



Marine Protection Tas Inc

## President's Report 2018

Firstly I would like to thank the MPT Committee for electing me as President at the April Meeting this year. I would also like to thank all MPT committee and general members for their efforts in the last 6 months. In particular I would like to pay tribute to Patricia Kirk for her tireless efforts as secretary / treasurer. If it wasn't for Trish, MPT would not exist, I am certain of that!

Our initial goal of preventing a salmon farming operation going into Okehampton Bay has not been attained, but we continue to hold Tassal accountable for its actions in the bay, as well as more broadly, all three major Fish Farming companies for their inappropriate expansion plans in Tasmania. We have also been supporting and promoting the notion, that in Tasmania, we currently have worst practice fish farming.

MPT Vice President stood unsuccessfully for the Legislative Council, even though he gained a great deal of local support for his candidacy. On behalf of MPT I would like to thank Jim and Trish for their tremendous joint efforts in relation to that election campaign. I am still in the hunt to be elected as a GSB councillor and would like to thank everyone for their support of my campaign, and in particular, committee members, Trish Kirk, Eugene Alexander, Dale Pearce and Jim Playsted.

Locally, Tassal's use of the town water supply has been a focus for MPT. Along with locals, Geoff Baker and Wayne Murray, MPT members have questioned the amount of town water Tassal has used through public meetings, the EPA and TasWater reps. Wayne Murray identified that Tassal 'unexpectedly' used 4 ML of town water in January 2018 and a further 8 ML of 'unexpected usage' in November/December 2017. These figures have been consequently verified by TasWater, as 'unexpected usage'. The 'Twamley' dam has not yet been approved by the Federal Environment Minister, and we still need to target Tassal's water use, particularly with the summer period approaching.

With frustrations growing in relation to the imminent unfettered expansion of Fish Farms in Tasmanian coastal waters, MPT ran a poll of members to explore views in relation to a boycott of 'caged farmed salmon'. Of the 103 members polled, 94% supported an MPT boycott. No action based on this result has been taken by MPT so far, given that Environment Tas will be running a 'markets campaign' some time in the near future.

Tassal has held several information sessions at Triabunna this year and several members have been in attendance at each of these meetings, asking various questions about Tassal's operations in Okehampton Bay. The expected 'spin type' responses were expectedly forthcoming from the Tassal leadership team. I have consequentially had a recent meeting with the Head of Environment for Tassal, Sean Riley. He has promised to upload specific data from Okehampton Bay to their 'Dashboard' in an 'understandable format'. I also had some 'off the record' discussions with him in relation to Storm Bay and the Derwent Estuary which has resulted in me soon to have a meeting with a CSIRO rep to look at some fish farm pollution 'modelling' software programs.

The ASC team came to town and several MPT members attended their meeting, asking the 'hard hitting' questions. The ACS Team concluded that it had been the 'best session' they'd had so far in Tasmania!! Best for who one might ask. Sue Nettlefold sent in a wonderful response to the team, outlining their shortcomings. I also sent in a response targeting their 'in house' industry assessment process and how meaningless it was.

On a positive note, behind the scenes, there has been steady growth in the outrage at the Finfish Farming expansion plans, to such a point that numerous community groups and individuals have got together and formed a statewide alliance. The alliance will be an incorporated association called, the 'Tasmanian Alliance for Marine Protection' (TAMP).

There will be a media launch in Hobart on Tuesday 23rd October, which I will attend as the MPT rep, so watch this space!

The Alliance already has ten member groups + individuals and is growing. The list includes the following groups;

- Marine Protection Tasmania
- Neighbours of Fish Farming
- Wild Fishers Against Fish Farms
- Environment Tasmania
- Surfers Against Inshore Fish Farms
- Freycinet Action Network
- Abalone Wild Fishers
- RecFish Tasmania
- King Islanders Against Fish Farms
- Bruny Island Sustainable Aquaculture

I firmly believe that TAMP will become the major vehicle for Finfish Farming reform in Tasmania, and the government has certainly becoming worried about community concerns in relation to expansion plans. The Finfish Farming Industry is already branching out its operations to other areas of Australia, partly due to the continuing concerns of everyday Tasmanians.

Finally, if we don't want Tasmania surrounded by inshore coastal fish farms, we all need to keep fighting against this current 'world's worst practice feedlot farming', the

vested interest politics associated with the Aquaculture Industry, and we must continue to push for 'closed loop' Finfish Aquaculture.

Grant Robinson  
President  
Marine Protection Tasmania