



10<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**Sarah Courtney MP**

Minister for Primary Industries and Racing

Parliament House

Hobart 7000

**TAS**

Dear Minister

**Re: Message from the electors of Prosser**

Congratulations on your strong election result and elevation to the Cabinet Ministry. My colleagues at Marine Protection Tasmania Inc and an ever expanding network of Prosser residents known to us through our data base, welcome your appointment as an opportunity for the Government to heal some scar tissue related to the current 'Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry'.

May I correct the record left by your predecessor – had the Okehampton Bay proponent Tassal brought world class on shore 'closed loop' hatchery technology and high energy off shore growing pens to our coast, we would all be in the cheer squad for job creation in our area.

But we were not given that choice – in fact nor any choice in the resumption of our coast and licensing of yet another polluting, inshore, industrial scale fish farm.

Minister, blind freddy can see the degradation of once pristine coastal areas in Tasmanian waters, increasing levels of community disquiet and the steady decline in the productivity of our wild fisheries where these farms have proliferated, these past 30 years.

The forefathers of this industry could not have known this would happen, these are unintended consequences. But now that we have 30 years of graphic evidence and an environmental disaster unfolding in Macquarie Harbour driven by 'self regulation' which has been spectacularly abused, the cargo cult mentality driven by Minister Rockliff to 'grow this industry to a \$1Billion sector of the Tasmanian economy' MUST stop for a rain check - if we are to achieve sustainable growth and learn to co habit with the industry under a social license.

The industry growth plan needs to be reworked in consultation with the community, wherever these farms might be proposed in the future and until it is, community resistance to salmon farming will continue to spread and ferment state wide.



You have inherited a contentious issue because:

- *'Coming ready or not' is no way to deliver a Government growth plan for any industry.*
- *And since 2011 when the 'Marine Review Panel', designed to hear community appeals related to matters arising for salmon farming was established under the Marine Farm Planning Act 1995, was subsequently stripped of independent powers and the authority vested then only in your Ministry – the planning process is not now about science, but about politics. Claimed community consultation under this regime is tokenism at best.*

The present autocracy is a fundamental failure of the very legislation designed to allow community engagement and build trust. The reverse is now the case. You Minister have the power to restore that status to the panel as an important first step to restoring transparency and credibility on your watch.

Make no mistake about it – the Tasmanian aquaculture sector is an important industry for our state. But so are our wild fisheries both commercial and recreational which I am advised are already a \$1B industry combined yet I hear few voices speaking for them. The damage ammonia rich effluent flows and nutrient laden blooms travelling in suspension on the tides from inshore fish farms are doing to native fishery resources in Southern Tasmania is not properly understood and is a critical matter for science, independent of fish farm vested interests, to establish as we learn more about managing and protecting these resources for the future. We MUST have independently verified base data before we do any more of this and do permanent damage to the ecology of our magnificent coast line.

The damage to wild fishers native fish stocks is very well understood however, due to seal relocations. During 2017 over 2,000 animals were relocated from Tassal farms in Southern Tasmania causing havoc to the native fishery in NW Tasmanian coastal waters and the families who rely upon these waters for their living.

Major investments in armoured predator nets will bring an end to relocations Minister and we expect your Government to abide by the commitment announced by Minister Rockliffe late in 2017 to end seal relocations and to ensure Tassal do make these investments and the relocations do end as promised.

The next test for this policy will by the way be the arrival en mass of the Ile Des Phoques Australian Fur Seal colony from the small granite Island off Schouten Island, in the Okehampton Bay fish farm and your management of that issue.



I am advised that these once playful creatures are severely traumatised by the relocation experience, remaining frightened and aggressive towards mankind thereafter. Shark activity related to seal movements is another concern for the amenity of populated inshore coastal areas.

Minister we know the things which unite us are stronger than the things which divide us and we want our state to prosper. But Tasmanian coastal communities want a seat at the table of their own futures and do not want to be dictated to by bureaucrats.

A reworking of the 'Industry Growth Plan' for the Salmon Industry with genuine community engagement will reward the growers doing the right thing, properly consider the future of the state wild fishery and dependent families and confirm transparency of process which is missing from the recent past of the salmon Industry in Tasmania.

Can I urge your consideration of these matters please.

Sincerely

Jim Playsted  
**Candidate for the seat of Prosser**  
Tasmanian Legislative Council elections  
On May 5<sup>th</sup> 2018