

Media release: 03 September 2025

## \$229 billion for Australia's national economy from marine industry

Australia's growing marine industry economic output was \$229 billion in 2023 according to a new report released today by the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS).

The [2025 AIMS Index of Marine Industry](#) is the latest assessment of the contribution of Australia's marine sector to the national economy, using data from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the biennial series by Deloitte Access Economics.

The \$229 billion reflects a 19% growth in like-for-like terms compared with two years ago, supporting a 52% increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs to 712,000.

This growth was predominantly driven by rebounding domestic tourism and an expanding natural gas industry.

In FY23, the marine industry contributed \$203 billion in total value added, equivalent to 9.1% of Australia's GDP (Gross Domestic Product). This includes \$140 billion generated across 19 industries, and a further \$63 billion in indirect value added across 109 upstream industry groups.

AIMS CEO Professor Selina Stead said the 2025 Index highlighted the scale of the marine industry's economic footprint, showcasing its growing contribution to the Australian economy.

"This report underscores the important role of marine science by research agencies such as AIMS in delivering independent high-quality scientific information to inform evidenced-based decision-making," she said.

"AIMS, in collaboration with partners, is ensuring the sustainable growth of marine industries and the protection of the ecosystems that underpin the value of the marine economy, by providing access to the best available data.

"Our oceans, estuaries, and connected waterways not only support thriving ecosystems but underpin industries that generate billions for the Australian economy, supporting several thousands of jobs and wider cultural and social benefits.

"The report illustrates the marine industry growth was propelled by expansion of the natural gas industry and domestic tourism after COVID-19 travel restrictions.

"The increase in jobs was fuelled by the return of international visitors and strong pent-up domestic tourism demand, as well as growth in the natural gas industry and water transport services."

Between FY21 and FY23, the economic output of natural gas, offshore oil exploration and extraction sector has grown by 12% – reaching \$122 billion in output and comprising more than half of the marine industry’s economic output.

The second largest sector by economic output was marine tourism and recreational activities, which grew 65% over the same period, reflecting the recovery of the tourism industry following the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Not only has the marine industry grown since the last Index, but it has grown significantly in the past decade,” Professor Stead said.

Compared with financial year 2012-13 economic output, adjusted for inflation, the marine industry grew to be 1.8 times larger in 2022-23.”

Professor Stead said AIMS was increasingly supporting decision-makers in considering the role ecosystems and their health played in sustaining long-term economic growth and prosperity based on world-class science. For example:

- [AIMS’ scientific information assured environmental approval for maintenance dredging and enabled Darwin Port to continue to facilitate commerce in Northern Australia.](#)
- [AIMS data on the increase in coral trout populations in no-take marine reserves confirms that the science behind the Marine Park’s rezoning continues to benefit Queenslanders because it means more fish available for anglers.](#)
- [Australian alumina refineries can operate with confidence, knowing that complying with the guideline values will safeguard the health of local marine ecosystems.](#)

“This edition of the Index explores the blue economy, highlighting opportunities to align economic goals with sustainability,” she said.

“It also examines the broader cultural, social and environmental benefits of marine environments, such as coastal protection from mangroves and saltmarshes.”

In 2021, coastal protection from mangroves and saltmarshes protected 280,000 people and were valued at \$228 billion – underscoring the need for a comprehensive approach to valuing Australia’s marine economy.

Marine ecosystems like mangroves, tidal marshes, and seagrasses sequester carbon by absorbing carbon dioxide which helps mitigate climate change. Australia hosts 12% of the world’s blue carbon ecosystems.

AIMS launched its Strategy 2040 yesterday that shares its vision for thriving oceans through trusted science and innovation as part of its commitment to support Australia’s growing marine economy and sustainable livelihoods.

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## About the Index

The 2025 AIMS Index of Marine Industry was first developed in 2008 and is now in its 10th edition.

Analysis was performed for AIMS by professional services firm Deloitte Access Economics using data from the 2021-22, 2022-23 financial years.

The marine industry is defined as the collection of economic activities within saltwater bodies connected to the ocean, including seas, estuaries, rivers, harbours and associated waterways. It covers goods and services that rely on the existence of marine environments or are produced in these environments and are classified to various sub sectors.

A total of 37 industries were included in the AIMS 2025 Marine Index. Output was quantified from a range of data sources and updated where available. Qualitative industries were not quantified in this report due to limited data availability.

## About the Australian Institute of Marine Science:

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) is Australia's tropical marine research agency. In existence for half a century, it plays a pivotal role in providing large-scale, long-term and world-class research that helps governments, industry and the wider community to make informed decisions about the management of Australia's marine estate. AIMS science leads to healthier marine ecosystems; economic, social and environmental benefits for all Australians; and protection of coral reefs from climate change. More here: <https://www.aims.gov.au/>