



City of **HOBART**

**MEMORANDUM: LORD MAYOR
DEPUTY LORD MAYOR
ELECTED MEMBERS**

EFFLUENT SPILL

Meeting: City Infrastructure Committee

Meeting date: 4 May 2022

Raised by: Deputy Lord Mayor Burnet

Question:

There was a report recently about an effluent spill from a salmon hatchery occurring in the Upper Derwent. As the Council is a shareholder of TasWater, can the Director advise what protections are there to prevent this from happening, and what likely impact is there on the water quality of Hobart's water supply?

Response:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for the environmental regulation of marine and land based salmon farms in Tasmania. Regulatory activity involves issue of environmental licences, assessing compliance against environmental license conditions, reviewing associated environmental monitoring data and reports, and requiring fish farmers to undertake management actions where environmental issues are identified arising from fish farming activity. The EPA also has a role in the assessment process for new finfish farm developments.

The environmental licence conditions for inland fish farms are being progressively updated by the EPA. All large farms that discharge to surface waters will be required to undertake regular water quality monitoring of physicochemical parameters such as dissolved oxygen, suspended solids and total and dissolved nutrients for farm intake waters and effluent discharges. In stream biological monitoring of algae and macroinvertebrate communities for waterways that receive effluent discharges may also be required. Record keeping and reporting for stocking biomass, waste volumes and waste disposal processes will also be required.

The current environmental licences for the Florentine and Wayatinah Hatcheries in the Upper Derwent, are available from the [LIST](#). These licences describe the ambient

management and discharge management plans for the farms which are based on the environmental values stated in the *State Policy on Water Quality Management 1997*.

The Florentine Hatchery is what is known as a flow-through facility located near the confluence of the Florentine and Derwent Rivers approximately 80 km upstream of New Norfolk. It is one of several inland fish farms in Tasmania that rely on an inflow and outflow of river water. While flow-through salmon farms, forestry and agriculture contribute to anthropogenic influences on the river water, the water use is not consumptive. The nutrients attributable to fish farms have generally not been detected at concentrations in the river that are likely to present a toxicity risk to biological communities. Nevertheless, recent water sampling indicates that nutrients from the Florentine fish farm effluent, were likely to have contributed to algae growth in the river during the low river flows and seasonally high water temperatures of Spring 2022.

In response to community complaints about large amounts of algae in the Florentine River, the EPA conducted algae and water sampling at the farm wastewater discharge point and in the river. No effluent spill from the salmon hatchery was reported to the EPA at the time of these complaints. The EPA is in discussion with SALTAS, and is assessing compliance with the Environmental Licence and further actions required to improve environmental outcomes. Monthly water quality data provided by SALTAS in accordance with their licence conditions shows general compliance.

Sources, EPA Tasmania Website, and Salmon Environmental Regulation Branch
For further information enquiries@epa.tas.gov.au

The water treatment plant at Bryn Estyn in the Derwent Valley is operated by TasWater staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Water quality at the plant is continually monitored through a SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system and staff also perform laboratory testing at various stages through the treatment process multiple times every day. This is to ensure that it is safe and meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

It is estimated that about one per cent of the flow in the Derwent River is used for drinking water so any small spills from the upper catchment are highly diluted by the river flows. The Bryn Estyn water treatment plant uses chlorine dosing as the final disinfection process, and this system provides protection to ensure a safe supply of water for the customers of the greater Hobart area.

In the event of any incident TasWater works closely with the EPA and DoH on any issues that could potentially pose a risk to drinking water.

Source – State Water Officer, Department of Health
For further information public.health@health.tas.gov.au.

As signatory to this report, I certify that, pursuant to Section 55(1) of the Local Government Act 1993, I hold no interest, as referred to in Section 49 of the Local Government Act 1993, in matters contained in this report.



Felicity Edwards
**MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH**



Jacqui Allen
DIRECTOR CONNECTED CITY

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