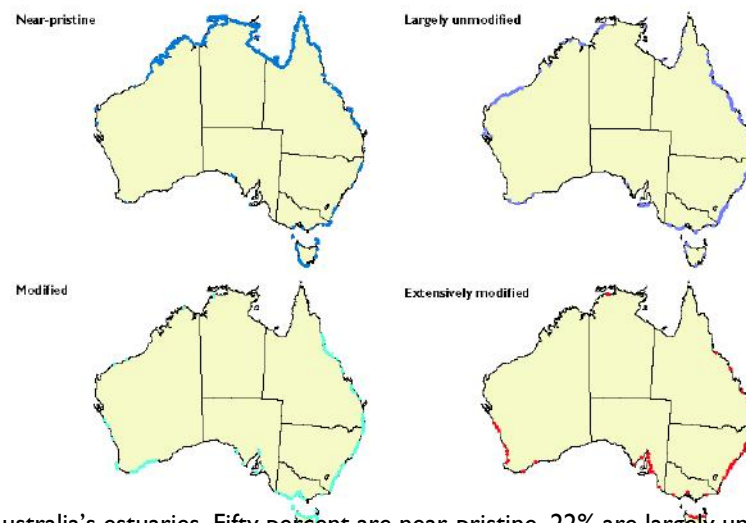


There has been substantial loss of estuarine wetlands accompanying catchment development for agriculture, infrastructure and urban uses around the developed Australian coast. These losses far outweigh the much more emotive community perceptions of loss to intensive developments such as ports in the otherwise undeveloped northern Australian stretch of coastline from above Geraldton in Western Australia around to and including most of Cape York in Queensland.

The Audit (2002) assessment of the condition of Australia's estuaries found that:

- 484 are near-pristine – most of these in tropical Australia, especially northern Western Australia, Northern Territory and Cape York and many of the rest on the west coast of Tasmania
- 210 are largely unmodified – many of these are also in tropical regions with a scattering of small estuaries, often within national parks along the east coast and Tasmania
- 186 are modified – predominantly along the east coast of Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and south-west Western Australia
- 92 are extensively modified – being predominantly along the east coast of Queensland and New South Wales, several in Victoria and Tasmania, South Australia and south-west Western Australia.



Condition of Australia's estuaries. Fifty percent are near-pristine, 22% are largely unmodified, 19% are modified and 9% are extensively modified.

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