

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**HANSARD**

**Thursday, 7 September 2023**

**QUESTIONS**

**Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan - Implementation**

**Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER,  
Ms PALMER**

[2.36 p.m.]

It might not be the right portfolio, but you will redirect me if I need to be elsewhere.

Noting the Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan 2023 and the implementation program which sits under that published in May this year, there is a commitment to move from partial cost recovery to recovering the full costs of managing the industry from 1 July 2023, on page 6; also, a commitment to deliver benefits to the broader Tasmanian community and economy, including through manufacturing and other value-adding activities, full cost recovery for government services and an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community, on page 13; and another commitment to consult on an appropriate return from the salmon aquaculture industry to the Tasmanian community, on page 18.

The two questions I have relate to those commitments:

- (1) Has the move to full cost recovery been completed by the specified time frame? If not, by when will the required legislation or other instruments be completed and introduced?
- (2) What, if any, consultation has taken, or is taking, place with regard to determining an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community?

**ANSWER**

Cost of services has historically been partially recovered from the industry, through fees and charges to help support the industry when it was starting out and growing. Moving from partial to full cost recovery certainly was a priority action under the Government's Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan.

From 1 July 2023, a cost recovery levy of \$3310 per hectare applies to the grant or renewal of a finfish marine farming licence. Revenue from the levy is expected to be \$9.6 million in 2023-24. Yes, we have now commenced from 1 July, which was the commitment in the salmon plan to full cost recovery.

Then you asked about consultation on return to the community. That has just started. I believe that was a short- to medium-term commitment in the salmon plan and we have just begun a consultation on that.

### **Tasmanian Salmon Industry Plan - Supplementary Question**

**Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER**

[2.39 p.m.]

If I may, I am going to follow up with a couple of extra questions on that for a little more information.

In terms of the move to the full cost recovery that has been in place, as you have described since 1 July, is the modelling that sits behind the setting of those figures available in the public domain?

The other questions are more detail on the second question of the consultation. You mention it has just begun. Is the framework for that consultation or the description of it available in the public domain where it can be accessed so I can get some insight into the details of that consultation, who is involved, what the time frame is and what the opportunities are?

### **ANSWER**

I will start with return to community. With full cost recovery now in effect, the Government, as you are aware, is also now considering options to ensure that the Tasmanian community receives an appropriate return for the use of the state's natural resources. The return to community is quite a different concept to cost recovery. It is undertaken in other sectors and in other jurisdictions who manage aquaculture. We are at the beginning of that process of engaging and consulting more fully and looking at what is happening in other jurisdictions and in other industries to ensure what we need to do to make that happen.

**Ms Webb** - Just to clarify, you said consultation has begun. I was seeking more understanding about what that looks like and if I can see the available detail of that process, the time lines and how it is being undertaken.

**Ms PALMER** - No, that is the body of work that we are doing at the moment, to look at other jurisdictions, to look at other industries and to consider what that consultation process needs to look like. We are at the beginning of that body of work. We needed to go through that body of work for the full cost recovery, which has now been completed and implemented. Now, we are moving on to this stage. If you would like a fuller briefing on this, I would be more than happy to organise that for you, especially in light of the body of work that you did through the Legislative Council inquiry on that. We are at the beginning of that work.

I think you also asked about -

**Ms Webb** - The model for full cost recovery.

**Ms PALMER** - Yes. I am aware that the department has released information relating to an independent review for fee and levy structures for finfish farming under the Right to Information Act 2009. I am not aware of where it is publicly available outside of that process.

**Ms Webb** - Can I clarify, RTIs are generally put up by the department. Is that RTI disclosure not on the department website under RTI disclosures?

**Ms PALMER** - The information that I have here is that the department has released information relating to an independent review of fees, the fee and levy structures for finfish farming under the Right to Information Act. I am more than happy to commit to getting a fuller answer for you for next week.

**Ms Webb** - Normally RTI would be in the public domain. I am interested if it is in the public domain as a result.

**Ms PALMER** - Yes, sure.

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**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
HANSARD  
Tuesday 12 September 2023**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Salmon Industry Appropriate Return to Community  
Agricultural Show Development Grants Program 2023-24**

**Ms PALMER** (Rosevears - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr President, I wanted to have the opportunity in the interest of clarifying my response to the questions the member for Nelson raised last Thursday, 7 September, about whether any consultation had taken or is taking place with regard to determining an appropriate return to the community from the salmon industry. I am advising as follows: the Government, through the Salmon Industry Implementation plan, has committed to consult on an appropriate return from the salmon industry to the Tasmanian community. Consultation is yet to commence. That was the clarification I wanted to make.

What the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania has released publicly under the Right to Information Act 2009 is information relating to an independent Tasmanian salmonoid marine farming socio-economic assessment. This work relates primarily to return to community and would be considered as part of the implementation of an appropriate return to the Tasmanian community.

There was another question from the member for Nelson in relation to full cost recovery and whether the modelling that sits behind the setting of those figures is available in the public domain. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has not released a model, as such, for full cost recovery. There is an existing government policy relating to cost recovery and that is set out in the Department of Treasury and Finance's costing, fees and charges

guidelines and has been in place since 2006. That is the model that is being followed. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania also has an existing pricing policy. The Treasury guidelines provide the fees and charges should be set at a level which ensures the full cost of providing goods or a service can be recovered at an appropriate level. This policy approach is essentially the same as applied by the Australian Government and other states and territories.

I also have additional information relating to the question for the member for McIntyre on the Agricultural Show Development Grants Program 2023-24. The Agricultural Show Development Grants Program is administered by DPAC and it is at arm's length from government. The 2023-24 program was oversubscribed with a total of 16 applications requesting funding of \$338 192. The assessment panel considered these applications and determined the funding recommendations. The assessment panel recommended that 12 applications be funded through the program, with five applications approved subject to conditions. Four applications were deemed to be ineligible projects or were not recommended for funding due to the quality of the proposal. Unsuccessful applicants were contacted by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, with appropriate contact details if they wish to discuss their unsuccessful application and/or to appeal a decision.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Salmon Industry Appropriate Return to Community**

**Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER**

[2.34 p.m.]

I thank the minister for providing the clarification for the questions last week. I appreciate that very much and acknowledge they were also sent through to me yesterday, directly, so I would have them at an earliest opportunity. Much appreciated.

To follow up, I wanted to clarify in relation to the report that the minister referred to that has been released on RTI. I want to clarify that was the RTI disclosure that was made on 24 April this year, No. RTI 056 on the NRE Tasmania website, and to clarify that there is actually no detail at all about the report in that disclosure that was made. It is a series of emails referring to it, but all the pages in which the content of that report is covered are all redacted. Just to clarify, although you mentioned that report has been released under RTI, no detail of it actually has been. To clarify, will that report be made public, and if so, at what stage in the process going forward?

## **ANSWER**

I believe it is the RTI you are referring to on 24 April but I do not have that information to confirm that with great certainty. I believe it is what you are referring to. I understand that under the RTI, the terms of reference and the correspondence, I think you are talking about emails?

**Ms Webb** - There are no terms of reference.

**Ms PALMER** - This is the information that I have been given: that under the RTI, the terms of reference in the correspondence regarding this report have been released. The decision to release redacted information was made by an authorised officer under the Right to Information Act and I have no role to play in that process. I can confirm that the Government, through the Salmon Industry Implementation Plan, has committed to consult on an appropriate return from the salmon industry to the Tasmanian community. With regard to the second part of your question, we will release information related to this work as part of our consultation on the appropriate return to the community at the appropriate time.

**Ms Webb** - No terms of reference in this RTI, just so you know, Minister.

[...]

**Correction - Member for Nelson**

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - I have questions to ask, but before that I wanted to correct a comment I made in response to the minister earlier around the RTI released on the NRE website. There are two sets of documents there and one of them does have a term of reference, it is a sentence long. I had not recognised it as a term of reference, because it just says, do a report, essentially. I apologise for suggesting it was not there, I had overlooked it because it was so brief. It is there and thank you for allowing me to correct that.

[...]

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