

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 15 of 2022 House of Assembly

The petitioners call on the State Government to:-

- (1) Place a moratorium on all finfish farming expansion, including plans for expansion in northern Tasmanian coastal waters and in Commonwealth controlled waters of Bass Strait, until open, honest and comprehensive public consultation is completed
- (2) Fully consider all 68 recommendations of the Legislative Council Report on Finfish Farming in Tasmania
- (3) Finalise a Salmon Industry Growth Plan

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

We are developing a new Salmon Plan which is centred on innovation, continuous improvement and world-leading practices. A plan that will be forward looking, enduring and responsive to the future, and a plan that is developed around the principles of:

- future growth lies in land-based and off-shore salmon farming;
- world's best practice through continuous improvement; and
- strict independent regulation.

The Government's *Draft Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan* (the Draft Plan) has now been released for a period of public consultation and we encourage all stakeholders to continue to provide input and feedback to the development of the Plan, which will take effect by 1 May 2023.

Consultation to date has been extensive and inclusive, and this will continue as the plan is developed. The consultation process has included early engagement with stakeholder groups, the 2022 Tasmanian Salmon Symposium and follow up Workshop and Conversation Series both facilitated by the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre, the *Discussion Paper: Towards a 10-Year Salmon Plan* and now the recently released *Draft Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan*.

The Government acknowledges the considerable time, effort and work of the members of the Legislative Council Government Administration Sub-Committee "A", and the many community and industry submissions that led to the release of its report.

The Government carefully scrutinised the Committee's 68 recommendations and responded to each in detail, in its formal response to the Committee tabled on 16 August 2022.

Importantly, the supporting document to the Draft Plan, the *Draft Workplan* identifies specific actions that were committed to by this Government in its response, and will be implemented.

When Minister Barnett announced the development of Tasmania's 10-Year Salmon Plan in September 2021 he clearly stated an immediate 12 month moratorium was in place. The

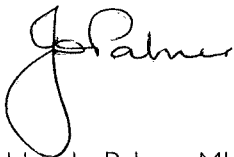
moratorium meant that, while the 10-Year Salmon Plan was being developed, there would be no net increase in total leasable area for finfish farming in State waters beyond the current allocations and those areas subject to current research permits that may result in approved lease areas. While the moratorium expired at the end of September, this principle will continue to apply until the Plan is finalised and takes effect next year.

Offshore aquaculture in Commonwealth waters presents the opportunity for a sustainable future for a range of sectors not just for salmon. Which is why we are working to maximise the potential opportunity for Tasmania from offshore aquaculture for all potential species, including finfish, shellfish and seaweeds. This approach is consistent with the National Aquaculture Strategy.

There is no secret process and no lack of consultation in relation to aquaculture research in Commonwealth waters. All agreements and arrangements are publicly available on the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania's website.

Current legislation does not provide for commercial aquaculture activities in Commonwealth waters, only aquaculture research activities. We are taking an evidence-based, scientific approach, before there could be any consideration of commercial scale activity.

Legislative changes would be required prior to any commercial activity taking place.



Hon Jo Palmer MLC
Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Date: 19/11/22