



Media Release

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IMAS STUDY SHOWS LITTLE INDICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF 2015 NITROGEN EXCEEDANCE

The Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment today released the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) study into the potential effects of Huon Aquaculture's nitrogen inputs into the Huon Estuary in 2015.

Huon Aquaculture CEO and Managing Director Peter Bender said, "we are pleased that the IMAS report corroborates our initial assessment made back in 2015; that there would be no cause for concern.

"The public can rest assured that the report found that our nitrogen exceedance has had a temporary, small and localised impact without any significant system-wide impact.

"It is also important to note that at no time was the total nitrogen limit exceeded across the Huon and Channel.

The exceedance was caused by a range of factors, not the least of which was a major overhaul of the Company's operations at that time.

"In 2014-15 we totally revolutionised the way we farmed – we changed every single pen and mooring on our marine leases and moved them to deeper, higher energy sites.

"Unfortunately, during that period of change, we breached our nitrogen cap in the Huon plan area because we relocated our entire southern fish population into the Huon whilst we were re-installing all new mooring systems to support our new fortress pens in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.

"In addition, we were also awaiting lease approvals in Storm Bay. We also had unprecedented fish growth rates and the success of our fortress pens meant we were no longer losing fish to seals," he said.

"The unique combination of factors led to a short term increase in feed inputs and we have put in systems and procedures to ensure that a repeat cannot occur.

"We took full and public responsibility for the breach back in 2015, and we will continue to farm transparently and in a way that prioritises fish welfare and preserves the environment for the long-term.

The IMAS report was finalised in October 2017 and a copy can be found on the DPIPWE website <https://agencyweb.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/Documents/HAC%20Nutrient%20Enrichment%20Assessment.pdf>.

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Background:

- Over the period of March 2014 – February 2015, Huon Aquaculture breached its total permissible dissolved nitrogen output (TDPNO) in the Huon River
- Dissolved nitrogen outputs are calculated on a rolling 12-month total meaning that a breach early in the rolling 12-months will have a rollover effect
- Huon voluntarily reported the exceedance to government
- Huon paid the full \$260,000 costs of the scientific assessment
- The Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) was engaged to undertake the assessment
- Approximately 85% of the nitrogen is dissolved inorganic nitrogen, mostly released across the gills and is immediately available to primary producers (eg. phytoplankton) in the water column