

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for the Environment and Climate Change

Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone: 03 6165 7678
Email: barnett.correspondence@dpac.tas.gov.au



Mr Peter George MP
Member for Franklin

8 SEP 2026

By email: haprocedure@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr George 

Salmon Farming – Wellboat Disturbances

Thank you for your question in Parliament on 17 June 2026 requesting further information about the *Salmon Farming – Wellboat Disturbances*. I provide the following information:

Question

Mr GEORGE question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE CHANGE My question comes from an anonymous resident of the Huon Valley unlucky enough to live near a salmon farm. They describe the incessant low-frequency noise caused by passing wellboats as 'intense and physical vibrations and a sensation akin to heartburn'. Despite numerous complaints to the EPA salmon regulator, nothing has been done to stop this disturbance. As a consequence, this resident is relocating their family away from the Huon Valley. Minister, which do you believe should take precedence, the industrial operations of multinational salmon farms and public waterways or Tasmanian families' quality of life?

Response

Regulation of noise emissions from marine finfish farming activities

- The EPA takes noise complaints seriously and noise emission limits are imposed on marine farm leases via environmental licences.
- The EPA's priority is to identify and resolve any non-compliances against noise emission limits in environmental licences.
- The EPA uses a risk-based approach to prioritise noise investigations that considers details provided by complainant(s), whether the source can be reasonably

identified, current EPA noise investigations underway, and other regulatory tools available that enable the EPA to impose requirements on a regulated entity to undertake a noise investigation to the satisfaction of the Director, EPA.

- In the last financial year July 2025 to 11 May 2026, the EPA received 138 individual noise complaints.
 - 130 of these individual noise complaints are from 3 members of the public.
- Noise investigations are a complex and lengthy process. However, when combined with details provided by those making complaints, this can provide solid evidence to support regulatory decision making.

Environmental Standards for Tasmanian Marine Finfish Farming 2023

- In 2023 the Tasmanian Government made the *Environmental Standards for Tasmanian Marine Finfish Farming 2023*.
- This Standard gave the Director EPA, the head of power to require an environmental licence holder to undertake a noise investigation, assessment and report on vessels travelling to and from a marine lease where the Director has formed the opinion that the noise from vessels may be causing environmental nuisance.
- These investigations must be undertaken in a manner specified by the Director, include noise predictions or measurements to determine noise emissions from identified vessels at relevant Noise Sensitive Premises that are representative of relevant period of the day and operating conditions.
- The produced report must include mitigation measures to improve noise emissions from identified vessels.

Huon River – Port Huon and Wattle Grove

- In December 2024, responding to community noise complaints in the Port Huon and Wattle Grove area, the EPA required Huon Aquaculture Company to undertake a vessel noise investigation and impact assessment under section 35 of the *Environmental Standards for Tasmanian Marine Finfish Farming 2023*.
- Vessels to be investigated were selected based on the of risk of generating nuisance noise emissions and/or complaints. These included both of Huon's well boats the Ronja Huon and the Ronja Storm.
- On 5 November 2025 Huon Aquaculture submitted their report, *The Noise Impact Assessment Report – Vessel Traffic Transiting the Huon River*, which identifies actions to be undertaken to reduce the impact of noise from vessels transiting the Huon River.

- Following EPA review of the initial report, Huon Aquaculture submitted a revised version in January 2026 which has been approved by the EPA and is publicly available.
- The report's vessel noise mitigation plan identified general and specific vessel mitigation measures to minimise the impact of vessel noise on residents living on adjacent shorelines.
- General measures include;
 - all vessels traveling the Huon River will follow a defined course that runs central to the channel, noting that this is the only permissible course that the two well boats, The Ronja Huon and Ronja Storm, are able to navigate under their pilotage exemptions; and
 - Other operational actions such as ensure doors are closed to noisy machinery compartments and non-essential noise emitting requirement power down where possible, when passing coastal residences.
- Ronja Storm
 - Modelled results indicated the vessel was capable of meeting EPA noise limits.
 - Noise mitigation measures include installation of a muffler silencer on the vacuum pump exhaust to minimise noise output during water filling operations at Whale Point.
- Ronja Huon
 - Modelled results indicated the vessel needed noise mitigation to meet evening and nighttime limits.
 - Noise mitigation measure implemented includes;
 - redirection of exhaust outlet; and
 - supply and exhaust fan generators turned off during transit where possible; and
 - the well boat connected to shore power when moored at Port Huon.
- It is important to note that the Ronja Huon as with other vessels contracted by Huon have been in service for several years. Engineering fixes and or replacement of noisy vessels or implementation of major engineering fixes across multiple vessels takes time.

Huon River – Huon Aquacultures Garden Island Marine Farm

- In early 2026 the EPA required Huon Aquaculture Company to undertake a noise impact assessment for the Garden Island lease due to the introduction of a

permanently moored feed barge. This impact assessment modelled potential non-compliances against noise limits set in the environmental licence, therefore a mitigation plan was required.

- The Garden Island lease noise impact assessment and mitigation plan were published on the EPA website in April 2026.
- This plan identified the Ronja Huon as a vessel of interest to the EPA.
- In June 2026 the EPA issued a warning letter to Huon Aquaculture regarding non-compliances against daytime noise limits.

EPA Noise Investigation Eggs and Bacon Bay Area – In process

- In response to community noise complaints in the Eggs and Bacon Bay area in the first half of 2026, the EPA commenced a noise investigation from finfish farming operations in the Eggs and Bacon Bay area.
- Three noise loggers were deployed, two in coastal locations and 1 located to provide the EPA with background noise information to inform current and future investigations.
- EPA noise monitoring occurred concurrently with monitoring undertaken by Huon Aquaculture as required by the EPA in relation to their operations on their Garden Island Marine Farm.
- The EPA is in the process of reviewing this noise logger information.
- Noise diaries provided by nearby coastal communities during the period of EPA noise logger deployment will be used to inform outcomes of the EPA's investigation and any future regulatory and compliance decisions by the Director, EPA.

EPA Noise Investigation Petchy's Bay

- In response to historical community complaints in the Petchy's Bay area the EPA commenced a noise investigation in 2024 in regarding to Tassal's operation of its Brabazon lease.
- The well boat AquaTas had been identified as a vessel of interest.
- The EPA is in the process of reviewing noise logger information captured in 2024 and 2025.

Thank you for raising this matter on behalf of your constituent.

Yours sincerely 



Hon Guy Barnett MP

Deputy Premier

Attorney-General

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Minister for the Environment and Climate Change