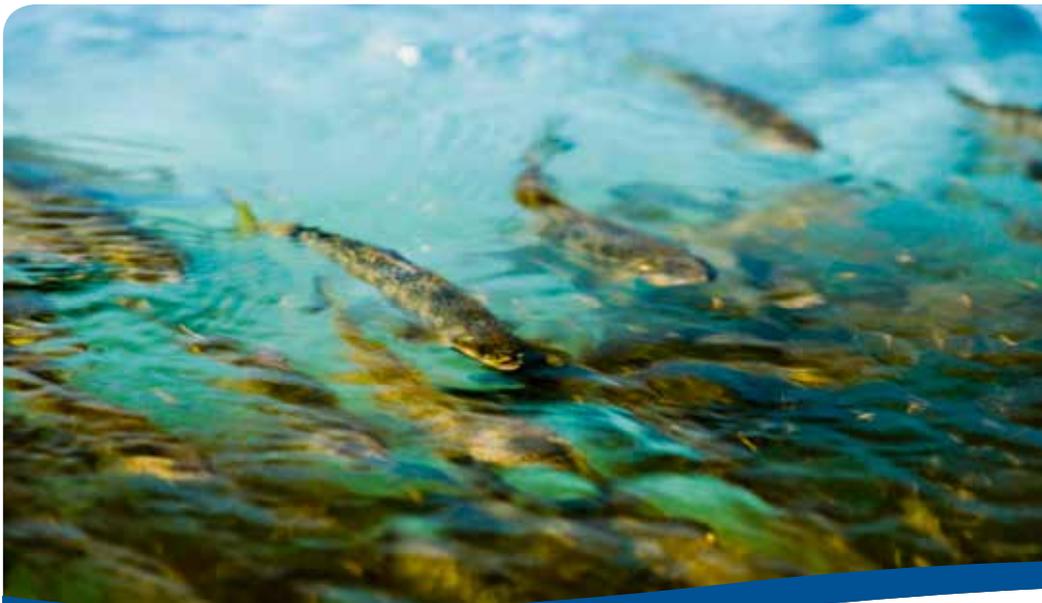


Sustainable industry growth plan for the salmon industry

Grow. Make. Protect.



A message from the Minister



The Hodgman Liberal Government is a strong supporter of the salmon industry.

We acknowledge its important contribution to the State, especially in terms of jobs in our regions, and welcome the prospect of further sustainable growth. This Plan represents the Government's vision and priorities for the future of the industry and the value it brings to the Tasmanian community.

In the past 18 months the Government has developed and introduced the most substantial reforms to the regulation of the industry in at least 15 years. The changes included transferring responsibility for environmental regulation to the independent Environment Protection Authority, introducing increased penalties that will have a genuine deterrent effect, and creating a new mechanism for excluding salmon farming from areas of the State's coastline. And we have called a halt to the practice of long-distance relocation of seals by salmon farmers.

We have also developed this Plan, at first in a draft form that was exhibited for public consultation for seven weeks. This generated almost 100 comments and submissions. A report on the consultation process, as well as all the feedback received, can be found at www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/salmonplan. Openness and transparency has been a key part of this process and I sincerely thank all those who have been a part of what has been a highly valuable process.

The consultation highlighted that the great majority of those who participated wish to see the industry continue to grow, provided it operates in a genuinely sustainable way. Opinions naturally vary on how this can be achieved, but after considering the full range of views we believe this Plan strikes a balance and lays out a practical way forward for an industry that will have the highest standards of biosecurity, fish health and environmental management. The consultation report indicates how we have responded to the main points raised.

The Plan is a living document, reflecting continuous improvement. We will review the Plan after one year, and thereafter every two years. (Information on the progress of the Plan will continue to be available at www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/salmonplan.)

I welcome your continued engagement in the sustainable future of the salmon industry.

Jeremy Rockliff

Deputy Premier, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

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What the Government has already done to support a sustainable salmon industry

2014	We provided additional funding to the new Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines Centre of Excellence at Mount Pleasant, and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies for additional research on amoebic gill disease
2015	Significant additional funding for frontline biosecurity (ongoing funding now \$1 million pa)
	Seafood Pledge signed, with funding for Seafood Training Tasmania over three years
2016	Important reforms to penalty / infringement notice legislation in the <i>Marine Farming Planning Amendment Act 2016</i> , with demerit points consequently reformed by 2017 Regulations
	Transfer of responsibility for environmental regulation to Environment Protection Authority (EPA) under delegation
2017	Additional ongoing funding to Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines Centre of Excellence
	Decision to ban finfish farming in all of Mercury Passage outside existing Okehampton Bay zone
	Passage of <i>Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act 2017</i> to formalise EPA's role and other reforms, including process for creating finfish marine farming exclusion zones
	Giving Marine and Safety Tasmania a formal role in marine safety enforcement around marine farms
	Development of major new <i>Biosecurity Bill 2017</i> , including provision to approve industry biosecurity programs
	Renewal of Seafood Pledge for up to a further three years, with increased funding available for training
	Requirement to end long-distance seal relocation by Christmas 2017, and to review and amend the Seal Management Framework

Executive summary

*The salmon industry has been one of the **great Tasmanian success stories** of the past **30 years**.*

Starting from scratch, it has seen the creation of an estimated 5,200 jobs (including related industries and flow-on impacts) that are largely in regional areas; become an industry that generates sales revenue of \$726 million; and has become integral to the fine food component of the Tasmanian brand. To ensure ongoing sustainable growth, and the benefits that flow to communities as a result, the Tasmanian Government is setting the blueprint for future development, environmental regulation and increased community confidence.

The Government is the custodian of the public natural resources that the industry uses and is responsible

for ensuring strong environmental performance. So the Government's role in the future of the industry is to partner constructively with industry and the community to create the right environment for growth through two mechanisms: first, ensuring that access to public natural resources is on terms that encourage the industry to meet world's best standards of sustainable farming practices, research, development and innovation, and effective biosecurity; and second, facilitating a robust, appropriately resourced and independent planning and regulatory system.

Our vision is for the industry to:

- **continue to deliver increased tangible benefits to Tasmania through sustainable growth – delivering more and better jobs and economic growth (especially in the regions), and acting as a driver of productivity and innovation in the State's economy;**
- **remain an industry Tasmanians are proud of and have confidence in, by increasing transparency and industry accountability for environmental management, and by the introduction of a clear and robust mechanism for expansion; and**
- **be the most environmentally sustainable salmon industry in the world by continuing to improve environmental performance through industry driven innovation, coupled with appropriate environmental monitoring and regulation.**



The Government believes there are three essential elements to achieving this vision. The top priority actions under each heading are:

Maintaining public confidence in the salmon industry

- Clearly identifying the areas of Tasmania's coastal waters where salmon will continue to be farmed, areas where further growth might be possible (subject always to careful and open planning and approval processes), and areas where salmon farming will be excluded
- A commitment to future expansion moving into oceanic (deeper and high-energy) waters, rather than estuarine waters
- Analysis of existing marine farming development plan areas used for salmon farming, particularly with a view to strengthening biosecurity
- A competitive tender process for access to any proposed new and untried farming areas, with criteria for success to be determined by government
- A formal agreement, jointly developed by all current finfish licence holders and the Government, for sustainable future farming in Macquarie Harbour
- Development of a "Tasmanian Salmon Industry Scorecard" that benchmarks the industry against international best practice, as applicable in the Tasmanian context, and is regularly reviewed and updated

Improving the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the industry's environmental regulation, and the effectiveness of its biosecurity systems

- Establishment of an industry funded Finfish Farming (Compliance and Monitoring) Unit in the Environment Protection Authority
- Development of an industry-wide Biosecurity Program that can be given effect through the proposed new Biosecurity Act
- Collection of a wider range of environmental information, including additional real time data, and increased public access to relevant environmental information through an independent portal hosted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies
- Continuing strong support for the State's advanced fish health and biosecurity facilities
- Encouraging relevant research and development, and the subsequent adoption of new technologies that reduce environmental impacts

Supporting industry growth

- Strong support for the industry's sustainable growth, to maximise the industry's contribution to the State by 2030
- Continued support for cooperative research, development and innovation through the supply chain
- Marketing and export development support linked to Tasmanian brand development
- Further investment in developing the skills and career paths the industry needs
- Establishment of a broad-based industry body as to oversee the Plan's implementation and meeting relevant milestones

Snapshot of the industry today

The salmon industry has been one of the most important growth sectors in Tasmania over the past 30 years, and a global innovator.

It is not only the largest primary industry in the State, with increasing gross revenue that reached \$726 million in 2016-17, but also the nation's largest seafood product by volume.

Salmon farming in Tasmania is mainly undertaken by three large, vertically integrated companies that grow fish from eggs to harvest and value add to a final product. All three started in Tasmania and remain based here.

Industry estimates the jobs created through salmon farming to be in the order of 5,200, including around 1,600 jobs directly with the three companies. In its submission to the 2015 Senate Committee Inquiry, the industry estimated there were about 3,770 further full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs generated in both Tasmania and the rest of Australia (section 7.18, Report into Regulation of the Fin-fish Aquaculture Industry in Tasmania (August 2015) by the Senate's Environment and Communications References Committee).

The positive impact of the industry on the economy spreads well beyond direct employment with the salmon

companies, and the flow-on impacts into the broader community are significant. There is now a thriving ancillary sector providing inputs to the industry such as vessels, cages, nets and feed, training, transport and logistics, and a range of contract and consultancy services.

The wages of those employed as a direct result of the industry or ancillary sector drive local businesses, creating further employment in local retailers. They also underpin the viability of communities including services such as schools and medical facilities.

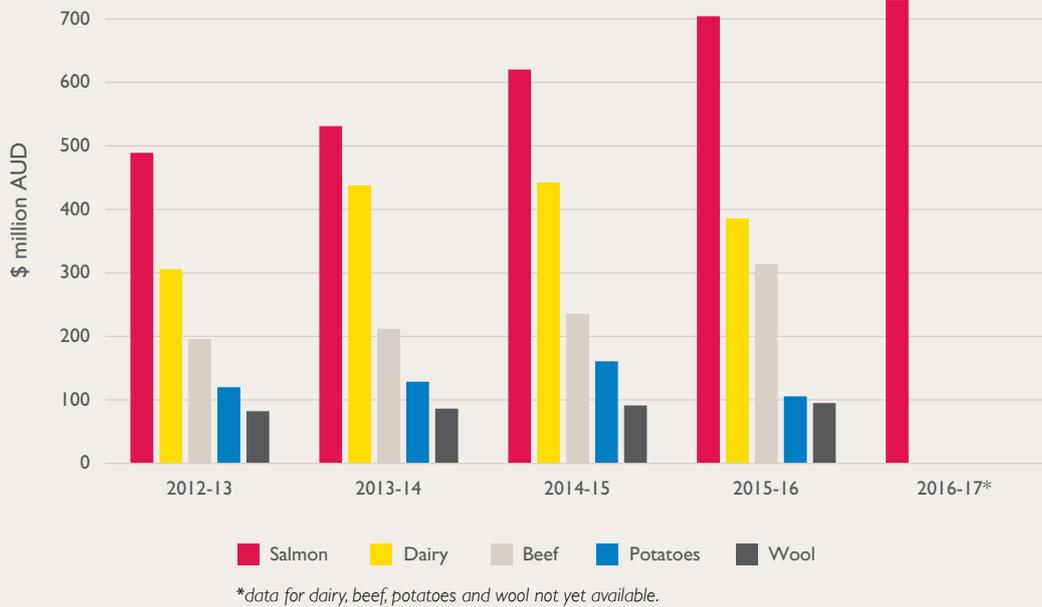
Further, the industry has been and will remain a significant capital investor in infrastructure such as hatcheries, shore facilities, pens, boats, processing plants and so on, providing work for multiple other businesses and tradespeople. Current expansion plans mean further capital expenditure is in the pipeline.



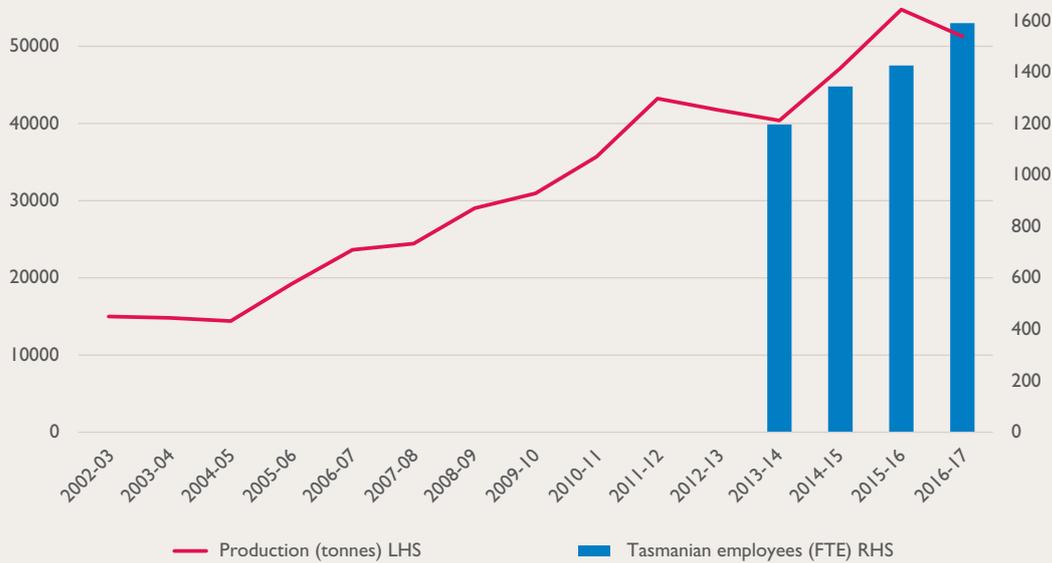


Tasmania's highest value agrifood commodities

Gross value at farm-gate or beach



Tasmanian salmon industry direct employment and production



Vision for the industry in 2030

*“It is the committee’s view that **the success of the fin-fish aquaculture industry is inextricably linked to the future economic prosperity of Tasmania.**”*

Section 7.40, Report into Regulation of the fin-fish aquaculture industry in Tasmania (August 2015) by the Senate’s Environment and Communications References Committee.

The Government agrees with this statement and supports the industry’s growth as long as it operates to the high standards and expectations outlined in this Plan.

The vision is therefore for a successful, larger industry with excellent regulation and minimised environmental impacts.

In 2009 the salmon industry set a target to double to a \$1 billion a year industry by 2030, which has been supported by government. It is now widely recognised that this target is conservative as the industry has been tracking well ahead of the growth required to achieve it.

Industry growth of this nature, aligned to the high standards of the Plan, will result in significant economic benefits to Tasmania, including jobs growth, both directly related to the industry and

indirectly through increased economic activity in regional communities.

This potential expansion is an exciting opportunity to help ensure that the Tasmania of 2030 will have prosperous regions and good jobs for a growing population. The industry has to take the lead, invest and innovate. The Government can help realise the potential through undertaking the actions outlined in this Plan. Each of the three essential elements is critical to success.





The growth of the ancillary sector has been a striking feature of the salmon industry's recent history.

Current estimates suggest that this sector already accounts for about three-quarters as many FTE jobs as the salmon companies themselves and its employment is projected to continue its rapid increase.

The ancillary sector provides both physical inputs – feed, cages, boats and many sophisticated engineered components – and services, including specialised transport, training, logistics, and software. Importantly, as the scale of the Tasmanian salmon production has increased, the ancillary sector has been able to achieve critical mass to expand its

product range and intellectual property (IP), including by partnering with world-class scientific institutions such as IMAS and CSIRO Marine and Atmosphere.

It has developed some unique solutions and products, which have then found markets in other parts of the world. Some companies are starting to become significant exporters in their own right, including in areas outside the salmon industry itself, with products such as recirculating aquaculture systems, specialised vessels, and feed control software for the prawn industry.

Some companies are subsidiaries of major multinationals, eg in feed manufacture, but they have nonetheless focussed on developing products uniquely suited to Tasmania and that use as many Tasmanian ingredients as possible.

But most operations are Tasmanian in origin and ownership.

The overall result is that the ancillary sector has become an independent generator of valuable IP and economic activity. And this is not only in the traditional locations for salmon production. So though farming employs people mainly in the regions there is also a growing number of jobs in greater Hobart, where already there are about 800 FTE jobs in the sector – half as many as the total employed by the farming companies. Like those companies, the sector has attracted new talent and retained talent that might otherwise have left the State. Its further growth is a real opportunity to lock in smart and rewarding employment, as well as to generate valuable export income.

The planning and approval process that will apply to any new farming areas

The map clearly shows where salmon farming may currently take place (amber), where it might go in the future (green and blue) and also, importantly, where it will be banned (red). Most of Tasmania's coastline will be closed to salmon farming.

The blue and green zones on the map indicate areas within which farming might occur, subject to the comprehensive planning process outlined below.

The changes recently made through the Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act have significantly strengthened the planning, leasing and licensing framework. This framework, plus any changes necessary to accommodate a new competitive tender process for the blue zones, will be used to guide any proposed development.

The elements of the planning process: There are several levels, set out in legislation. Each needs to be in place before a marine farm can operate.

- The key pieces of State legislation are the *Marine Farming Planning Act 1995* (MFPA), the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* (EMPCA) and the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* (LMRMA).
- The primary decision makers are the Minister for Primary Industries and Water, the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Board and Director. A critical advisory role in planning is played by the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel (the Panel).
- The MFPA establishes the planning framework:
 - The overarching elements are new or amended **marine farming development plans (MFDPs)**. There are currently **14 approved MFDPs**.
 - These cover specified areas and contain **marine farming zones (MFZs)** – each of which can be specified as suitable for certain activities. The commercially relevant types of farming currently allowed are for finfish, shellfish or seaweed. The potential uses reflect the environmental assessment of the sites, which underpins the planning process.
 - Each MFZ has an identified **maximum leasable area** (which may be in more than one portion).
 - The MFZs usually only make up a small fraction of the total area covered by an MFDP; the maximum leasable areas in turn make up a portion of each MFZ.

How MFDPs are made or significantly amended: The statutory process for preparing or amending an MFDP is overseen by the Panel. Section 21(1) of the MFPA sets out what the Panel must do when considering proposals, including:

- (d) *have regard for the use and development of the region as an entity in environmental, economic, recreational and social terms; and [...]*
- (f) *have regard to the biological and physical requirements of fish species to be farmed in that area;*



The critical step is the development and release of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public exhibition, accompanying the draft planning instrument for the new or significantly amended MFDP. The EIS and draft planning instrument are open to representations and representors can require public hearings.

The EIS must be prepared in accordance with guidelines, which have input from the Panel and include any requirements of the EPA. **The Government will release a template for EIS guidelines.**

The EIS guidelines vary a little according to location but have a comprehensive set of core matters that are to be addressed. An EIS for a proposal must **identify and describe all of these matters, then explain any possible impacts and all proposed mitigation measures.** Where appropriate, the mitigation measures are embodied in the draft “management controls” of the new or amended MFDP. The issues to be covered include, among other things:

- **Operational matters** – all the practical issues around installing and operating the proposed farms; this explicitly includes relevant biosecurity protocols.
- **Environmental** – everything relating to the water and the seafloor, including all living things (plants, fish, birds, mammals); threatened communities or species; hydrology, water quality and chemistry; disturbance by noise and nocturnal light; and predicted climate change effects. Under the amended legislation the Director EPA may require any matters to be addressed in the planning process.
- **Economic** – covers industries in the region, specifically including all sorts of tourism operations: land based (accommodation, restaurants, cafes, bars and other food outlets, cultural heritage, lookouts, walks and treks); and marine-based (eg. wildlife spotting, boat cruises, seaplane flights, SCUBA diving, sea kayaking, water skiing, surfing).
- **Commercial and recreational fishing** are highlighted and the EIS must report on consultation with stakeholders of both sectors; the environmental issues around impacts on fish habitat are of course critical here also. This is reflected in the longstanding prohibition of salmon farming over hard bottom, and the current practice of surveying nearby reefs. Issues such as seawater intakes for land-based aquaculture will also be covered.
- **The socio-economic** considerations include such matters as effects on: local and state labour markets; upstream / downstream industries; land values, and demand for land and housing; and the local, national and state economies. Visual amenity is specifically required to be addressed.

At the end of this process, the Panel makes a recommendation to the Minister. If the Minister agrees, and an approved MFDP covering finfish is issued, it must include any environmental management controls that the Director EPA specifies.

Before marine farming operations begin, a proponent must apply for and, subject to conditions, be granted both a lease (under the MFPA) and a marine farming licence (under the LMRMA).

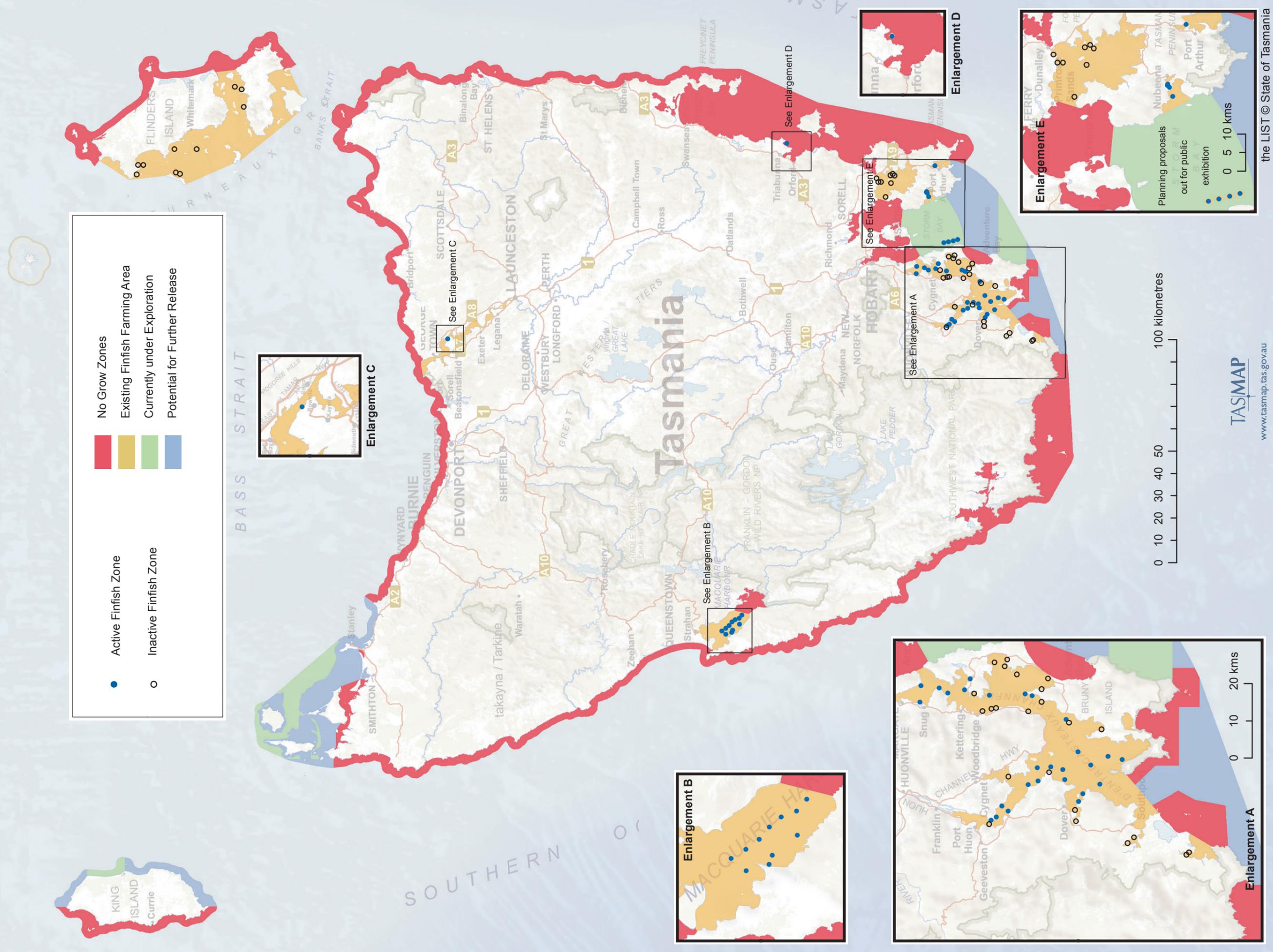
In addition, because of the changes the Government has recently made to strengthen the system, a finfish proponent will now require an Environmental Licence (EL) under EMPCA. It will include site-specific environmental management elements determined by the Director EPA and prescribed in the EL.

A proponent may also need to consider their intended activity in relation to the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and potentially have their proposal assessed under that Act.

How can you have your say in the planning process?

- 1) **You can engage with a proponent in their initial community consultation about a future proposal**
- 2) **You can be a part of the broader stakeholder feedback process in the development of an EIS**
- 3) **You can make a representation during the public exhibition of the EIS - including request a public hearing**
- 4) **You can attend any public hearings that are held**

Proposed “grow” and “no grow” zones for finfish in Tasmania



Explaining the map

What the green “currently under exploration” shading means

At the moment, exploratory work is under way in the four green zones. In three of them it is authorised by time-limited permits granted under the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*. In Storm Bay the proposals are now moving through the statutory planning stage.

The permits allow the companies involved to conduct environmental investigation and monitoring within the permit areas. The permits are often granted over large areas, even when the focus is on smaller, specific locations. This is because understanding the environmental and other conditions of the target locations may require understanding the wider systems of which they are part. The three areas are:

- East of Cape Connella, South Bruny: Huon Aquaculture Company has a permit covering a large area and is focussed on investigating the potential of three specific areas, one of which is about 6 km offshore.
- Far North-West: Petuna has a permit that covers a large area but, as the map indicates, its focus is on the deeper water shaded green.
- King Island: Tassal has a permit to investigate an area off part of the island's east coast.

If the work under the initial permits proves promising, subsequent permits may be granted to the companies to allow them to trial their technology at specified locations. Before such permits are issued the interests of key stakeholders, including both commercial and recreational fishers, will be considered.

Government and industry hope this work will identify some areas within the green zones as potentially suitable for salmon farming. If so, the proponent will then need to undertake the full planning process outlined above.

In Storm Bay, all three major companies have current proposals. Two of them (Tassal's “West of Wedge” and Huon Aquaculture Company's off Trumpeter Bay) are seeking amendments of existing MFDPs. Both companies have recently had their proposals, and accompanying EISs, released for public exhibition. The third proposal, by Petuna, is for a new MFDP and is being prepared for public exhibition.

What the blue “potential for further release” shading means

These are waters where the Government considers future expansion may be possible, and should not be precluded. There is no implication that all, or even any, of these areas will necessarily end up containing salmon farms.

If salmon farming is to occur in the blue zones, a new competitive tender process will be required (**only** for these waters) that will take account of legitimate stakeholder concerns, maximise the community benefit and still maintain the safeguards of the current legislative processes. It is outlined on page 17.

The defining characteristic of this proposal is that a new Tender Advisory Board will decide which waters within the blue areas will be put out for tender, and when this might occur.

Once the tender is open, any person or entity wishing to test the suitability of waters in the blue zones will need to make a proposal that meets criteria set by government. And while the proponent of a successful assessment will have a priority in future planning, allocation and licensing processes, those processes will still need to be carried through in full, and will incorporate means of holding the original proponent to any commitments they may have made.

What the red “no grow zone” shading means

The mechanism to establish “no grow zones” is now set in legislation, through amendments introduced by the *Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act 2017*. At this time, only the Mercury Passage no grow zone has been legislated. Salmon farming is banned in these zones. Only Parliament can make new ones, or change existing ones. This process cannot be exercised by the Government alone.

The map indicates that the proposed no grow zones include two types of water:

- Areas covered by existing MFDPs that do not include any zones permitting finfish farming; these are generally MFDPs devoted to shellfish culture (Pitt Water, Pipeclay Lagoon, Blackman Bay, most of Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage, Georges Bay, Port Sorell and the existing MFDP for some inshore areas of the far North West);
- Areas not previously subject to any marine farming planning processes. The majority consists of two continuous strips covering (a) the Southwest and West Coast, and (b) most of the East Coast and the North Coast. The eastern side of the Furneaux Group and the west coast of King Island have now been added (they were “potential for further release” in the Draft Plan). There are also three areas deliberately highlighted for exclusion from neighbouring blue zones – Adventure Bay on Bruny Island, and two areas protecting reefs in the blue zone south and west of Bruny Island.

What the amber “existing finfish farming areas” means

The amber shading applies to the **full** area covered by any marine farming development plan (MFDP) that includes one or more marine farming zones (MFZs) where, under that MFDP, finfish can be farmed. There is one exception: the area of the Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage MFDP. The only MFZ in this very extensive plan area that allows for finfish farming is Zone 4 Okehampton Bay; that is already surrounded by the Mercury Passage exclusion zone, so to show the remainder as amber would be misleading.

Every MFDP contains one or more MFZs zoned for any or all of finfish, shellfish and seaweed. Finfish can include a range of species, such as flounder or yellowtail kingfish, as well as salmonids. In the Furneaux plan it was the possibility of farming yellowtail kingfish that led to 10 zones there being specified for finfish.

So, apart from in the Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage MFDP, all areas covered by MFDPs that include any MFZ specified for finfish are shaded amber, even where most of the area would never be considered suitable for finfish farming.

The difference between the “active” and “inactive” finfish zones

MFDPs specify what type of marine farming activity can occur within each MFZ. The map identifies as “finfish zones” all MFZs that currently allow for the marine farming of finfish. Many of these also allow for the farming of shellfish and seaweed.

The distinction in the map between “active” and “inactive” has been modified since the issue of the Draft Plan. It is now based on identifying as active all finfish zones where not only have marine farming leases been allocated, but also where a licence to farm finfish has been obtained. These are shown on the map as blue dots (●). The inactive are shown as black circles (○). This change has materially reduced the number of finfish zones shown as active.

The active category therefore now identifies all finfish zones where finfish farming could occur without further approvals, except where finfish farming has not occurred for more than 10 years (in which case a new environmental assessment would be required under the amended EMPCA).

Maintaining public confidence in the salmon industry

As the industry grows, the public must have confidence in the regulation of its use of public resources.



What does “oceanic” mean in this Plan?

Oceanic sites are exposed deep water marine sites that experience high wave energy and good current flows.

The preceding map, with its accompanying explanation, is a crucial step in this direction.

The system for planning and allocating marine water has been seen as a global model, well suited to a phase of rapid growth from a low base, but after 22 years it needs to be refreshed to address new circumstances and the challenges of sustainable growth for a mature industry. Important steps have already been taken but the Government believes that more needs to be done, including, where necessary, changes to the existing legislation.

Grow and No-Grow Zones

The mechanisms that will implement the new “grow” and “no-grow” zones have described above.

The selection of the grow and no grow zones in this Plan was achieved by carefully weighing up three important considerations:

- Firstly, by obtaining and incorporating advice across government and industry about the areas where marine farming would be suitable or not suitable, for basic biophysical and environmental reasons;
- Secondly, by talking to the industry about its plans, and the waters where it considers it needs to go in order to achieve sustainable growth with good environmental and biosecurity outcomes; and
- Thirdly, by listening to the concerns of the community about where they felt that marine farming was not appropriate, for reasons of amenity and alternative uses.

The Plan has taken a cautious approach to growth. Further, if the planning process reveals that an area of interest is not suitable or viable, the proposal will not proceed.

Committing to future industry expansion being largely oceanic, rather than estuarine

Over the next decade and beyond the industry expects to see an increasing use of recirculating aquaculture systems to grow bigger fish on land, prior to their transfer into seawater. However, to achieve its sustainable growth potential the industry will also need additional oceanic farming sites for its marine phase, the final grow out stage of the salmon life cycle.

This oceanic water will be in contrast to the relatively shallow inshore waters where the industry became established. Technological advances, such as waste capture, continue to improve outcomes

from farming in estuarine zones but most investment is now going into the development of systems that allow farming in oceanic locations. These will be more difficult to farm but despite the challenges, research indicates that such sites have strong potential to produce healthy fish and a smaller environmental impact. The State’s planning and approval processes will ensure that investigations and potential future farming occur carefully and sustainably. The Government supports proposals to allow States to regulate marine farming outside State waters.

A competitive tender process for access to any new farming areas (the “Potential for further release” areas), with criteria for success to be determined by government

The Government will establish a new process for testing the suitability of salmon farming within the identified areas, through an open competitive tender process. The proposal is outlined below. It will require some changes to legislation, which will take time to complete as the legislation is complex and involves many interrelated elements. The target date is June 2018.

The intent is to ensure that growth

further the Government’s underlying objectives of encouraging best practice in sustainable farming and in research, development and innovation.

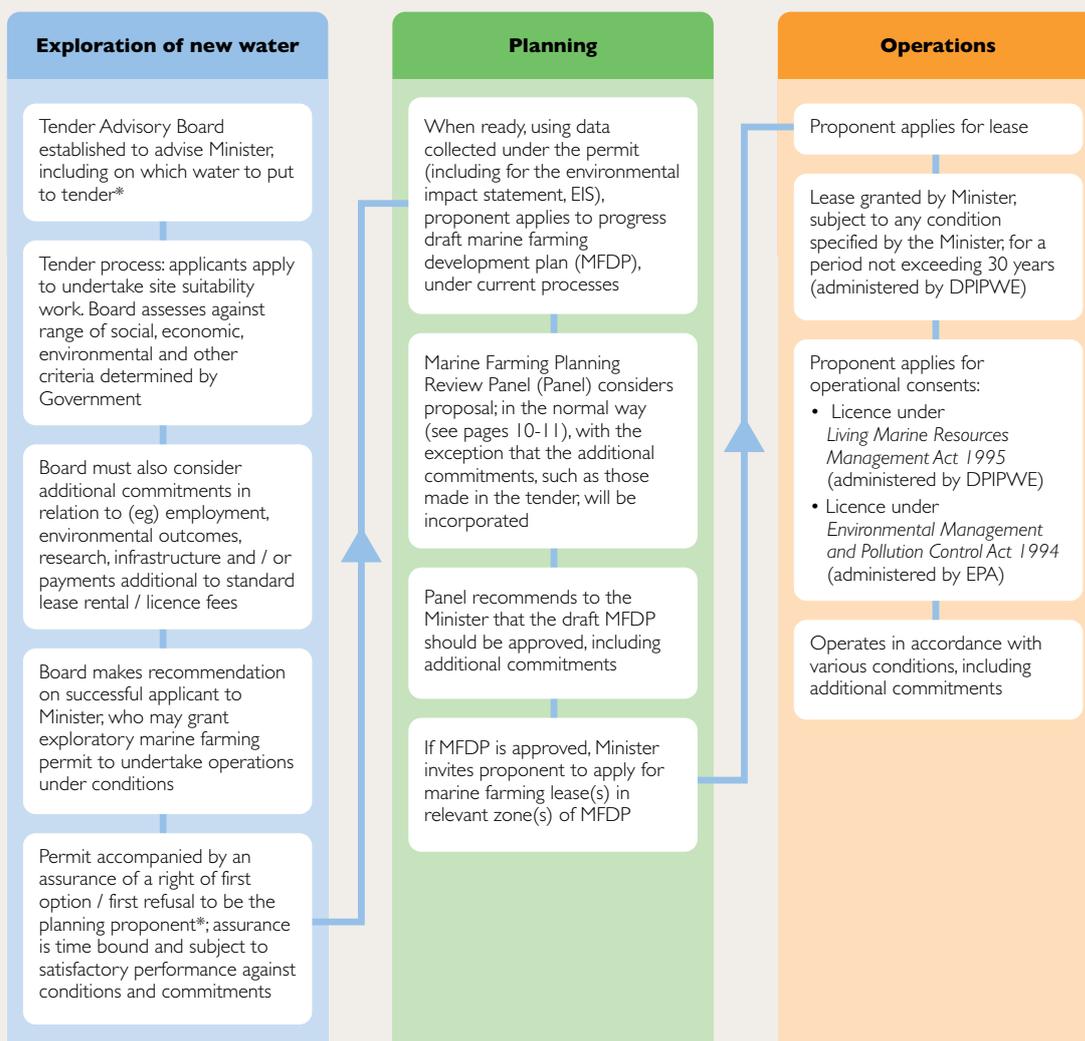
Advice on the tenders for particular areas of water will be provided by a legislated Tender Advisory Board. Tenders will be assessed with a view to maximising community benefit and amenity.

The Government will set the criteria – environmental, social and economic – and ensure that equity is achieved and monopoly avoided. Criteria may include (but not be limited to) effective commitments to, for instance, research; environmental performance; biosecurity improvements; employment; associated

investments (such as transport hubs, hatcheries or processing capacity); and financial benefit to Tasmania.

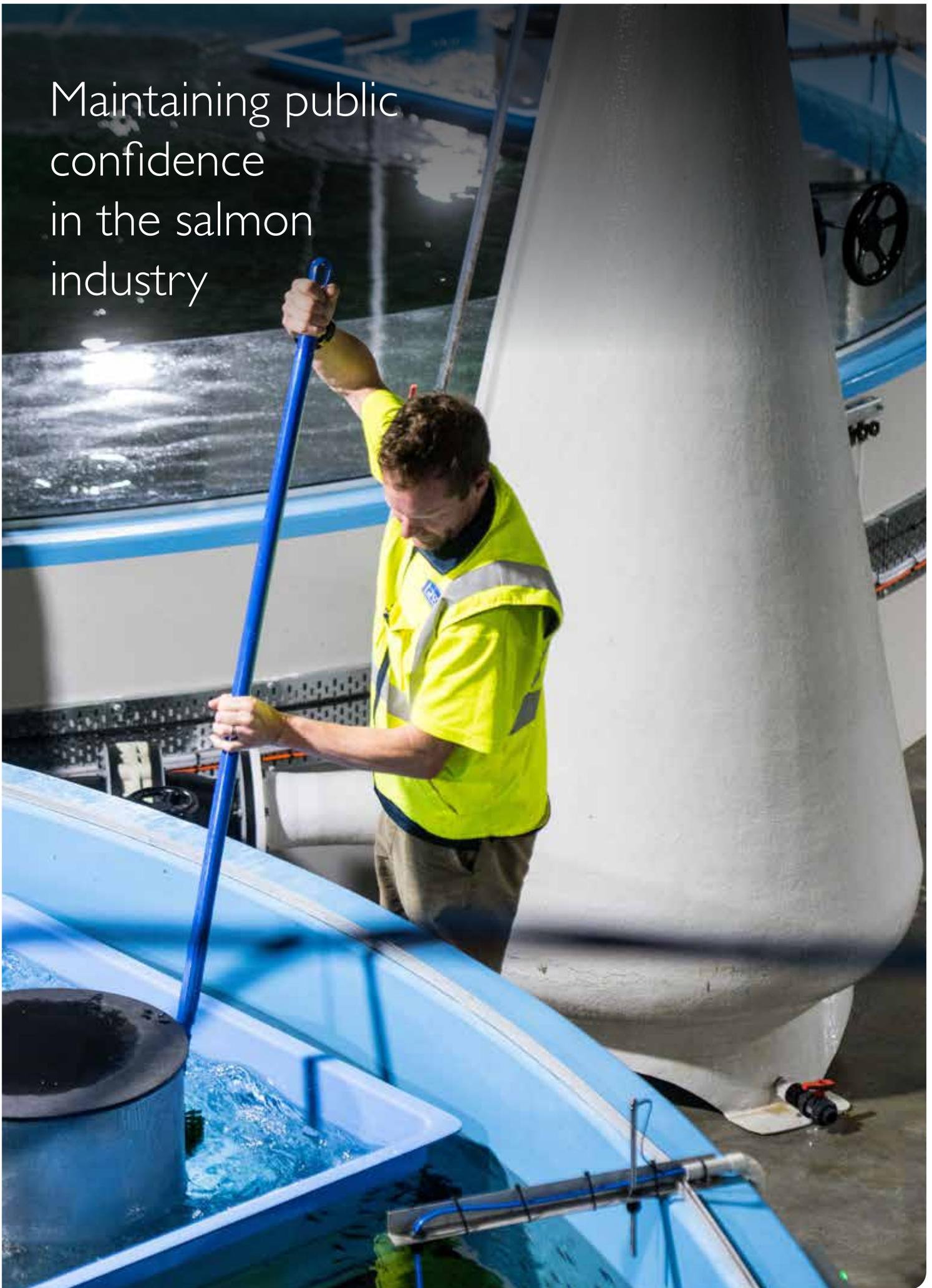
Successful tenderers will gain a temporary exclusive right to “prove” part or all of the relevant areas of water (similar to an exploration licence under mining legislation) and to do the relevant studies and potential impact assessments. The planning process and the final steps of leasing and licensing will largely follow the current model but they will include a clear preference for successful tenderers, provided they have delivered on commitments made in the tender process.

Proposed pathway for testing, planning and allocating new water for finfish farming



* change to legislation required

Maintaining public
confidence
in the salmon
industry



Analysis of existing marine farming development plan areas used for salmon farming, particularly with a view to strengthening biosecurity

Industry and government acknowledge that currently farmed inshore waters are at capacity and the zone locations are not optimised for biosecurity, in particular. For instance, the current distribution of leases does not facilitate the separation of companies and year classes that are now accepted good practice. As new offshore farming sites are established there is an opportunity for industry and government to work together to analyse existing inshore finfish leases, to improve management of biosecurity and possibly operational efficiency.

The expectation is that this will primarily be an industry led analysis. Government will consider proposals from industry to improve biosecurity by adjusting lease locations within zones or exchanging leases between companies, or consolidation proposals for other reasons if agreed by all affected parties.

A formal agreement, jointly developed by all current finfish licence holders and the Government, for farming sustainably in Macquarie Harbour

Currently, all companies operating in Macquarie Harbour are signatories to an Area Management Agreement finalised in 2012. Since that time different approaches to the farming of the Harbour have emerged.

With the move to the EPA as an independent environmental regulator and improved international knowledge about how best to manage biosecurity risks, it is timely to develop a new and strengthened Agreement.

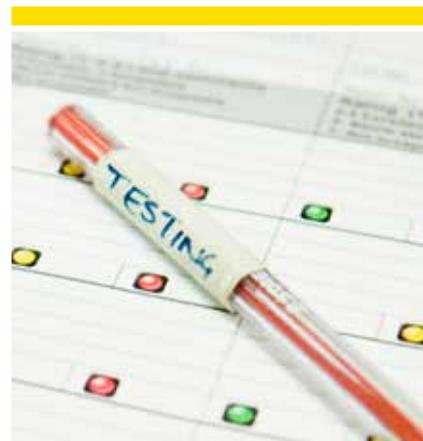
Aspects of the Agreement could be given statutory effect under the proposed new Biosecurity Act. The Government therefore commits to bring all parties together to deliver an agreed and workable solution by June 2018.

Adoption of a new “zero tolerance” approach to marine debris and related boating safety issues

The amount of debris from marine farming operations has been an ongoing concern to the community. Individual companies have been undertaking regular clean-ups and supporting voluntary action. The Government has taken action to ensure greater compliance and accountability. Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) officers have been authorised to monitor and respond to breaches, where marine farm equipment is found outside of marine farm lease areas and is causing navigational and safety risks. This has doubled the number of authorised officers under the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* and will bring the total to four DPIPW officers (who have a wider remit) and four MAST officers. Marine Police from the Tasmanian Police Service remain authorised officers for all issues relating to marine safety. In enforcing the zero tolerance approach, the Government will establish deadlines for the universal adoption of best practice tracking technologies and simple ways to identify the source of debris.

Development of a “Tasmanian Salmon Industry Scorecard” that will benchmark the industry against international best practice

Like all successful companies, the major operators in the industry all use benchmarking to measure and help improve their performance. The Government believes there is a larger benefit to be gained from industry-wide benchmarking that will show objectively how the industry compares with its international peers. To undertake this we will undertake international research and consultation with stakeholders to identify key benchmarks that are relevant in the Tasmanian context. The increasingly shared adoption of international third-party certification schemes, including the Aquaculture Stewardship Council's, creates potential efficiencies here. Such benchmarks will be used to create a scorecard that summarises the Tasmanian industry's comparative performance and can be regularly released.



Improving environmental regulation and biosecurity

The salmon industry's environmental performance is critical to its success – both physically and in terms of the market.



Tasmania's environmental regulatory systems have succeeded in managing growth for 30 years, but standards continuously improve and it is time to recommit to staying abreast of the best global practices.

The Government has already taken important steps to update the State's planning and regulatory system, such as legislating for higher penalties, placing environmental regulation with the Environment Protection Authority and strengthening its role in the planning process, and legislating to introduce a new Environmental Licence. But the planned growth ahead makes this the right time to make further practical changes.

Finfish Farming (Compliance and Monitoring) Unit

The Government's consolidation of the industry's environmental regulation into the independent Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is a major step forward. The Government will now take this consolidation further by establishing a Finfish Farming (Compliance and Monitoring) Unit in the EPA.

The Unit will be funded by industry through levies. The Unit will ensure the capability of the regulator keeps up with the industry's growth, and ensure that farmers perform to the standards they have committed to. This will reinforce public and market confidence

in the companies' commitment to those standards, already indicated by their voluntary third-party certification.

We understand the large investments companies have made in environmental monitoring infrastructure, their workforce and appropriate skills and we don't want to lose these things. We do acknowledge though, that the community expects more effective oversight of environmental monitoring. This change will deliver that oversight, with the Finfish Farming Unit undertaking observation and audits of environmental monitoring practices.

Development of an industry-wide Biosecurity Program

The greatest single risk to marine farming operations worldwide is fish disease and pests. Through significant investment in research and development in vaccine technologies, coupled with good fish health and biosecurity practices, Tasmania has escaped a major fish disease outbreak on the scale of those that have devastated important marine farming locations overseas. But with that risk in mind, in 2014 the salmon companies worked with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) to develop a *Biosecurity Program*.

The Government is strongly committed to continuing to underpin Tasmanian biosecurity. As a priority, the Government will work with the industry to review the *Biosecurity Program* and develop a new version that ensures the industry works to the highest biosecurity standards. It will include assurances of protection for the inland salmonid populations from any risk of fish disease arising from the land-based facilities of the marine farmers. This approach will be consistent with the Government's complete overhaul of the State's biosecurity legislation and the intention is to have the new program approved under the proposed new Biosecurity Act. If legislative change is required in order to implement elements of the new *Biosecurity Program*, it will be prioritised.

Increased range and improved transparency of environmental information

The salmon farming companies already provide a very large amount of environmental data under their licence conditions. But the capacity to collect such information is constantly improving, and now includes the possibility of some of it being available in real time, which creates the important potential for real-time monitoring. The Government will require increased use of real-time monitoring, where it's technically possible given the limited reliability of current equipment.

The Government will also improve the transparency of information on the industry's environmental performance by the establishment of an independent web portal that will be hosted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. The website will provide access to all environmental data and to as much production information as possible, subject only to not revealing genuine "commercial in confidence" information.

Encouraging relevant research and development, and the subsequent adoption of new technologies that reduce environmental impacts

The industry in Tasmania has pioneered many technological advances in its history, and continues to work on a wide range of further improvements. We are already seeing further advances in areas such as reducing waste through improved feeding techniques,

experimental waste capture systems (particularly in shallow or sensitive areas), net cleaning techniques, and reduction of wildlife interactions. There is further work to do on the practicality and relevance in Tasmania of recirculating aquaculture systems and potential land-based farming. The Government will cooperate with the industry to develop outcome based performance measures that encourage the use of emerging technology, and continuous improvement.

Maintenance of key fish health and biosecurity assets

The Government will resource, and upgrade as necessary, the State's key fish health and biosecurity assets that are operated by DPIPWE. This will require continuation of broad industry consultation so that the work program of the State's assets always reflects the real needs of the industry. The Government will extend the model of co-funding with industry that was developed for the new Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines Centre of Excellence at Mt Pleasant. The Government contributed an additional \$500,000 to the Centre in the 2014-15 Budget in fulfilment of an election commitment, and recently provided an ongoing additional \$150,000 a year.

Supporting industry growth

*The Government cannot directly drive growth, but **there are ways it can appropriately use its resources and influence to support it.***

Commitment to Sustainable Growth

The Government's actions are underpinned by a clear commitment to realising the growth potential of the salmon industry, consistent with it remaining genuinely sustainable and taking full advantage of the efficiencies offered by improving technology and practices. These are the conditions for maintenance of the social licence the industry has established, and which it needs if it is to grow further.

The Government supports the industry's own long-established target of becoming a \$1 billion a year industry by 2030, while noting that this now appears conservative. The Government supports the industry's growth so long as it operates to the high standards and expectations outlined in this Plan. The effects of such growth on the wider Tasmanian community and economy could be enormously positive. Those possible benefits explain why the Government is so keen to look beyond the current marine farming areas, to new water and new ways of farming. We will also commission new economic research to quantify better the full impact of the industry on the State's economy.

Research, development and innovation

The industry is in a highly competitive market, globally and nationally. Growth will require keeping up with overseas competitors, as well as dealing with new operating challenges such as farming further offshore. The Government will continue to work with the salmon industry – including the ancillary sector – to support research, development and innovation that can lead to the development of products and IP that are marketed and sold globally.

Marketing and export development support linked to Tasmanian brand development

The competitive environment for salmon includes the sphere of marketing. The salmon companies are already very active marketers on their own behalf, but salmon is also an important part of the broader Tasmanian brand. The Government commits to maintaining that linkage. It also commits to using its capacity to support and develop export markets in order to reinforce the industry's growth opportunities, including in the rapidly expanding ancillary sector whose growing stock of marketable IP in turn reinforces the "clever" aspects of the brand.





Skills and career development

The industry has a strong record of encouraging training and skills development, with both public and private providers. The Government has a strong record of supporting this effort, and is renewing the “Seafood Pledge” for up to three more years, to deliver critical funding to Seafood Training Tasmania. But to make further growth possible skill levels will need to be even higher, and career paths will need to be improved to attract and retain skilled staff, especially in remote locations. The Government commits to remaining a strong partner through public training providers and institutions, and in the implementation and review of the industry’s workforce development plan. This will include seeking to maximise the opportunities for Aboriginal Tasmanians to find and develop good careers.

Representative industry body

The industry consists of more than the farmers, given the growth of the important and innovative ancillary sector and the role of the scientific community. The release of this Plan provides an ideal opportunity to bring together representatives of the whole industry – salmon growers, ancillary industries and scientific community – to act as a reference group throughout the Plan’s implementation. The Government will facilitate the establishment of the new, broad-based reference group as an early priority, and support it in developing milestones. These will help track progress on implementation, which will be done through reviews after one year and then every second year after that.





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