

The Strategic Fleet explained



What is the Strategic Fleet?

The policy is to increase the number of Australian ships by up to 12. These ships will be Australian flagged, Australian owned, and operated commercially by full Australian crew. These vessels could be called upon by the government (requisitioned) in times of need.

Why does it matter?

Australia is an island nation heavily reliant on shipping for the domestic and international trade that our economy relies upon. Having some of our own ships improves our national resilience. This means we have assets available in times of crisis, a pipeline of maritime skills development for the safe functioning of our shipping and ports, and supply chain security in times of disruption.

Why doesn't Australia already have its own ships?

All nations that value their shipping industry have positive shipping policies and incentives. Australia's shipping industry cannot compete with these incentives and as a result has been in decline for decades. We have gone from over 100 Australian-flagged vessels 50 years ago, to just nine in 2024.

What is industry doing?

For many years MIAL has warned of the impacts of shipping policy neglect on national resilience. We advocate for policy measures to level the playing field for Australian shipping, to allow Australian shipping businesses to compete on an even footing with foreign shipping. The Strategic Fleet provides a mechanism for this to occur.

What is government doing?

In 2022, the Australian Government set up its Strategic Fleet Taskforce to report on how a Strategic Fleet could be created. The Taskforce, which included MIAL CEO Angela Gillham, drafted its report with 16 key recommendations. The report, along with the governments response was released publicly on 8 November 2023. What happens next will shape Australia's maritime future for years to come.

What can you do?

A Strategic Fleet is vital to safeguard Australia's maritime capability and national security. You can support our activities by joining MIAL or subscribing to receive monthly email updates.

Find out more at mial.org.au.



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