

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHEET • CONNECTIVITY

Cable landing stations

The small coastal buildings where undersea cables come ashore

The key idea: small building, big job

A landing station is where a subsea cable comes ashore and connects to land networks. Despite the critical role, the facility itself is modest: typically a small, secure, single-storey building near the coast, with backup power and cooling for the equipment inside. It is **not** a data centre: no large-scale computing happens there.

What's actually involved

The cable is brought ashore through a drilled conduit or trench across the beach and dunes (usually underground and invisible once complete), to a beach manhole, then by underground duct to the station. Construction is short-lived and localised; operation is quiet, with occasional maintenance visits.

Why locations are chosen

Landing sites need gently sloping seabeds, protection from anchoring and trawling, clear routes to shore and reasonable access to inland fibre networks and power. That's why certain coastlines (Sydney's northern beaches, Perth's western suburbs and now Darwin) host multiple cables.

Who decides

Nationally: the ACMA issues permits for installing cables in Australian waters; security obligations apply to carriers. **State:** coastal management and planning approvals for the shore crossing and building. **Local:** councils assess the building itself and construction management (traffic, noise, hours).

What good practice looks like

- Early explanation to neighbours of what the facility is and isn't.
- Underground shore crossing with full beach and dune reinstatement.
- Construction managed to protect beach access, parking and amenity.
- A visible point of contact for questions during construction and operation.

Questions to ask

What will the building look like and how big is it? How long will beach works take and will access be maintained? What noise does the station make once running (typically: very little)? Who do I contact if something goes wrong?

Want to know more? Your council's planning register will hold the application; the proponent and the ACMA publish cable and permit information. This sheet is general information, not legal or planning advice; a specific proposal is confirmed by qualified assessment.