



Defending our Environment

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

### **We need a government watchdog, not lapdog.**

The latest research into Tasmania's salmon industry highlights what coastal communities have been telling the State government for years: the threat to Tasmania's coastline and to its reputation vastly outweighs the benefits of the industry.

Neighbours of Fish Farming (NOFF), like other watchdog groups, has been warning the government for years that its unquestioning support of the industry is misplaced.

The latest report into the salmon industry by the Australia Institute only highlights how lopsided that support is.

The institute illustrates how little the industry returns to the state in taxes and that what the state government calls "our brightest economic prospect" actually employs far fewer people than car repairers and child care centres. – just 0.6% of the workforce.

"The salmon industry's contribution to the state in terms of economy and employment do not justify the unquestioning

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support of both the major political parties in the state,” the president of NOFF, Peter George said today.

“Worse, the fish farms get away with peppercorn leases on swathes of Tasmanian coastal waters that belong to the public.

“As the Australia Institute points out, by adopting the Norwegian model for leases, the Tasmanian industry should be paying at least \$700 million dollars to the people of our state rather than less than a million.

“The figures in the report should give any reasonable person pause for thought.”

NOFF urged state and federal governments to take note of the report and become an industry watchdog instead of its lapdog.

Mr George added the bottom line had to be judged by the negative impact the industrial fish farms were having on the coastal environment and on Tasmania’s reputation as a supplier of sustainably sourced fine food and wine.

“It’s already clear that the fish farms will have to move ashore to closed-loop facilities where their impact can be moderated and monitored,” he said.

“That’s a worldwide trend gathering force particularly as oceans warm and it would be shameful to see Tasmania left behind.”

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