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www.asc-aqua.org

27 May 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: A Submission to the Federal Government's Senate inquiry into Tasmania's aquaculture regulations

The [Aquaculture Stewardship Council](#) (ASC) is an international standard and certification organisation that seeks to improve the environmental and social performance of aquaculture operators globally.

The ASC standards were developed with input from over 2,000 stakeholders drawn from all sectors with an interest in aquaculture. The ASC is a full member of the [International Social, Environmental, Accreditation and Labelling Alliance](#) (ISEAL). Membership to ISEAL demands rigorous adherence to the [Codes](#) that ISEAL has developed covering: Standard Setting, Impacts Monitoring and Assurance (accreditation and certification).. [Members](#) include the Marine Stewardship Council, the Forestry Stewardship Council, Rainforest Alliance and FairTrade amongst others.

ASC's certification process is consistent with globally recognised technical guidelines developed by the [Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations](#) (FAO) and adheres to the [FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Aquaculture](#).

ASC's Theory of Change is explained in full [here](#) but basically seeks to promote best practices in aquaculture. Those farms achieving initial certification and promotion in the market through buyer commitments and use of the ASC on-pack logo create powerful incentives for others to follow. The improvements these subsequent farms make to achieve certification drives sector-wide improvement. This model for change is driven powerfully by commitments that businesses, associations and events make.

Testimonials by the farms of the improvements they have made and benefits they have gained as a result of certification can be found [here](#). On the ASC website there is also information about significant commitments made by the [Global Salmon Initiative](#), [pangasius farmers in Vietnam](#), [Belize shrimp farmers](#) and [the Rio Olympics Committee](#). The ASC label is increasingly being used by leading companies such as Loblaws, Ahold/ Albert Heijn, IKEA, Coles, Hyatt International Hotel Group, Colruyt, Iglo (selection only).

The ASC certification programme is based on a third-party process (a prerequisite for FAO consistency) and enshrines transparency before, during and after the farm assessments. Also all of ASC's [certification scheme documents](#) can be found on our website as follows:



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- a) the ASC's standards, audit manuals and checklists
- b) the certification and accreditation requirements
- c) governance documents

The audit process and results are also made available on our website to encourage stakeholder input into the assessments and to provide transparency around the results.

The gestation of the ASC, particularly its standards, was long; but since launching its market based programme the numbers of farms seeking certification and the uptake in the market has been spectacular. There are now over 160 farms certified with another 63 under assessment and over 2,700 approved products carry the ASC logo across 44 countries (see our latest facts about programme growth [here](#)). There are six salmon farms certified and one more under assessment in Tasmania. The first abalone farm to enter into ASC assessment is from Australia. And, there are now 15 products using the ASC logo available in Australia and significant growth is anticipated.

The reasons for making this submission are to highlight:

- a) the content and credibility of a certification programme that strives to enshrine best practice requirements within its standards;
- b) the open and transparent nature of the programme's processes;
- c) the increasing market acceptability of the ASC programme; and,
- d) that farms within the remit of this inquiry are currently ASC certified.

We look forward to your deliberations in this matter, trust the information provided is useful and would be happy to elaborate on any of this content if that would be helpful.

Yours faithfully
Chris Ninnnes
CEO
ASC