



# Media Release

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## **PORT STEPHENS KINGFISH TRIAL MOVES TO NEXT STAGE**

Huon Aquaculture has today confirmed to the New South Wales Government they will finalise the joint Yellowtail Kingfish research trial in Providence Bay, Port Stephens earlier than anticipated.

Peter Bender, Huon Aquaculture CEO said, “The joint trial has been a success in that we have learnt a lot about how to farm high-quality Yellowtail Kingfish in warm water as well as farming in a highly exposed site.

Mr Bender said that the trial demonstrated there are no biological challenges to farming Yellowtail Kingfish while also providing valuable information around environmental, economic and marketing matters associated with farming Yellowtail Kingfish.

“We are now in a position to pursue commercially farming Kingfish off the Australian coastline, which is the very outcome that the trial set out to achieve—this result truly is a credit to everyone involved.

Huon extended sincere thanks to the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the local community for their support, dedication and patience during the trial.

“We simply couldn’t have achieved what we have without the research and technical support of the NSW Government, especially the team at the Port Stephens Fisheries Institute.

Mr Bender said ongoing challenges with the trial included sourcing commercial quantities of Yellowtail Kingfish fingerlings, the lack of a suitable holding/harvest site to ensure a stable market supply, and an appropriate shore base.

Huon continues to explore possible Kingfish farming sites elsewhere in NSW.

“We’d ultimately like to have Kingfish farming sites on both the East and West Coasts of Australia so that we can supply locally-grown Kingfish to the domestic and export markets, as well as locals.

“The future is bright for farming Yellowtail Kingfish which has been proven by the joint research trial. Customer feedback indicates the fish is a very high quality, versatile product and an excellent species for aquaculture production,” concluded Peter Bender.

**ENDS**

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## Background:

- Huon retains a commercial 62-hectare lease near the trial site but does not plan to farm it for the foreseeable future.
- Independent environmental sampling undertaken in the two and a half years of operation found no significant impact on seafloor ecology or water column chemistry. Samples were taken from under sea pens and within the research lease, at compliance sites on the edge of the research lease and at the three control sites located at a distance from the research lease in Providence Bay (video footage included on NSW DPI/Huon websites);
- As outlined in Annual Environmental Management Report October 2018):
  - there was no significant unexplained mortality or illness of fish;
  - no new introduced pest/species identified on the lease;
  - tagged shark monitoring indicated that during routine operations sharks were not attracted to the lease area; and
  - there were no aquatic fauna entanglement incidents.
- The moorings and marker buoys will be removed from the trial site and pens, nets and other equipment will be cleaned, disinfected and taken to Tasmania.
- Following the completion of the first harvest in mid-2018, a decision was made to upgrade the MARL pens, including the reinforcing of underwater nets and other pen infrastructure. Throughout this time, Huon employees have gained additional skills by working on the company's Tasmanian salmon farms. Now that the decision has been made to take Huon Aquaculture's investment in Yellowtail Kingfish farming to the next phase, these employees have been offered employment elsewhere within the business.