder Engagement Plan imply support for the industry and working towards making it's practices more palatable. And there is an assumption the moratorium will be lifted and it will be a return to business as usual.

I would be hopeful the enquiry would be looking to investigating the 'social costs' to the community rather than the 'benefits' to the community (1.0 Impact Analysis 1.1 &1.2).

Unfortunately there were no base line studies conducted prior to the establishment of this

industry so there can only be anecdotal feedback from my generation and my elders who have the experienced the waterways in the 'good old days'. I therefore question the 2.0 Regulatory and Management Framework which will rely on information provided by the industry and governmental departments that have demonstrated their parasitic support for the industry all the way through. The study does need to be comprehensive and conduct studies separate to that provided by the industry and investigate sites (eg. underneath fish pens) at random and without the permission of the operators.

The framework appears to make the assumption that regulations can 'balance sustainable industry development' (2.0 first dot point) when from many perspectives the industry is not sustainable, at least not in its current form. It also assumes environmental benefits and identifying positive outcomes for the environment. I would hope the enquiry will highlight the current and potentially negative impacts on the environment. I don't believe the environment has any 'assimilative capacity' (2.0 dot 1, point 2) – it is already beyond capacity and it is repair that is needed, not absorbing any further or ongoing pollutants.

Eight pens have recently arrived in a previously used lease area in front of our home. That area is already damaged but further damage is not the answer.

I want the enquiry to not be influenced by these foreign companies that now own the three main Tasmanian operations. This industry needs to withdraw from inshore and shallow waterways and the foreign owners who pay little or no tax should be required to fund a transition. Government can support the transition without being financially responsible. Tasmania should not be blinded by a 'jobs at any cost' mantra. Alternative jobs can be found and transition to land is a proven possibility.

I am concerned that the enquiry is being advised by an 'expert panel', presumably remote scientific professionals who whilst having knowledge have no lived experience. I would like to see the enquiry having the advice of those blinded by light pollution, driven out of their homes by the 24 hour noise, who have had their visual amenity destroyed and their house values rock-bottomed, those who have suffered for years with mental anguish requiring medical intervention, those whose recreational pursuits no longer exist and those whose health is put at risk by swimming in polluted (including by antibiotics) waters.

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