

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 111
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Tassal's expansion of salmon farming
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Question Date: 22 May 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: This is my last question. In relation to Tassal's expansion of salmon farming at Okehampton Bay, in the south-east of Tasmania, around Orford, I just want to clarify: have you been approached, or has Tassal approached the department, in relation to this project? At what point does a proponent need to approach the department to get approval around what is an action and what is not a controlled action under EPBC? By 'proponent' I mean presumably Tassal, but perhaps it could be the state government.

Mr Cahill: I am aware that Tassal has actually approached us, but I will have to get an update, unless Ms Collins has the status of that approach about Okehampton Bay.

Ms Collins: I can recall that we have been approached, but I just cannot recall exactly well enough to say confidently the decision on that one, so we will have to take it on notice.

Answer:

On 9 May 2017, Tassal wrote to the Department requesting advice as to whether their proposal for finfish aquaculture of Atlantic salmon in Okehampton Bay requires referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Department advised that the proposal should be referred to ensure that the range of complex matters associated with the proposal are sufficiently interrogated to inform the Minister and the community about the potential for the action to impact on matters protected under the EPBC Act.

On 31 May 2017, the expansion of aquaculture at Okehampton Bay was referred by Tassal under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* for assessment.