

Salmon Farming in Macquarie Harbour: timeline of key events

When?	What happened?
6 June 2017	<p>Huon Aquaculture commences Federal Court proceedings seeking a declaration that Tassal is in breach of the revised biomass cap.</p> <p>EPA Director subsequently revised and reissued the biomass determination to clarify how Tassal's allocation was calculated.</p> <p>EPA Director grants Tassal approval for a waste capture trial (allowing an additional quota of approximately 4,200t).</p>
30 June 2017	<p>EPA Director releases waste capture trial results</p> <p>EPA Director issues an Environment Protection Notice, Environment Management Plan and approving Tassal's ongoing waste capture system.</p>
July 2017	<p>Draft <i>Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Bill 2017</i> to transfer responsibility to the EPA released for public comment.</p>
August 2017	<p>Draft <i>Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry</i> released for public comment. Draft Plan proposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a Finfish Farming (Compliance and Monitoring) Unit in the EPA • new agreement between salmon companies concerning the future of farming in Macquarie Harbour (to replace the existing Area Management Agreement) • greater public access to environmental monitoring data <p>The <i>Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Bill 2017</i> introduced to Parliament.</p>
September 2017	<p>Compliance monitoring (benthic monitoring) released showing no significant change in compliance status across the Harbour. IMAS monitoring showed some faunal recovery and a reduced range of bacterial matting, but noted oxygen levels remained very low and could potentially return to critically low levels."</p>
28 September 2017	<p>Tassal referred proposal to dispose of waste captured from Macquarie Harbour pens to Kelly Channel (at the mouth of the Harbour) to the Federal Minister for assessment under the EPBC Act.</p> <p><i>Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act 2017</i> passed</p>
3 October 2017	<p>EPA Director grants approval for Tassal to treat waste captured from Macquarie Harbour pens on board the MV Wallaby.</p>
7 November 2017	<p>Tassal applies for approval to dispose treated liquid fish farm waste from its Macquarie Harbour waste capture via a TasWater wastewater treatment plant at Pardoe.</p>
13 November 2017	<p>EPA approves Pardoe disposal plan.</p>
14 November 2017	<p>Tassal abandons proposal to dispose of waste at Kelly Channel and withdraws EPBC Act referral.</p>

Salmon Farming in Macquarie Harbour: timeline of key events

When?	What happened?
16 November 2017	Huon Aquaculture Federal Court challenge hearings commence. Due to late circulation of relevant documents, hearings adjourned to March 2018.
20 November 2017	EPA Director approves amendments to the EMP for on-board waste treatment to add disinfection and an activated sludge process.
27 November 2017	EPA confirms significant fish mortalities reported by all three companies. Petuna Seafoods lost approximately 3 per cent of smolt stock, Huon Aquaculture lost fish from one trout pen. Tassal did not confirm the extent of its losses.
4 December 2017	Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act 2017 commences
6-8 December 2017	Final Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry declared <i>Blue Future</i> Aquaculture conference held at IMAS – local, national and international industry experts discuss issues facing aquaculture industry.
21 February 2018	EPA and DPIPWE successfully apply to cease to be parties to the Huon Aquaculture Federal Court proceeding.
19-26 March 2018	Federal Court hearing in <i>Huon Aquaculture Group Ltd and Others v Minister for the Environment and Others</i>
21 March 2018	IMAS report on the health of Macquarie Harbour (based on monitoring data up to January 2018) confirms very low levels of dissolved oxygen in mid-bottom waters continued during Spring 2017 and a decline in benthic faunal abundance, including within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.
23 March 2018	EPA Director announces that he believes the scientific modelling relied upon to support the 2012 expansion of salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour was " flat wrong ", and has provided a draft determination to the companies proposing reducing the biomass cap to 9,000t.
29 May 2018	EPA Director sets the 2018-2020 biomass limit for Macquarie Harbour at 9,500t (or 10.26t/ha), and stocking density at 15kg/m ³ (or up to 17kg/m ³ for 40% of the cages for the 2017/18 year class fish). All leases, including the fallowed Franklin lease, were used in the calculation of the total allowable biomass. In his statement of reasons for the decision, the EPA Director refers to preliminary IMAS monitoring which shows a decline in dissolved oxygen and benthic fauna abundance and diversity at lease sites between October 2017 and January 2018.

Updated 29 May 2018

Please note, this timeline has been compiled from publicly available documents, including media reports, statements released by the EPA Director and the companies, and published court material. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, there may be things that we've missed or minor discrepancies in dates.

Please let us know if you spot any errors and we'll endeavour to correct the timelines.