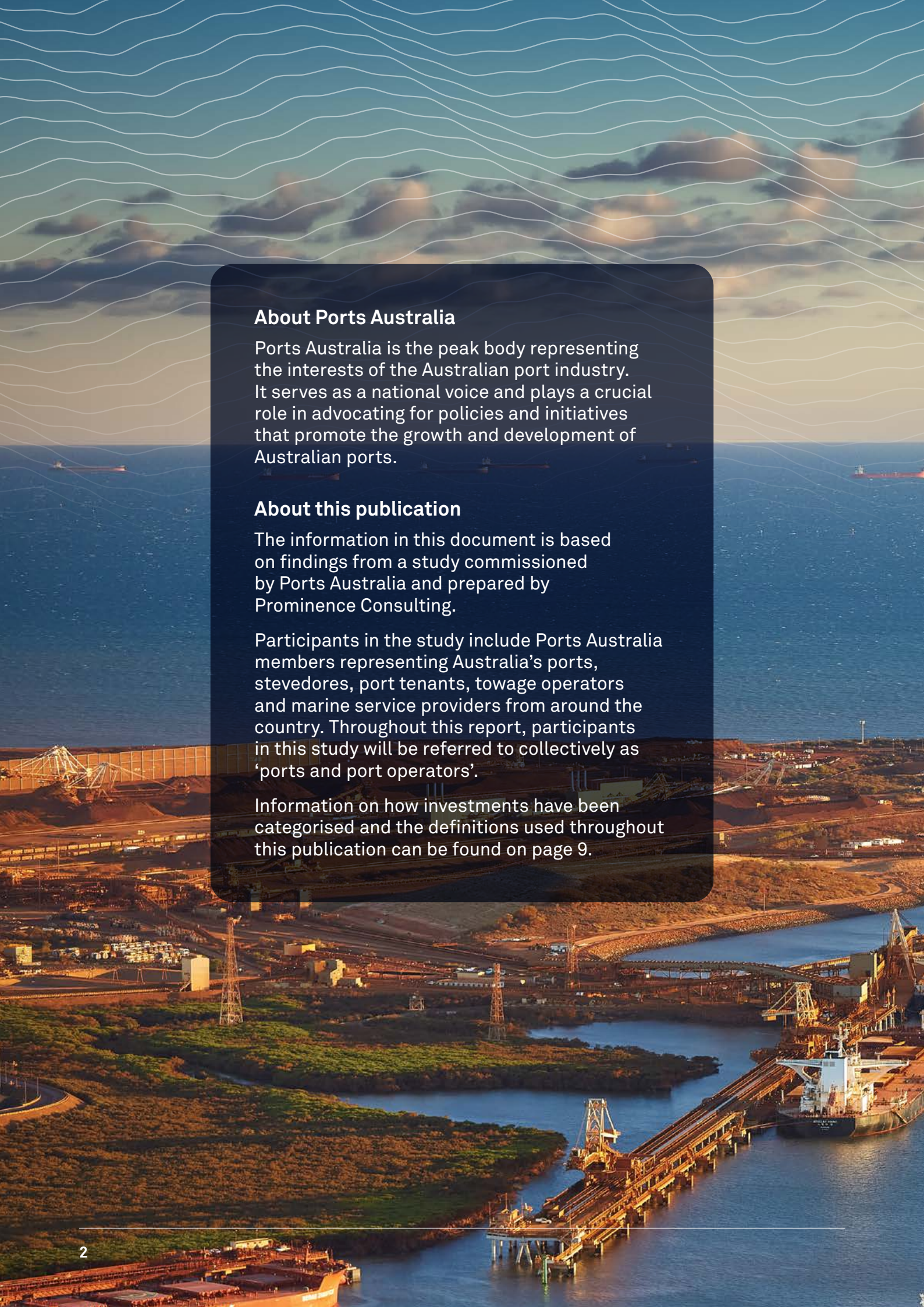
Ports Australia

2026

Port Investment Snapshot

Commissioned by Ports Australia





About Ports Australia

Ports Australia is the peak body representing the interests of the Australian port industry. It serves as a national voice and plays a crucial role in advocating for policies and initiatives that promote the growth and development of Australian ports.

About this publication

The information in this document is based on findings from a study commissioned by Ports Australia and prepared by Prominence Consulting.

Participants in the study include Ports Australia members representing Australia's ports, stevedores, port tenants, towage operators and marine service providers from around the country. Throughout this report, participants in this study will be referred to collectively as 'ports and port operators'.

Information on how investments have been categorised and the definitions used throughout this publication can be found on page 9.

Executive Summary

Ports play a vital role in Australia's economy, workforce and sovereignty. Moving 99% of Australia's international trade by volume each year, ports are not only the gateway for international trade but also support 1 in 20 Australian jobs across industries that depend on goods moving into and out of the country. From the importation of construction materials, fuel, medicines and vehicles, to the export of food, fibre and minerals, ports keep Australia's economy moving.

To meet the demands of a growing population and unlock future trade opportunities, ports are continuing to invest in landside and quayside infrastructure, assets and projects that strengthen capacity, improve operational efficiency and advance sustainability outcomes. In doing so, ports are not only enablers of trade but also long-term investors in Australia's future.

This publication examines the historical (FY16–FY26) and forecast capital expenditure (CapEx) by the Australian ports sector, and provides a snapshot of the long-term investments that are increasing capacity, supporting regional development and preparing for future trade growth.

In the last decade, capital expenditure has grown significantly across most states and territories. Overall findings indicate an expansionary investment environment across the Australian ports sector. Growth and Improvement projects make up the majority national CapEx over the last ten years, demonstrating a strong focus on expanding capability and preparing for future demand.

Importantly, the value of port investment extends beyond physical infrastructure. The findings show meaningful investment beyond the wharf, with ports and port operators spending a combined $122m over the last five years on environmental programs, training and development, and community grants and initiatives.

Looking ahead, there is a diverse pipeline of capacity and growth projects planned across all states and territories. These investments reflect the sector's commitment to supporting new industries and enabling continued trade growth. Significant forecast investment and long-term capital commitments from ports demonstrate strong confidence in Australia's economic and trade outlook and is predicted to outpace past investment.

National Investment

The big picture

National investment data from ports and operators shows a commitment to growth and improvement.

Capital Expenditure (CapEx)

Australia's ports and port operators had a combined national **CapEx** of

$12.4bn

over the last 10 years.

Of this $12.4bn:

$7.6bn

was spent on **Growth and Improvement**.

$4.8bn

was spent on **Replacement and Maintenance**.

Growth and Improvement
investment covers landside and quayside projects that enable more ships, cargo or customers, improved productivity and safety, and resilience to disruption.

Replacement and Maintenance
investment maintains existing service levels, including the renewal, refurbishment or replacement of assets. This category of investment keeps the port operating as it already does and is an important part of maintaining trade.

People, Environment and Communities

Ports are significant enablers of economic activity across metropolitan and regional Australia, with more than 25% of the port workforce based outside capital cities. Investment in people, skills and local communities across Australia is a critical component of the industry's long-term growth and resilience.

Ports and port operators invested a combined

$122m

in People, Environment and Communities over the last **5 years**.

Breakdown of investment

People

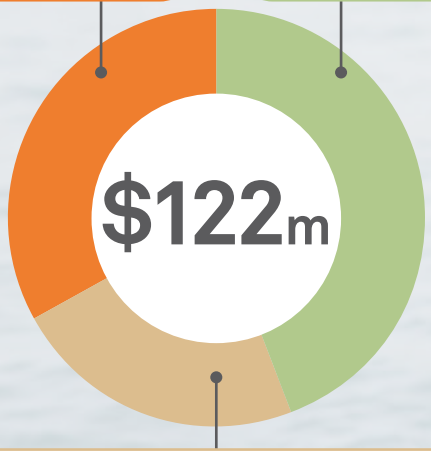
$40m

spent on training and development of employees, contractors and broader port communities.

Environment

$54m

spent on environmental management, monitoring, compliance and remediation activities associated with port operations, assets and development.



Community

$28m spent on communities through grants and local initiatives, including upkeep of community assets.

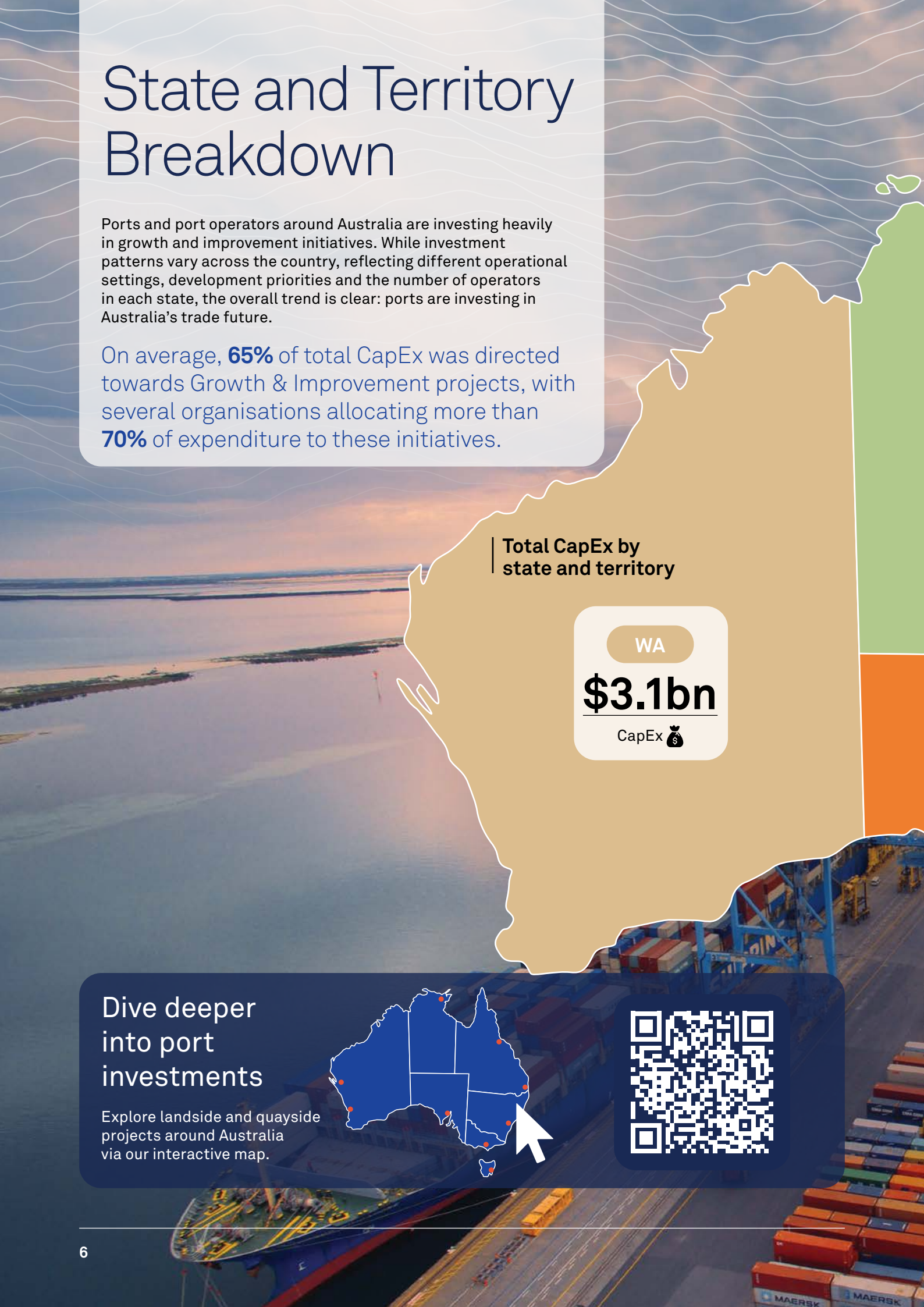


State and Territory Breakdown

Ports and port operators around Australia are investing heavily in growth and improvement initiatives. While investment patterns vary across the country, reflecting different operational settings, development priorities and the number of operators in each state, the overall trend is clear: ports are investing in Australia's trade future.

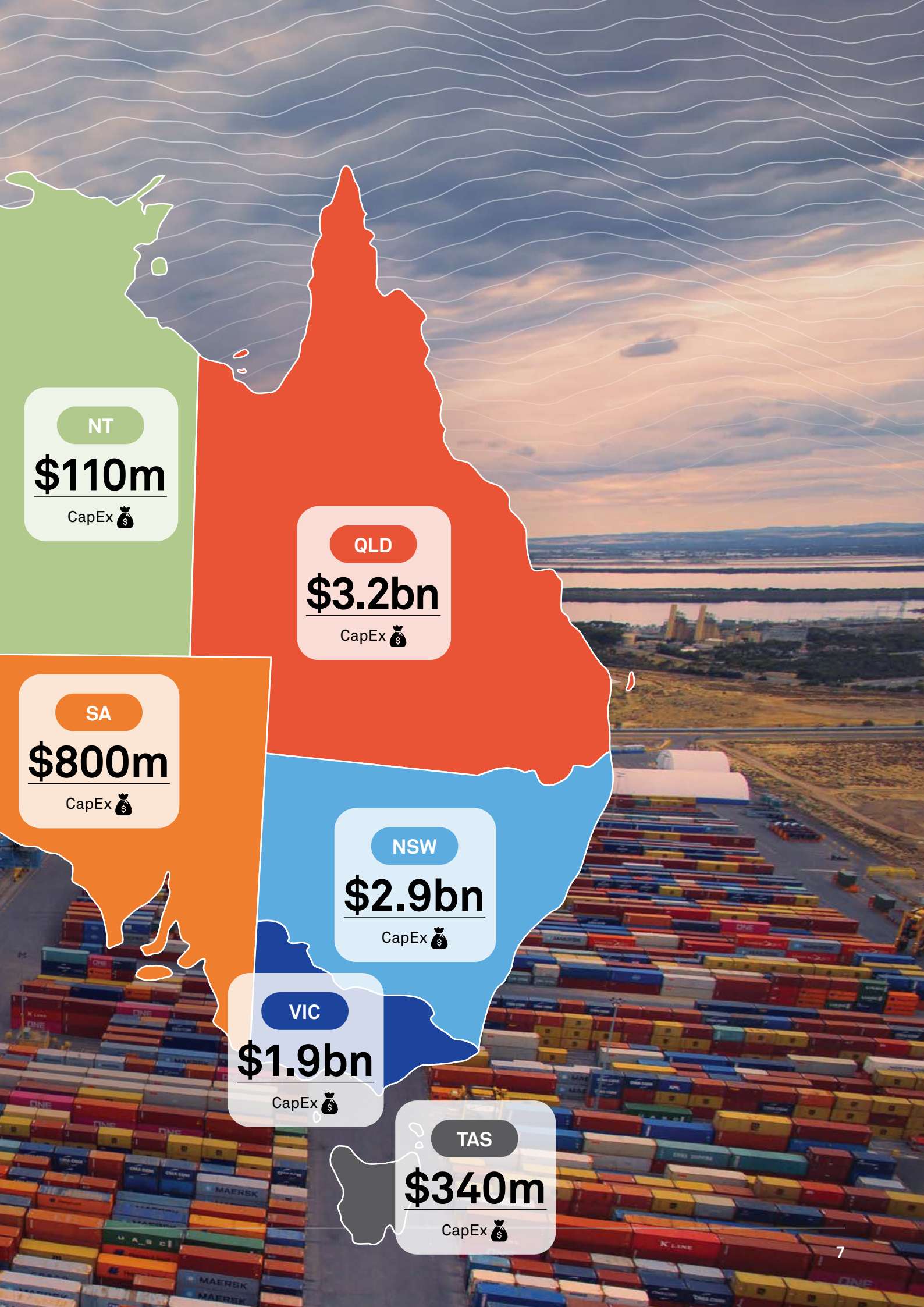
On average, **65%** of total CapEx was directed towards Growth & Improvement projects, with several organisations allocating more than **70%** of expenditure to these initiatives.

Total CapEx by state and territory



Dive deeper into port investments

Explore landside and quayside projects around Australia via our interactive map.


NT
$110m
CapEx
QLD
$3.2bn
CapEx
SA
$800m
CapEx
NSW
$2.9bn
CapEx
VIC
$1.9bn
CapEx
TAS
$340m
CapEx

Forecast Investment

Looking ahead

Port assets have long life cycles and depend on substantial capital commitments. While ports constantly face changing trade conditions, future trade outlook remains positive, supported by growing investment on the horizon. Notably, Growth & Improvement CapEx in the next decade is forecast to outpace the previous decade.

Ports and port operators are forecast to invest...

$8.3bn
in the next 3 years.

Ports are long-term investors, making significant commitments to meet future supply chain demands. The strong pipeline of landside and quayside projects demonstrates confidence in Australia's economic outlook and will help support regional communities, strengthen supply chain resilience and secure Australia's role in global trade.

National investment overview

Spent

$12.4bn
over the last 10 years

Forecast

$8.3bn
over the next 3 years



The table below outlines the framework used to classify investment projects in the data collection phase. It defines each investment type, the criteria used for assessment, and how projects are referred to in this report (Definition used).

Investment type	Criteria	Definition used
Replacement and Maintenance	Investment required to maintain existing service levels, including renewal, refurbishment or replacement of assets that are at or near end-of-life, or to meet current standards. If the project keeps the port operating as it already does, it is classified here.	Replacement and Maintenance
Capacity and Growth	Investment that increases the physical or operational capacity of the port or enables the port to accommodate forecast growth in trade, vessels, throughput, or customers. If the investment supports projects that allows more ships, more cargo, or more customers, it is classified here.	Growth and Improvement
Improved Efficiency	Investment that improves productivity, reduces cost, time, congestion, or resource intensity, or optimises existing capacity, without materially increasing overall capacity. If the project does more with what already exists, it is classified here.	Growth and Improvement
Resilience and Risk Management	Investment that reduces exposure to operational, safety, environmental, climate, security or business continuity risks, or strengthens the port's ability to withstand and recover from disruptions. If the primary driver is risk reduction, safety, or resilience to disruption, it is classified here.	Growth and Improvement
Workforce and People (including Safety)	Investment that improves the safety, capability, wellbeing, availability, or effectiveness of the workforce, including employees, contractors, and port users, and supports safe and sustainable operations. If the primary benefit is a safer, more capable, or more effective workforce, it is classified here.	Growth and Improvement
Environment and Sustainability	Investment that reduces environmental impact, improves environmental performance, or supports long-term sustainability outcomes, including compliance, mitigation, and enhancement of natural systems affected by port operations. If the primary driver is reducing environmental impact or improving sustainability outcomes, it is classified here.	Growth and Improvement



Ports Australia

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