ZITHA TECH SPECIALTY CABLES (Pty) Ltd

Australia receives fiber optic cables



Overview

Australia's fibre backbone race picks up speed Microsoft has agreed to be the first customer for the new network, which will intersect with Telstra's subse.

Key Takeaways

Australia receives international and domestic fibre optic connectivity through a network of subsea and onshore cables, linking it to the US, Pacific islands, and Asia, with ongoing expansions to support AI, cloud services, and disaster resilience.Historical and Current Subsea Cables

Australia's international connectivity began with the ANZCAN submarine cable in 1984, linking Australia to New Zealand, Canada, and beyond, initially supporting analog communications with 1,380 voice circuits . Fibre optic technology replaced analog systems in the 1990s, dramatically increasing capacity and reliability. The SX NEXT cable, launched in 2022, provides a direct subsea link from Australia to the United States with speeds up to 72 terabytes per second, benefiting consumers, businesses, and Pacific neighbours .

Recent and Domestic Developments

The SMAP system is a major domestic and international fibre project connecting Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth, with subsea links to the US, Singapore, and India. It offers a total data transfer capacity of 400 terabits per second, supporting AI, cloud services, and critical infrastructure such as emergency operations and transport systems . SUBCO, an Australian-owned company, is actively laying over 5,000 km of fibre infrastructure using the cable-laying ship Ile d'Yeu .

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Future Projects

Australia is planning the APX East cable, expected to be operational by late 2028, which will be the first direct subsea link to the US without landing in other jurisdictions. This cable will provide the lowest latency route for AI-related workloads and enhance security and resilience through single-end power feeding . Additionally, the Coral Sea Cable links Sydney to Honiara and Port Moresby, reflecting Australia's strategic investment in secure digital infrastructure for Pacific island countries .

Strategic and Environmental Considerations

Australia's fibre optic network is not only about speed and capacity but also resilience and environmental responsibility. Subsea cables are carefully routed to avoid coral reefs and fish nurseries, and retired cables are recycled for copper, steel, and polyethylene . Government initiatives, such as the Pacific Step Up and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, support secure and sustainable digital connectivity in the region .

Summary

Australia's fibre optic infrastructure combines historical legacy systems, modern high-capacity subsea cables, and ambitious future projects to ensure robust international connectivity, low-latency links, and support for emerging technologies. These developments enhance digital services, disaster resilience, and regional influence, while maintaining environmental and strategic safeguards.

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The subsea cables are extremely important for Australia''s digital network, with 99 per cent of digital content coming

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Submarine Cable FAQs

Submarine Cable 101 How many cables are there? As of 2026, we track more than 600 active and planned submarine cables. The

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Vocus'' new Sydney-Melbourne route, which is designed to carry 3,456 fiber pairs, is expected to be operational in 2029.

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