

Minister for Environment
Minister for Innovation, Science, and the Digital Economy
Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs
Minister for Arts and Heritage

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Mr Peter George MP
Independent Member for Franklin
C/o- Laura.Ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr George,

Thank you for your constituency question about algal blooms.

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges that harmful algal blooms can pose risks to marine ecosystems, fisheries, aquaculture industries and, in some cases, public health.

Tasmania already has established monitoring and management systems in place to detect and respond to these events. This includes routine phytoplankton and marine biotoxin monitoring through Tasmania's Shellfish Market Access Program, weekly public Biotoxin News updates, and regulatory powers to restrict harvesting or take other action where risk thresholds are exceeded.

The bloom observed in southern Tasmania earlier this year was confirmed as *Noctiluca scintillans*. This is a naturally occurring species known to cause water discolouration and bioluminescence, but it is not regarded as toxic to humans. It was distinct from the harmful bloom event recently reported in South Australia.

In relation to economic and social modelling, Tasmania's approach is to focus on practical preparedness, scientific monitoring, and coordinated response capability. Relevant agencies continually assess emerging risks, including the impacts of marine heatwaves and changing ocean conditions, which may increase bloom likelihood over time.

Should a significant harmful bloom occur, trigger points for action would depend on the species detected, toxin levels, geographic extent, impacts on fisheries or aquaculture, and any risks to human health. Where thresholds are met, immediate responses can include increased sampling, harvest area closures, public health advice, and cross agency incident management.

The South Australian experience reinforces the importance of early detection, clear communication and acting on the best available science. Tasmania already has mature systems in place and will continue to strengthen preparedness as environmental conditions evolve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Ogilvie".

Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie MP
Minister for Environment