



MEDIA RELEASE

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World Heritage Under Threat and No Real Science Available

Environment Tasmania and the Tasmanian Aquaculture Reform Alliance are urging the community to oppose the proposed expansion of marine farms in Macquarie Harbour by TASSAL, Petuna Aquaculture and Huon Aquaculture Group, on the grounds that insufficient scientific baseline data has been provided and serious threats to the health of the Harbour and its well established tourism industry exist coupled with a raft of social impacts.

“The Government is currently assessing the largest proposed expansion of marine farms in Tasmania on the doorstep of our unique Tasmanian Wilderness World-Heritage Area in Macquarie Harbour, and yet there is a shocking lack of baseline scientific data to demonstrate whether or not it will be sustainable,” said Environment Tasmania’s Marine Coordinator, Rebecca Hubbard.

The draft amendment to the *Macquarie Harbour Marine Farming Development Plan 2005 No 1* proposes an expansion on marine farms from 564 hectares to 926 hectares in the Harbour (increase of 64%), right up to the boundary of the World Heritage Area.

“The social and environmental impacts of the proposed expansion are potentially huge, with significantly less access for kayaking and fishing, and significantly increased noise and odour, antibiotic use, lighting, infrastructure and marine debris,” said Christine Materia, Chair of community group Tasmanian Aquaculture Reform Alliance.

“The proposal to increase stocking densities of fish within each farm and to change the management controls to the Secretary of the Primary Industries Department seems an extension of the shift of authority from the independent scientific review panel to the Minister regarding developments. This reflects the politicising of a decision making process that should remain within an independent scientific realm, and further decreases community confidence,” continued Ms Materia.

“The unique and endangered Maugean Skate is likely to suffer from such a large increase in fish farms within its restricted habitat, and the huge increase in nutrients and related decrease in Dissolved Oxygen levels could lead to marine life not being able to survive in the area. It is these very grave impacts that have not been addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement, despite being required by the *Macquarie Harbour Marine Farming Development Plan*, and it is simply not good enough for a proposal of this scale. The Companies cannot say they will monitor it later, because later may be too late,” concluded Ms Hubbard.

For more information:

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Also Available:

Background briefing on the proposed expansion and Environmental Impact Statement