



Fact sheet



Telecommunications Act 1997 (Schedule 3A requirements)

If your project involves activity in a submarine cable protection zone, or the installation of international submarine cables in Australian waters, you must comply with applicable requirements under Schedule 3A to this Act.

1. What approvals do I need?

Permission is required to undertake restricted activities in or install submarine cables in a protection zone declared around submarine cables, and a permit is required to install an international submarine cable in Australian waters, in accordance with Schedule 3A to the [Telecommunications Act 1997](#) (the Schedule).

Under the Schedule, protection zones can be declared around submarine cables to restrict or prohibit activities that pose a risk to damaging those cables.

In these zones, permission from submarine cable owners is required for the following activities:

- installing, maintaining, using or removing cables and pipelines or associated equipment
- constructing, maintaining or removing an installation for the use of ships
- conducting civil engineering work, including constructing and removing navigation aids
- exploring or exploiting resources, other than marine species
- conducting research involving seabed contact.

Currently, protection zones exist in two areas adjacent to the Sydney Coast and one area adjacent to the Perth Coast. A map of each of the protection zones, as well as further details on prohibited and restricted activities, is available on the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) [website](#).

Separately, a permit is required to install:

- One or more submarine cables in a protection zone.
- One or more international submarine cables in either a protection zone or in Australian waters that are not in a protection zone and that are not the coastal waters of a State or the Northern Territory. This includes waters starting three nautical miles from the coastline, covering Australia's exclusive economic zone and extending to the continental shelf of Australia.

Guidance on [permit requirements](#) is available on the ACMA website.

2. Who provides the approvals?

The ACMA administers the Schedule. It grants installation permits and makes protection zone declaration decisions.

Submarine cable owners are responsible for granting permission for restricted activities in a protection zone.

Separate legislation applies to the installation of submarine cables in State or Northern Territory coastal waters and approvals are required from the corresponding State or Northern Territory Authority.

3. How do I apply for the approvals?

To gain permission for restricted activities in a protection zone, you must follow any relevant consultation process outlined within the protection zone's declaration.

Please refer to the relevant declaration for [Northern Sydney](#); [Southern Sydney](#); or [Perth](#).

To apply for a permit to install a submarine cable, a telecommunications carrier must apply to the ACMA using the ACMA's application [guide](#) and [form](#).

4. More information

Australian Communications and Media Authority

Further information about the regulatory requirements regarding submarine cables is available on the ACMA [website](#).

The ACMA can be contacted by email at subcablesenquiries@acma.gov.au.

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

If you would like assistance to identify potential Australian Government regulatory approvals required for your project, please refer to the [Major projects help tool](#) self-assessment.

The MPFA team can be contacted by email at MPFA@industry.gov.au.