

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 24 March 2015, the Senate referred the following matter for to the Environment and Communications References Committee (the committee) for inquiry and report:

The regulation of the fin-fish aquaculture industry in Tasmania, with particular regard to:

- (a) the adequacy and availability of data on waterway health;
- (b) the impact on waterway health, including to threatened and endangered species;
- (c) the adequacy of current environmental planning and regulatory mechanisms;
- (d) the interaction of state and federal laws and regulation;
- (e) the economic impacts and employment profile of the industry; and
- (f) any other relevant matters.¹

1.2 The committee was initially required to report by 10 August 2015. However, on 10 August 2015, the Senate granted an extension of time to report until 18 August 2015. On 18 August 2015, the Senate agreed to a further extension of time to report until 21 August 2015.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 The committee advertised the inquiry on its website and in *The Australian* newspaper. The committee also wrote to relevant organisations and individuals inviting submissions by 1 June 2015. The committee received 103 submissions, which were published on the committee's website and are listed at Appendix 1.

1.4 The committee held public hearings relating to its inquiry in Hobart on 15 and 16 July 2015. As well as witnesses from organisations and the Tasmanian Government, the committee allocated time during the hearing on 15 July for individuals who had provided submissions, with an opportunity to make short statements to the committee. A list of witnesses who appeared at the hearings may be found at Appendix 2.

1 *Journals of the Senate*, 2013–15, No. 88–24 March 2015, p. 2371.

1.5 On 14 July 2015, the committee undertook an inspection of Tassal's Rockwood hatchery, a tour of fish farming activities on the Huon River and an inspection of Tassal's Huonville Smokehouse. While undertaking its tour of the Huon River, the committee was able to watch monitoring activities being conducted by Aquenal Pty Ltd.

1.6 The committee wishes to thank the Tasmanian Salmonid Growers Association Ltd, Tassal Group, Huon Aquaculture, Petuna Seafoods Tasmania and Aquenal Pty Ltd for their assistance in facilitating the committee's inspection. The inspection was invaluable in providing the committee with an understanding of the operation of the salmonid industry and the way in which companies integrate activities from hatchery to processing the end product.

Acknowledgement

1.7 The committee would like to thank all the organisations, individuals and government departments that contributed to the inquiry.

Structure of the report

1.8 This chapter outlines the conduct of the inquiry. Chapter 2 sets out background information relating to the fin-fish aquaculture industry in Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government regulatory framework, research and development activities, third-party certification of the fin-fish companies and public perception of the industry in Tasmania.

1.9 Chapters 3 and 4 address waterway health. Issues covered in chapter 3 include adequacy of monitoring, access to information and independence of monitoring, analysis and research. The discussion in chapter 4 canvasses issues including in-water cleaning of nets, broadscale impacts on rocky reefs and hatcheries on inland rivers. This chapter also includes comments on threatened and endangered species and marine debris.

1.10 Chapter 5 outlines the current environmental planning and regulatory mechanisms pertaining to the fin-fish aquaculture industry and the adequacy of these mechanisms.

1.11 Chapter 6 canvasses the interaction of state and federal laws and regulation and, in particular, comments on fin-fish aquaculture in Macquarie Harbour.

1.12 Chapter 7 examines the fin-fish aquaculture industry's contribution to the Tasmanian economy and employment.

1.13 Chapter 8 examines issues related to the possible impact of the fin-fish aquaculture industry on human health.