



[Parliamentary Business/Committees/House/Standing Committee Australian Aquaculture/Terms of Reference](#)

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the terms of reference as provided below in the context of the last twenty years observing the growth of the salmon sea cage industry in Tasmania and its devastating impacts on the marine environment. The model is an Australian example of worst practice industry development and for aquaculture to flourish in this country we would do well to avoid the worst mistakes as exemplified by this industry and the shambolic approach by the Tasmanian Government to plan for its growth and regulate business activity.

- a) the nature and current status of Australia's aquaculture sector;

It is wrong headed to examine the nature and status of an Australian aquaculture sector without specifying culture systems, species, sites and intensity of farming. Industrial scale salmon farming and oyster farming are no more alike than intensive pig farming and farming cut flowers.

The inputs vary enormously, the sites differ, the required infrastructure differs and the garbage created and impacts of waste product differ enormously.

Planning for each has to be considered differently as a result.

The lesson for aquaculture planning from salmon farming is as follows:

Site selection within a real planning framework is essential. Do not bypass planning laws and regulations just to build an industry.

Stocking density must reflect the chosen site and cannot be left for companies to choose.

Recommendation: Governments plan for aquaculture development acknowledging species considerations, scale of farming proposed, site selection criteria, intensity of farming inputs and waste management issues.

b) opportunities and barriers to the expansion of the aquaculture sector:

If farming methods are to be piloted in any public sites then consideration be given to the impacts of commercial upscaling before any leases are granted.

The Tasmanian salmon industry was initially a pilot, became a cottage industry and then was overtaken by listed public companies without any scrutiny of leases, environmental impact or the effects that increased fish stocking densities would have on the marine environment.

Recommendation: If a proposed site for aquaculture is identified then criteria such as species, farming method, intensity, scale and waste management are closely aligned with planning permission, lease cost and monitoring methods

c) opportunities to streamline and increase the effectiveness of the current regulatory frameworks that govern aquaculture activities in Australia;

In Tasmania, the salmon industry does as it wishes. There is a façade of

regulation that does nothing in terms of environmental protection. The political parties take donations from corporates one of these parties wins government The Government pretends its payback to corporates is about jobs and the marine environment gets trashed. Salmon planning is a farce as is the regulation around it. There are peppercorn rentals for leases. An environment Protection Agency that is beholden to the industry it is meant to regulate. Whatever streamlining that comes out of this enquiry and or an increasing effectiveness of regulation will not repair the damage that has been done.

Recommendation

Look at what has occurred in Tasmania and never let what has happened here occur anywhere else in this country.

Ensure sound aquaculture planning inside planning processes without exemption.