

**Subject:** Overseas dependencies and threats – Data centres and international submarine cables  
OC250589

**Date:** Tuesday, 1 July 2025 at 10:02:50 AM New Zealand Standard Time

**From:** OIA

**To:** Wendy McGuinness

**CC:** [REDACTED]

**Attachments:** image001.png, image002.png

Kia ora Wendy,

On behalf of the Ministry of Transport, I acknowledge the partial transfer of your Official Information Act request on 30 June 2025 seeking:

**“C: Data disruptions due to damage to our international submarine cables**

*These risks could take many forms, such as cables being damaged due to earthquakes, cyber attacks, blackmail, or attacks by unwelcome actors (e.g. what [NATO](#) calls ‘seabed warfare’).*

14. *Has a risk assessment been undertaken of disruptions to submarine cables (e.g. if an earthquake severs the undersea cables that connect New Zealand and Australia)? If yes, by whom and when?*
15. *Does New Zealand have all the necessary skills and resources to repair a damaged cable if 10km of cable needs to be replaced between New Zealand and Australia without help from another country? If no, do New Zealand and Australia together have the necessary skills and resources to replace 10km cables, without any external help?*
16. *This [article](#) notes, ‘Any damage could take months to repair.’ If all the skills and resources are available in New Zealand and Australia, what is the range if 10km of cable needs to be replaced (e.g. 1–3 months or 1–12 months)?*
17. *What is the plan B if the cables are disrupted? How would New Zealand transmit key data to the world and vice versa? Given that the volume of data is likely to be restricted during a disruption, has work been done to select what data should take precedence (e.g. financial data)?*
18. *What protections and/or agreements are planned/in place to secure and protect our existing cables (e.g. underwater cameras, drones etc)? Who is responsible for such plans for international submarine cables?*
19. *There is a number of [proposed cables](#) that are expected to be in operation in 2026, 2027 and 2028 (e.g. the SX Tasman Express, see [article](#)). Can you please list each of the existing and proposed undersea cables between Australia and New Zealand and advise who owns them? We want to understand whether New Zealand has control over the cables. Are any of the proposed cables being built or planned to be built between Australia and New Zealand owned by the New Zealand Government or in collaboration with the New Zealand Government? If yes, are they on time and within budget? Further, please indicate if the resulting capacity will include a degree of redundancy and if yes, how is that redundancy being calculated?*

**D: Strategy**

20. *Work is clearly underway to make New Zealand less dependent and more resilient, but we are keen to clarify the extent we are currently vulnerable and what success might look like in the next few years. Can you provide any documents that set out New Zealand’s strategy on any of the above topics? ”*

We will endeavour to respond to your request as soon as possible, and in any event no later than **28 July 2025** being 20 working days after the day your request was received. If we are unable to respond to your request by then, we will notify you of an extension of that

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The Ministry publishes Official Information Act responses on our website when there may be wider interest in the information released. This means the information provided to you might be published after you have received it.

Ngā mihi nui,

[Redacted]

**Kaitohutohu - Ratonga Minita | OIA Adviser - Ministerial and Executive Services**

