LIVING MARINE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACT 1995
SECTION 75 – MINISTERIAL GUIDELINE

SUBJECT IN-SEA ABALONE MARINE FARMING

This Ministerial Guideline is issued in respect of the licensing (grant, transfer or variation) of in-sea marine farming of abalone (HALIOTIS sp.). “In-sea marine farming” is defined in this Guideline as marine farming conducted in an area of State waters in respect of which a lease as issued under the Marine Farming Planning Act 1995 is held.

OBJECTIVES

- To guide decision making on applications made for the granting, transfer or variation of any marine farming licence authorising in-sea marine farming of abalone (HALIOTIS sp.) to take into account the threat to abalone stocks presented by the biosecurity risks associated with this marine farming method.

BACKGROUND

The discovery of Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (AVG) initially in Victoria in December 2005 and subsequently in Tasmania in 2008 has resulted in greater scrutiny being given to biosecurity issues relating to abalone marine farming. AVG has had serious impacts on both wild abalone and marine farm stocks in Victoria and Tasmania has implemented a suite of biosecurity measures in an endeavour to reduce the risk of introduction of the infection from Victoria.

As a part of this process, the Department has undertaken a Risk Assessment (RA) with respect to AVG and considered the risks against the Tasmanian Government’s previously endorsed Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP). The RA covers interalia activities relating to abalone marine farming.

The RA has determined that in-sea abalone marine farming is a high risk with respect to emission of material from dead abalone, escaped farmed stock and monitoring of stock health. The RA suggested that these risks cannot be mitigated to an extent that would allow for the development of an industry based on in-sea marine farming without compromising the determined ALOP and presenting significant risk to the wild abalone resource.

Abalone fishing is one of Tasmania’s most valuable fisheries, earning around $100 million annually and land based abalone farming is growing to be an important primary industry.

APPLICATION

The Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 (“the Act”) provides the Minister with authority to approve applications to grant, transfer or vary a marine farming licence.

In-sea abalone marine farming has been ranked as a high risk biosecurity activity in a comprehensive RA undertaken based on an ALOP endorsed by the Tasmanian Government. Accordingly the activity is assessed as representing a high risk to the wild abalone resource in Tasmanian waters.
The risk associated with this marine farming activity to the Tasmanian wild abalone resource should be afforded significant weight in determining applications (in particular before determining them favourably) made for the variation, transfer or granting of any Marine Farming Licence where thereby is authorised the in-sea marine farming of abalone (*HALIOTIS sp.*), in accordance with either s 78, 82 or 83 of the Act.

Bryan Green MP
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND WATER

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