



Media Release  
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Tassal Group Limited  
ABN 15 106 067 270  
Tassal Operations Pty. Ltd.  
ABN 38 106 324 127  
De Costi Seafoods Pty Ltd  
ABN 81 606 307 804  
email: [tassal@tassal.com.au](mailto:tassal@tassal.com.au)  
website: [www.tassal.com.au](http://www.tassal.com.au)

## **TASSAL KELP CULTURING PROGRAM IN SOUTHERN TASMANIA PROGRESSING WELL**

Giant Kelp planted alongside Tassal's farm at Okehampton Bay as part of a major environmental program is performing well, with the Company saying it is now preparing to have the first-harvest.

Tassal has been trialling culturing of kelp species at a number of its southern and south-eastern Tasmanian leases over the past two years, including Okehampton Bay, as part of its investment into Eco-Aquaculture programs, aimed at delivering ecological and environmental benefits.

"This is part of our Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) project, which aims to promote balanced ecosystems," said Tassal Head of Environment Sean Riley.

"IMTA utilises by-products, including salmon nutrients, from one aquaculture species to another as inputs such as feed or fertiliser."

Giant Kelp is of particular interest as Giant Kelp forests in Tasmania's coastal waters have progressively disappeared since the 1940s and have been in significant decline in recent years. Tassal's Eco-Aquaculture Researcher, Dr Craig Sanderson, said this is thought to be due to warmer temperatures and concurrent lower nutrients of surrounding oceanic waters.

"This has occurred to such an extent that stands of Giant Kelp are now listed as critically endangered. This is of concern due to possible impacts on dependent species, including those of commercial interest such as abalone, lobster and urchins," Dr Sanderson said.

Dr Sanderson said the growth of the kelp at Tassal farm sites is performing above expectations.

"We are utilising hatchery produced kelp seed generated from parent stock taken from areas where the kelp still exists, including possible temperature tolerant varieties. One potential benefit of this program may be that it will encourage repopulation of Giant Kelp forests outside our leases, where it has disappeared," he said.

Tassal is also involved in attempts to regenerate forests on the Tasman Peninsula. Plants are being donated to community based groups for replanting.

Giant Kelp is also considered a major drawcard for divers with marine organisms and various fish species taking refuge in the forests.

Giant Kelp or *Macrocystis* is one of the fastest growing plants in the world, with recorded growth rates of 50cm a day and can reach up to 30 metres in height.

"Our plants have reached up to four metres in just two months," Dr Sanderson said

Recreational divers who have become involved are already seeing the early benefits of such a program.

Local dive clubs are being encouraged to adopt a patch for replanting. Plantings have already been conducted at Deep Glen Bay and Pirate's Bay areas.

Tassal is committed to investing in a range of environmental improvement programs and recently announced it had moved towards 100 per cent recycling of its major plastic waste across its operations, with Tasmanian company, Envorinex, now transforming soft and hard plastics into second-life products.

For more information contact Barbara McGregor, Head of Engagement Tassal 0429002769. Email [Barbara.mcgregor@tassal.com.au](mailto:Barbara.mcgregor@tassal.com.au)

**Hobart**

Level 9, 1 Franklin Wharf, Hobart, TAS 7000  
GPO Box 1645, Hobart, Tasmania 7001  
Telephone (03) 6244 9099  
Facsimile (03) 6244 9002

**Melbourne**

Level 2, 1-9 Derrick St, Kew, VIC 3101  
Telephone 1300 66 4731  
Facsimile 1300 88 1429

**Huonville**

20 Glen Rd, Huonville, TAS 7109  
Telephone 1300 66 4251  
Facsimile 1300 88 0239

**De Costi Seafoods**

29 Bachell Ave, Lidcombe, NSW 2141  
PO Box 429, Lidcombe, NSW 1825  
Telephone (02) 9649 7699  
Facsimile (02) 9649 7655