

Summary Report

The contribution of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Sector to the Tasmanian economy 2023-24

August 2025

Introduction

This report on *the Contribution of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Sector to the Tasmanian Economy 2023-24* has been produced by the Department of State Growth, with input from across the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector through a survey and direct consultation with stakeholders.

In compiling this report, the methodology of the 2021-22 report was followed, which was adopted from the 2019-20 report by Wells Economic Consulting. This report is a companion piece for Wells Economic Consulting reports for 2015-16, 2017-18 and a report by Blacklow Economic Consulting for 2011-12.

As a series, these reports highlight the growth of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector over the past one and a half decades and its overall importance to Tasmania.

Summary

In the two years since the last report (2021-22), the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector in Tasmania has continued to grow. Total spending by Antarctic organisations in Tasmania has risen moderately and employment has increased by 17 per cent, as measured by Full-Time Equivalent (FTE).

In real terms, spending by Antarctic and Southern Ocean organisations in Tasmania has increased to \$204.56 million. Total expenditure by Antarctic and Southern Ocean organisations reverted to the long-term trend with \$316.24 million after peaking in 2021-22.

Table 1 – Value of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector to Tasmania 2011-12 to 2023-24

Year	Expenditure by Antarctic organisations	Expenditure in Tasmania
2011-12	\$229.95 million	\$134.14 million
2015-16	\$220.65 million	\$131.62 million
2017-18	\$221.61 million	\$139.70 million
2019-20	\$259.73 million	\$179.72 million
2021-22	\$415.59 million	\$197.06 million
2023-24	\$316.24 million	\$204.56 million

Note: Values are in 2023-24 prices.

Table 2 – Value of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector to Tasmania 2011-12 to 2023-24

Year	FTE	% Employment (TAS)	Antarctic Sector Wage % of TAS Avg. Wage	Conference Delegate & Expeditioner Exp. (\$m)	# PhD Students
2011-12	671	0.34%	131%	N/A	N/A
2015-16	755	0.38%	71%	N/A	N/A
2017-18	855	0.42%	181%	\$6.5	63
2019-20	947	0.47%	177%	\$3.5	52
2021-22	993	0.43%	172%*	N/A	N/A†
2023-24	1166	0.50%	173%	\$9.87	86

*Note that the percentage of 172 for 2021-22 differs from that reported in 2023 due to revisions to the ABS data.

† Note that reporting on conference delegate/expeditioner and PhD students was not included for the 2021-22 report.

Employment

Employment has increased in both the public sector Antarctic and Southern Ocean institutions and in the private sector. The Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector has remained a key component of total Tasmanian employment at 0.5 per cent.

FTE employment in private sector organisations engaged in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector has risen from 262 to 369. This is reflective of the overall increase in employment in the sector, which is in line with strong employment levels in Tasmania during 2023-24, with the unemployment rate at 3.8% in June 2024.

The public sector Antarctic and Southern Ocean organisations' share of FTE employment has risen from 731 to 797. With a wage bill (including superannuation and on-costs) of \$129.24 million, the implied average wage in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector was \$162,164, considerably higher than the comparable figure for Tasmania as a whole, which was \$93,795.

Other measures

After not being included in the 2021-22 report, the reporting of Antarctic expeditioner and conference delegate expenditure has been resumed for this report. Conference delegates accounted for \$3.31 million in expenditure, with delegates spending a total of 5,803 conference related days in Tasmania.

Antarctic expeditioners spent a total of approximately 16,000 nights in Tasmania, outside of their time spent on an expedition. In total, Antarctic expeditioners accounted for \$6.56 million in expenditure during their time in Tasmania. There were 86 PhD students supported by or working for Antarctic organisations in 2023-24.

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