



COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHEET • CONNECTIVITY

Security, resilience and redundancy

What happens when a cable breaks — and why more routes make everyone safer

The key idea: resilience comes from plurality

Any single cable can fail and they do. Worldwide, most subsea cable faults are caused by fishing gear and ship anchors, not sabotage. What protects a nation's connectivity isn't making any one cable unbreakable; it's having **enough diverse routes** that traffic reroutes when one fails. That's the security argument behind Australia's expanding cable map.

How failures are fixed

Specialist repair ships locate the fault, lift the cable, splice in new sections and re-lay it: typically weeks rather than days. The global repair fleet is small and busy. During a repair, traffic shifts to other routes; whether users notice depends entirely on how much spare capacity exists elsewhere. Redundancy is bought before it's needed.

The security layer

Cables and landing stations are critical infrastructure under Australian law, carrying obligations on operators for risk management, incident reporting and government cooperation. Landing points are physically secured; routes are charted but protection zones and naval awareness add deterrence. Rising strategic attention on cables, globally and in our region, is one reason governments now co-invest in new routes and regional connectivity partnerships.

Who decides

Nationally: critical infrastructure law (Home Affairs), the ACMA's permit and protection regime and foreign investment screening of cable ownership. **State/local:** planning treatment of landing stations as significant infrastructure.

What good practice looks like

- Route diversity treated as a design goal, not an accident.
- Honest public communication during outages: cause, impact, timeline.
- Landing stations secured without becoming fortress-like intrusions on the coast.
- Regional partnerships that strengthen neighbours' connectivity too.

Questions to ask

If this cable failed tomorrow, what carries the load? Who owns and operates it and under what security obligations? Does the project add a genuinely diverse route, or duplicate an existing corridor?

Want to know more? The Department of Home Affairs publishes critical infrastructure guidance; the ACMA lists permitted cables and zones. This sheet is general information, not legal or planning advice; a specific proposal is confirmed by qualified assessment.