



# Media Release

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## NO SYSTEM-WIDE IMPACTS FROM YELLOW BLUFF FARM

Huon Aquaculture is pleased to see positive results stemming from the first annual Yellow Bluff (Storm Bay) Broadscale Environmental Monitoring Program (BEMP) report conducted by the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).

Peter Bender, Huon Aquaculture's Managing Director and CEO, said that based on the initial data and parameters surveyed, there is no evidence to suggest that farming at Huon's Yellow Bluff lease has had a system-wide influence on the water quality, soft-sediment, and inshore reef habitats of Storm Bay.

"The purpose of the BEMP program is to assess the environmental performance of salmon farming on the western side of Storm Bay, and to determine any impact from Huon's operations on the surrounding waterway," he said.

"The results of the Yellow Bluff BEMP are publicly available so that people can see for themselves, from a reliable and independent research institution, that our farming is having no impact," said Peter Bender.

The BEMP was initiated in August 2019 to provide knowledge and information about the surrounding habitats in Storm Bay, and looks at a nine-month period from August 2019 to April 2020. A BEMP program has also been operating in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon Estuary since 2009.

Mr Bender said key results showed a healthy canopy cover at all reef sites.

"A wide range of sponge colours and forms can be seen including finger, cup-shaped, arborescent and encrusting, plus an extensive list of fish species were observed."

The observations from the ROV surveys in 2020 indicate that the deep reefs in Storm Bay had not changed since previous baseline surveys.

While there were elevated levels of nutrients and chlorophyll a, these appear to be linked to the movement of wider scale natural water bodies into Storm Bay, rather than any farming influence.

"Storm Bay is a dynamic system and one that is well suited for Huon's operations. The impacts of farming are well understood both beneath our pens, 35 metres outside the leases, and within the broader farming area. The transient nature of these influences have been subject to an extensive amount of scientific investigation," finished Peter Bender.

Research across Storm Bay and the Huon and D'Entrecasteaux channel is ongoing and the results directly influence Huon's operations.

The report is publicly available via the EPA website <https://epa.tas.gov.au/regulation/salmon-aquaculture/storm-bay/mf281-yellow-bluff>

**ENDS**

Images: <https://huonaqua.sharefile.com/d-s855304eb26ca44cdac8d0c6e597dd53e>

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## Background:

- The BEMP program's objective is to document broadscale spatial and temporal trends for key environmental parameters, allowing assessment of the environmental effects of finfish aquaculture in the region.
- The BEMP for the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon Estuary commenced in March 2009.
- See page 13 (Figure 1) for a map of sample sites.

## Key findings summarised below:

- All redox and sulphide concentrations were indicative of healthy sediments.
- The fauna composition was consistent with natural assemblages, with limited abundances of species that indicated organic enrichment.
- The concentrations of nutrients were similar to previous datasets.
- There are elevated concentrations of phosphate and nitrate in spring and summer 2019-2020 across sites, and at multiple scales.
- Indicative concentration of chlorophyll *a* at the compliance site was higher than the annual rolling median investigative trigger level, but similar to other intermediate and far field sites.
- The patterns in d chlorophyll *a* appear to be linked to meso-scale influences on Storm Bay.
- There was a healthy canopy cover at all reef sites, with limited occurrences of enrichment status species (i.e. epiphytic algae, filamentous algae, nuisance green and nuisance red).