

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

BUILDING BACK GREENER & FAIRER: A GREEN NEW DEAL FOR LUTRUWITA/TASMANIA

BACKGROUND

Lutruwita/Tasmania has one of the world's most biologically diverse marine environments on the planet. 80% of Tasmania's marine species are unique.

Our oceans provide a globally exceptional habitat, and are an important part of the Tasmanian lifestyle. It is our responsibility to preserve them for future generations.

Tasmania's marine environment is vulnerable to climate change. Over the past ten years commercial fish catches have declined, iconic fisheries like abalone are depleted, and invasive species have extended their range.

Tasmania's coastal habitats are fragile and of enormous importance, but are being threatened by poor management, over-development, fish farming, fishing, and continuing warming waters. Remaining biological diversity must be protected and given the best support we can muster to help it adapt and overcome climate threats.

Marine Protected Areas

No-take Marine Protected Areas are a boon for building biological diversity. On average, MPAs have 670% more marine biomass than unprotected adjacent areas, and 343% more than in reserves without no-take protection.

MPAs also restore ecosystem complexity, and show more resilience to the impacts of climate change and invasive species than unreserved areas. Extending Tasmania's MPA network is vital minimum support to keep a functioning marine environment in the future.

We will renew Tasmania's Marine Protected Area strategy, and set a target of 10% of Tasmanian waters to become no-take reserves. We will prioritise consideration of existing marine conservation areas, and ensure that all eight bioregions and habitat types are represented in no-take reserves.

Fish for our Future

MPAs have significant benefit for sustaining the health and productivity of fisheries. The no-take status of these reserves creates an environment where fish stocks can significantly increase, and the environment can be a source of larvae, juvenile and adult fish that expand outside the reserve and can then be harvested by fishers.

The longer a reserve has been in existence, the more positive impacts on fish stocks are observable.

We will engage with recreational fishers in the development of size and location of MPAs, and include an increase in fish stocks in adjacent fisheries in the design objectives.

Salmon Farming

Tasmanian salmon has doubled in size over the last decade. While farming operations have provided important local employment, the mass expansion and location of farms has had damaging environmental and social consequences. Water health and marine debris, impacts on threatened species, fish escapes and wildlife deaths on farms are all examples.

There are also significant concerns about the lack of genuine community consultation, independent decision-making and political interference.

We need a future for salmon farming that provides a pathway for regional employment, and reduces the impact on marine biodiversity and local communities.

We will require all new fish farms to operate as closed-loop land-based farms. We will not renew licences for coastal farms as they expire, and will require all current coastal farms to transition to land-based closed-loop systems.

We will immediately review and update allowed stocking-levels and environmental licence conditions of existing fish farms, including stronger controls on marine debris and marine wildlife protection, to require them to meet environmentally and socially sustainable outcomes.

We will immediately review the operations of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel to remove the involvement of the Primary Industries Minister in decision-making, and will discontinue the legislated role of the Panel as new expansion for farming moves onto land.

We will require all fish farms to comply at minimum with RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards for Farmed Atlantic Salmon.

Coasts

The State Coastal Policy establishes the State Coastal Advisory Committee, the Coastal and Marine Program, and commits to provide funding and other resources to implement the Policy. None of these things are currently in place.

The Coastal and Marine Program used to provide practical help and assistance to the operations of Coastcare in Tasmania. The Victorian Government funds Regional Coastal Plans at the regional level and Coastal Management Plans at the local level. These plans fund, among other things, Coastcare operations.

We will establish a Coastal Management Unit in DPIPW, develop Coastal Plans and fund Coastcare operations.

The Tasmanian Greens acknowledge and pay respect to the palawa/pakana people as the original owners and ongoing custodians of lutruwita/Tasmania. We are committed to Truth, Treaty, Justice, and the return of lands.

GREEN NEW DEAL

