

# New legislation to protect submarine cables

Under new legislation, ACMA has powers to declare protection zones for telecommunications cables that lie under the sea in Australian waters.

There are nine submarine cables in Australian waters, eight of which carry about 99 per cent of Australia's voice and data traffic to other countries. These cables are vital to Australia's ability to communicate with the rest of the world, including the ability to conduct international trade. However, these cables are at risk of damage from some kinds of fishing, anchoring and dredging.

The new legislation allows ACMA to declare protection zones for submarine cables and to prohibit and restrict certain activities in those waters.

Key features of the submarine cable protection regime are that:

- ACMA can declare, vary or revoke protection zones for submarine cables
- certain activities are prohibited or restricted within a protection zone
- carriers need an ACMA permit to install submarine cables in Australian waters
- carriers and cable owners installing submarine cables in a protection zone will be exempt from certain state or territory laws and
- it will be an offence for anyone to damage a submarine cable in a protection zone, with maximum penalties of 10 years imprisonment or a \$330,000 fine.

ACMA will conduct comprehensive consultation with interested stakeholders in the course of declaring submarine protection zones.

The *Telecommunications and Other Legislation Amendment (Protection of Submarine*

*Cables and Other Measures) Act 2005* was passed by the Australian Parliament in August 2005 and is on the website at <http://scaleplus.law.gov.au/html/comact/12/7018/top.htm>.



## Temporary community broadcasting licences

Temporary community broadcasting licences allocated between 29 July and 31 August 2005

LICENCE AREA	LICENSEE	FREQUENCY	PERIOD	DATE ALLOCATED
New South Wales Sanctuary Point RA1	Bay and Basin Community Resources Inc.	92.7 MHz	1/09/05 to 1/12/05	19/08/05
Western Australia Kalgoorlie RA2	Tjuma Pulka (Media) Aboriginal Corporation	96.3 MHz	24/10/05 to 23/10/06	5/08/05
Northern Territory Alice Springs RA2	8CCC Community Radio Inc.	102.1 MHz (Alice Springs) and 102.1 MHz (Tennant Creek)	19/03/05 to 18/11/05*	18/08/05

\*Licence period extended