Tassal Company Statement

Tassal would like to also take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to working and collaborating with the local community, small business sector and the commercial fishing industry as we undertake our expansion plans. Tassal has been on a sustainability journey for many years. Indeed we've been working in partnership with WWF-Australia since 2012 to achieve the best possible, responsible aquaculture outcomes. Most of our more than 800 employees live and work in rural Tasmania. As such, we are very conscious of the impact of our actions not only on the environment, but on all of our employees and their families who work especially hard to meet the high standards we set as a company.

We take community and stakeholder consultation very seriously. We're prepared to listen to concerns, and to modify plans where possible. Sustainability is part of our culture and who we are, as we aspire to world leadership in responsible aquaculture production.

The attached Q& A information sheet is aimed at addressing concerns that have been raised recently. Any further concerns, questions or queries, are welcome by emailing us at sustainability@tassal.com.au at any time.

Q&A: Tassal's commitment to sustainable aquaculture in Tasmania

Q - Salmon farms are not being monitored adequately so there is no way to manage or prevent this impact

Marine farming in Tasmania is regulated by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) under the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 and the Marine Farming Planning Act 1995*.

The regulation of marine farming activities is achieved through multiple controls underpinned through modern legislative instruments. This regulatory framework has been driven by formal and informal processes that have enabled industry, researchers and Government agencies to develop adaptive management strategies and multidisciplinary monitoring programs that have improved the knowledge base and management of farm impacts on the environment.

This is demonstrated by an environmental assessment framework that now extends beyond near-farm limits to include monitoring programs sensitive enough to detect environmental change at the broadscale level.

Dr Catriona MacLeod (Deputy Director - Fisheries, Aquaculture & Coasts Division, Institute for Marine & Antarctic Studies (IMAS), University of Tasmania) has been reported saying that the Tasmanian Atlantic Salmon industry has one of the world's most comprehensive environmental monitoring programs, which sets a benchmark for industries in Scotland, Canada and New Zealand.

The Broadscale Environmental Monitoring Program (BEMP) represents an industry highlight – its design has had significant input from DPIPWE and IMAS and to date represents over 5 years of continuous environmental monitoring data. All of the BEMP monitoring is conducted by independent local marine scientists.

Although the BEMP is good, it can still be improved upon and in light of this, the Salmon Industry is expanding the program to include reef and macro-algal communities. In fact, Tassal itself initiated a study at the Tasman Peninsula near an existing salmon lease in 2013 which includes reference sites well away from the lease. Tassal is also a strong supporter of IMAS research in this field.

Relevant research projects currently underway include;

- A collaborative CSIRO and University of Tasmania (IMAS) project supporting consultation, planning and adaptive management for aquaculture and other multiple-uses of the coastal waters of southern Tasmania

- A University of Tasmania (IMAS) project clarifying the relationship between salmon farm nutrient loads and changes in macroalgal community structure and distribution

- A CSIRO, University of Tasmania (IMAS) and Salmon industry project evaluating closed containment (on shore) aquaculture systems.

Q: The planning process for your industry's expansion does not allow for coastal communities and other industries to have a fair say and ensure all of the values of our seas and waterways are protected

There is a planning process in place now, and Tassal is working well beyond that in our consultation processes. Tassal has been in close consultation with the community south of Dover for the past 6 months regarding a proposed amendment to existing marine farming leases in the area. Tassal has met with individuals, business owners and held 2 community information sessions. Tassal staff has also held community meetings to inform community members and specific interest groups about the proposed amendment and to inform people about the environmental impacts of salmon farming and the monitoring and research that is conducted. We have also had ongoing constructive dialogue with commercial fishing interests during this time.

Apart from consultations regarding specific amendments to leases, Tassal is actively engaged in the communities in which it operates. Tassal's dedicated Community Engagement Officer, invests time in the community, coordinates community activities, partnerships and research collaborations and liaises with non-government organisations and advisory forums. Community and stakeholder engagement is an overarching and ongoing activity within Tassal. Fostering an engagement culture in the company supports transparency and allows freedom for all employees to engage on issues important to them.

Q - There is little monitoring that is being done and it is not available to the public

We agree that transparency is important and that is why we provide information in a variety of formats; we have been publishing information in our annual sustainability reports for 3 years now. These reports are publically available on our website and we do our best to explain our operations as openly as we can. If you look at these reports you will see that they are not always about telling just the 'good' news story about our operations. We tell the whole truth and in fact, in 2014 Tassal was ranked number one in the world's top salmon farming companies by Seafood Intelligence for transparency in corporate, social and environmental responsibility (CSER) reporting. Tassal has an independent advisory panel of people who advise us on the content of the report – these people are from the wild and recreational catch seafood sector, environmental groups, community and government.

In 2013 a complete review of the BEMP was conducted by IMAS and the report (which includes data) is publically available on the DPIPWE website *(http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/marine-farming-aquaculture/marine-farming-broadscale-monitoring-data-evaluation-2009-2012)*. As stated on the DPIPWE website "*The report shows that although there has been a detectable level of change in some nutrient levels that would be associated with salmon farming industry development in the region, these did not translate into significant or adverse environmental effects to the water quality or sediments*." Another good source of publically available compliance information and monitoring data is Tassal's Aquaculture Stewardship Council Salmon Standard certification and auditor's reports available at

(http://www.asc-aqua.org/index.cfm?act=tekst.item&iid=4&iids=204&lng=1) and discussed further below. Additionally, the State of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Lower Huon Estuary report and associated Inventory of Scientific Information is publically available *(http://www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/page.aspx?u=660)*.

In 2012, Tassal signed a partnership agreement with WWF Australia. Information on our partnership is available on the Tassal website (*http://www.tassal.com.au/sustainability/accreditations/#WWF)* and on the WWF website *(http://www.wwf.org.au/about_us/working_with_business/strategic_partnerships/tassal/)*.

Below is a statement from WWF regarding Tassal and our practices.

Tassal and WWF-Australia formed a partnership in 2012 focused on achieving ecologically sustainable aquaculture production, safeguarding valuable marine ecosystems and ensuring the long-term viability of seafood supply.

The aim of the partnership is to ensure all Tassal salmon meets the Aquaculture Stewardship Council standards of responsible aquaculture practices by 2015 and to educate consumers about responsibly produced seafood, including ASC certified products. ASC is the highest standard for responsibly farmed seafood in the world and provides consumers with an assurance that they are purchasing seafood from farms that limit their impacts on the environment and communities.

"Fish production from aquaculture is the fastest growing animal-food-producing sector in the world," WWF-Australia CEO Dermot O'Gorman said.

He added, "Salmon farms need to be managed responsibly so that the industry can be part of a solution to feeding a growing global population without placing further stresses on the environment.

"Tassal's focus on consultation, its demonstrated ability to meet ASC's highest standards for all environmental criteria including nutrient management and monitoring, its significant results in reducing waste and impacts on wildlife management, and its commitment to becoming the first Australian producer of farmed salmon to achieve that ASC gold standard are great examples of industry leadership."

All of Tassal's marine farms have been third party audited and certified to *(http://www.gaalliance.org/bap/standards.php)* Best Aquaculture Practices Salmon Farm Standard.

All of Tassal's marine farms have been third party audited to the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Salmon Standard *(http://www.asc-aqua.org/)* and 4 of our farming regions have been certified to this standard. The remaining two are awaiting a final decision. Importantly, for the transparency of our operations, the auditor's reports are publically available *(http://www.asc-aqua.org/index.cfm?act=tekst.item&iid=4&iids=204&lng=1).* You will find these reports to be comprehensive and cover every aspect of our operations including monitoring and environmental impact. The ASC Salmon Standards were developed in consultation with environmental groups, scientific experts, regulators and the salmon industry following the guidelines of the international ISEAL Alliance and the ISEAL Code of Good Practices for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

The standards are widely recognised to be the most robust standards available for aquaculture and importantly, they provide a framework for continuous improvement.