



Media statement

Wednesday, 11 March 2020

New online portal improves marine data sharing

In a Western Australian first, the marine environmental survey information that informs environmental impact assessments will be captured, consolidated and made publicly available.

The [Index of Marine Surveys for Assessments \(IMSA\)](#) is a new online platform developed by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) in collaboration with the Western Australian Marine Science Institution that will provide free access to Western Australia's marine environmental survey data.

DWER Director General Mike Rowe said it was estimated that more than \$50 million per year is spent undertaking marine surveys for environmental impact assessments in Western Australia.

"Up until now that data has been single use only and locked away," Mr Rowe said.

"By collating and providing access to existing data, IMSA will lead to lasting benefits for industry, Government, the community and the environment.

"It will result in more efficient assessments and an expanded knowledge base of the State's vast and unique marine environment."

IMSA will also deliver cost savings by reducing the need for repeated and potentially overlapping surveys, giving proponents and Government better baseline information and a greater ability to conduct more targeted studies.

"The online IMSA portal will also improve the availability and transparency of environmental information to the community," Mr Rowe said.

The data will be captured and stored on the IMSA database and will be free and accessible to industry, regulators and the community through an online portal called BioCollect, provided by Atlas Of Living Australia.

"The portal will provide access to marine survey reports, metadata and map layers as well as the processed data products and raw data packages which will be stored at the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre," Mr Rowe said.

IMSA's launch follows the development and launch in 2018 of the [Index of Biodiversity Surveys for Assessments](#) (IBSA) by the State Government.

IBSA was conceptualised by the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute and developed with DWER, the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**

“DWER are committed to such initiatives as a small step in Western Australia’s journey toward comprehensive and transparent data sharing,” Mr Rowe said.

“These initiatives are also consistent with the intent of [Streamline WA](#), a Government initiative to make it easier to do business in WA by improving regulation and regulatory practice.”

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