



Media Statement

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There has been strong interest in our new wellboat, the *Ronja Storm*, but there's still been a bit of confusion about what a wellboat does, so here goes...

Wellboats have wells or tanks for the storage and transport of live fish. The term was first used in the 17th century and before modern refrigeration methods, well-boats allowed for the delivery of live fish to port. Contemporary wellboats are used extensively in the aquaculture industry around the world.

We use our current wellboat, the *Ronja Huon*, to transport smolt to sea, to transfer them from farm sites to harvest pens and to bathe them. The *Ronja Storm* will do the same; just in much greater volumes (500 tonnes vs current 300 tonnes).

In other words, a wellboat is a large fish taxi. In this case, the *Ronja Storm* is a 116 metres long and 23 metres wide taxi!

They are not on-water fish processing factories.

Wellboats eliminate the need for time intensive, noisy towing of pens back and forth through Tasmanian waterways.

Wellboats also provide a much safer working environment for employees, particularly as Huon grows our off-shore farming.

The *Ronja Storm* is a highly sophisticated, contemporary vessel specifically designed to withstand some of the roughest salmon farming areas in the world; Storm Bay. The size and design of the *Ronja Storm* means that it has the ability to go out to our farm sites even in challenging weather to bathe fish. This is much more efficient than the current method and will result in less vessel movements to and from our farm at Hideaway Bay to Storm Bay.

The *Ronja Storm* has four wells to store fish, as well as having a water cooling and control system. Resulting in more room for the fish, and strengthened monitoring. The water control system allows for the levels of hydrogen and oxygen to be easily measured and changed when needed.

It will also house an on-board desalination plant capable of producing over 700,000 litres of freshwater per hour, reducing our use of Tasmania's freshwater supply.

The desalination process works via reverse osmosis (water purification technology). It uses a semipermeable membrane at high pressure to separate the salt and natural minerals from the seawater and turn it into freshwater.



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Of each intake of seawater, 50 per cent will be used as freshwater to bathe our fish and the other 50 per cent will immediately be released back into the ocean with double its original salt and mineral content. As each pen of fish are bathed, the water is treated via the same process and released back into the ocean, preventing oceanic contamination.

Our current method of bathing fish involves pumping freshwater onto our current wellboat, at our base in Port Huon or from freshwater liners. Having the desalination plant onboard the *Ronja Storm* is a much more efficient method and more environmentally friendly.

We are leasing the *Ronja Storm* (vessels this size are prohibitive to purchase outright) and will be looking for additional skilled Tasmanians to support its operations once she arrives later this year.

The *Ronja Storm* is an investment into Huon's future in Tasmania and Australia as a whole. It allows for greater expansion, for improvements into animal welfare and strengthens biosecurity. This also allows us to create more specialised employment positions and help our industry grow for the future.

ENDS

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