

Okehampton Bay – The Facts

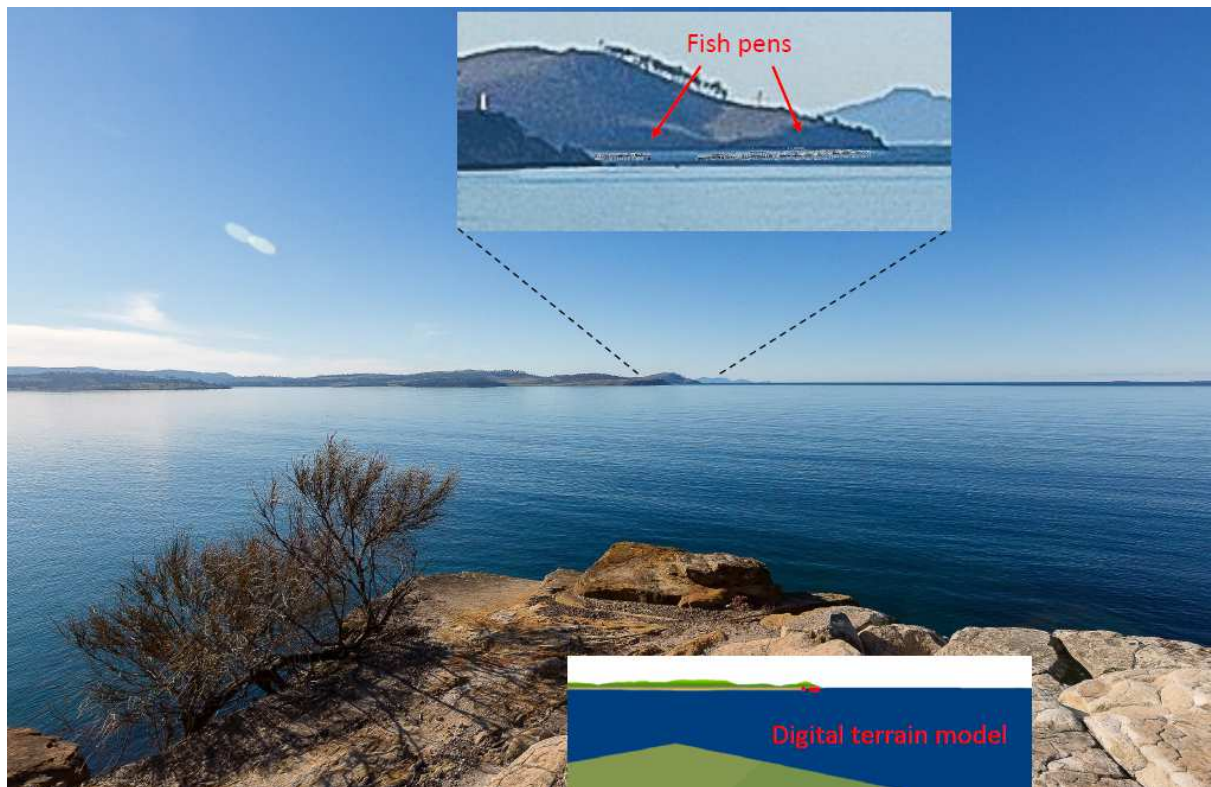
Will the farm be visible and exactly who will see what?

It won't be visible to most shack owners as it's around the corner tucked in to Okehampton Bay. The two property owners that look down on Okehampton Bay (that will be able to see day-to-day operations), fully support the lease.

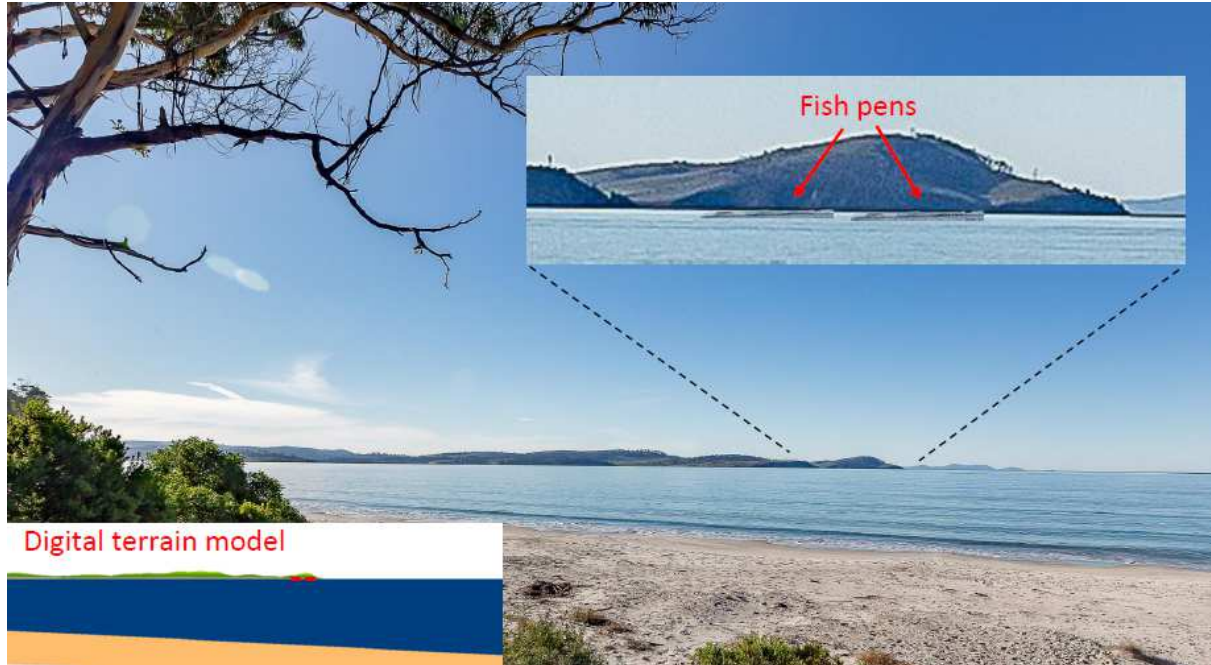
The lease is more than 7km from Spring Beach and more than 7km from Maria Island. The lease will not be visible to the naked eye from Triabunna, Orford, Spring Beach, Rheban or Darlington (see diagrams below).

The visual impacts have been modelled using a 3D digital terrain model, with farm vision being super imposed over high resolution photographs. The lease is not visible from Triabunna or, with the naked eye, from Orford, Spring Beach, Rheban or Darlington. The lease will be visible for some portions of the journey to Maria Island from the top deck of the Maria Island Ferry.

View of Okehampton lease from Bluff Rd



View of Okehampton lease from Stapleton Beach



View of Okehampton lease from top deck of Maria Island Ferry (at closet point of ferry route to lease)



How big will the lease site be?

The lease will have 28 pens over 80 hectares and stocking density will be managed through licence conditions.

Are there plans to expand into Mercury passage later?

NO, Tassal is on the record confirming it will not farm finfish in Mercury Passage.

The lease agreement with Spring Bay Seafoods is only for Okehampton Bay lease (MF 236).

Just to be clear about Mercury passage ...

Mercury Passage does appear regularly in associations with the Okehampton site, so to be clear:

- The monitoring stations across the northern end of Mercury Passage and near Orford are to provide background sampling data for the baseline survey for Okehampton.

While Mercury Passage appears on the Marine Farming Development Plan October 1998 and Spring Bay Seafoods leases extend into the passage, **Tassal is not developing this area now or in the future.**

How environmentally sound will the Okehampton lease site be?

Tassal works to the highest global standard – ASC certification (Aquaculture Stewardship Council). This ensures both environmental and social sustainability measures are considered. IMTA is an ecological approach to marine farming. Salmon, mussels and seaweed can be farmed alongside each other successfully.

Is salmon farming linked to increased algal blooms?

The science shows there is **NO link** between increased algal blooms and finfish farming. While Algal blooms are increasing on the East coast, there is no link between toxic algal blooms and salmon farming.

Algal blooms can however harm fish, and Tassal conducts daily plankton monitoring and has an emergency response plan in place in the event of a harmful algal bloom. To date we have not had an emergency response and have very little mortality across all our regions due to algal issues.

Tassal has actually invested in an algologist to complement its technical team and environmental monitoring. What's an algologist? An algae expert!

How many jobs will the farm create?

To service the Okehampton site, Tassal will be employing 25 new farming staff and will create 15 construction site jobs.

Tassal **will prioritise** jobs for locals – as we do in all our sites. In fact, the Tassal Triabunna Rendering Plant has demonstrated this. This site was chosen to demonstrate how we want to work both with and with-in the Triabunna community.

Salmon farming is an innovative sector, and we will be introducing a new feed delivery system that will make it easier to calibrate feed to meet fish consumption rates.

However, this does not mean machines will be taking people's jobs. Tassal always offers entry level jobs, but we are also able to up-skill people to take on specialised jobs. We offer people a career pathway ... not just a job.

How many staff does Tassal have and do they like working there?

Tassal has around 1,200 staff and is an 'employer of choice'. When surveyed, staff indicated a 'satisfaction' score of 81%. Our annual turnover rate of less than 9% indicates that once people join Tassal they tend to stay. Roughly 200 of these staff are based interstate, making up the marketing and sales team that sell our product to the rest of Australia.

How long will the jetty be?

The Spring Bay jetty that Tassal will use will be 195m long in total. The piled section will be 140 metres long and the causeway leading into it 55 metres long. To give you an idea of distance, Maria Island is 14km from Triabunna and 11km from the proposed shore base site.

Do people across Tasmania support fish farming?

The Tasmanian Salmonid Growers Association conducted a survey and found close to three quarters of respondents (74% in total) were in support to some

degree of the expansion of the salmon farming industry. A combined total of 17% of respondents stated that they oppose the expansion at some level, while the remaining 9% were unable to give a definitive answer.

Consultation regarding potential impacts...

Tassal understands and appreciates the importance of the area for everyone, the recreational and social value of the area. Tassal will continue to consult with recreational fishing, sailing and community groups.

As the independent Marine Farming Planning Review Panel noted 'the monitoring and management of impacts of salmon farming in Tasmania is considered to be world's best practice'.

Consultation has also been carried out with Regional Councils, peak environmental groups NRM and tourism operators.

How does Tassal rate with compliance?

Tassal achieves over 96% compliance across all sites and is committed to continuous improvement. We are not perfect but we aim to achieve 100% compliance.

Proper management is necessary to ensure that nutrients, such as fish waste and uneaten feed do not harm the marine environment.

The impacts of salmon farming in Tasmania have been well researched by IMAS, CSIRO and others over the last 15 years.

The characteristics of Okehampton Bay are similar to those found in South East Tasmania where much of the research has concentrated. Impacts of fish farming are most directly under and adjacent to cages. That is why compliance points are set at 35m from a lease. We adaptively manage sites to keep our footprint on the lease.

As the Marine Farming Panel (2017, p. 27) noted 'the work done in Tasmania showed conclusively that the effects of salmon farming on the environment were localised and that sediments recovered quickly when fallowed'.

What about the reef and abalone?

A review by Buxton (2016) concluded the risk to abalone fisheries was low. Additional research will be published in 2018.

The science behind it...

The first baseline environmental assessment for the lease was conducted in 2000. Tassal initiated its own water quality sampling work in August 2014 and over two years conducted consecutive monthly sampling of temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, nutrient profile and chlorophyll and algal samples. This is on top of monitoring and baseline studies undertaken by our partner in the project, Spring Bay Seafood.

In line with IMAS and the Panel's recommendation, Tassal will undertake a further baseline assessment prior to the commencement of farming and the establishment of the management regime.

The Panel concluded that 'the current environmental science supports the proposed environmental management and monitoring of salmon farming in Okehampton Bay'.

What monitoring will be done?

Developed in 2009, Broadscale Monitoring Programs (BEMP) are recognized as world's best practices for assessing water and sediment quality. This is the program Tassal uses. It allows regulators, industry and stakeholders to assess ecological conditions and adaptively manage sites.

Does salmon farming affect flathead health or numbers?

No. A considerable amount of research has been done into this as a lot of people love catching "flatties" (and eating them) so it's an area of concern. There's no evidence whatsoever to suggest salmon farming is having a negative impact on flathead numbers. The latest scale fish report shows recreational fishing is having the greatest impact on flathead populations. People have questioned the brown spots sometimes seen in flathead flesh. This is caused by a previous injury and increased deposits of melanin. Melanin is a natural pigment deposit.

Water temperature and flow in Okehampton Bay

Okehampton Bay water temperature is comparable to existing farming leases. It is important to note the Okehampton data is taken at 3m opposed to 5m at the other two leases.

Tasmanian salmon are routinely grown at sites that can reach higher temperatures near the surface and salmon move through the water column to find an optimal temperature.

- Temperature profiles between August 2014 and August 2016 for Okehampton Bay recorded a minimum temperature of 10.3°C (bottom temp in August 2016) and a maximum of 19.59 °C (surface temperature in January 2015). Temperatures at depth were on average 0.4 °C lower than the surface.
- The longest period of water greater than 18°C is 88 days from 31st December 2015 to 31st March 2016. This coincides with one of the hottest summers on record in Tasmania.

Water speeds ...

The current speeds recorded compare favourably with other Tassal leases at Butlers and Creeses. Current speeds are consistent with similar study sites around south-eastern Tasmania, a consistent supply of freshwater was recorded and large swell and storm events, which assist dispersal, featured.

Algal blooms are increasing on the East coast, however, there is no link between the prevalence of toxic algal blooms and salmon farming. Algal blooms can harm fish however. Tassal conducts daily plankton monitoring and has an emergency response plan in place in the event of a harmful algal bloom. To date we have not had to enact an emergency response and have very little mortality, across all our regions due to algal issues.

What about the negative TV Ads about Okehampton Bay and fish waste?

The advertisement and figures used are **not accurate**.

It is not correct to compare fish waste with human sewage. The main reason for legitimate concern with human sewage is the spread of human disease and contaminants. This is not a factor with fish waste. In fact, fish convert food

much more efficiently than humans and the composition and nitrogen levels are different making a simple “poop” comparison impossible.

For more information or to ask questions – please contact us !

Please go to: <http://www.tassal.com.au/community-news/community-update-okehampton/>

Call or email us at Tassal@Tassal.com. au. The Community Liaison Officer will review your issue and then contact you to discuss a pathway forward. We are committed to being transparent and working through any concerns.