

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Tabatha Badger MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

QUESTION:

Australians, and in particular, Tasmanians, have a strong connection and culture to the coast. From fishing, swimming and surfing, we rely on the ocean as a place of respite from the troubles of the land. With Tasmanians heading to the coast and their local beaches this spring and summer, how can families be expected to know if their local swimming hole is loaded with antibiotics that could potentially cause stinging, irritation of the eyes and affect external cuts or abrasions? Worse, there are serious concerns that this antibiotic also has reproductive toxicity and also a link to organ damage. Are we expected to change our lifestyle and shift our culture so that the multinational corporations can make more profits

ANSWER:

- A list of the fish farms currently being treated, including the 3km buffer zone, is publicly available at:
<https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap/app/list/map?bookmarkId=1201633>.
- The Director of Public Health has confirmed there is no evidence of harm to human health from consuming traces of florfenicol.
- The advice from Public Health is precautionary only, aimed at helping Tasmanians make informed decisions about eating wild fish caught in the vicinity of a florfenicol-treated lease area.

- Additionally, the use of florfenicol to treat salmon is unlikely to affect waters frequently used for recreational purposes, such as swimming.
- It is also important to note that there are numerous potential causes of skin irritation, both environmental (e.g. algae, bacteria, water quality factors) and non-environmental (e.g. personal care products, pre-existing conditions).
- The public health advice is publicly available at:
<https://www.health.tas.gov.au/advice-recreational-fishing>.



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