The Global Role of the ICPC

- Foster team-working relationships with other seabed users, so that submarine telecommunications and power cables can operate in harmony with other seabed activities.
- Promote awareness of submarine cables as Critical Infrastructure to Governments, other users of the seabed as well as the Public.
- Establish internationally agreed industry recommendations for cable installation, protection and maintenance as well as publish a series of best practices related to submarine cable protection and security.
- Undertake publicly-available, peer-reviewed research on environmental aspects of submarine cables.
- Monitor the evolution of international treaties and national legislation as well as help to ensure all submarine cable interests are fully protected worldwide.
- Liaise with UN Bodies including United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Seabed Authority (ISA), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Maritime Organization (IMO) and regional Cable Protection Committees.
ICPC Timeline & History

2010:
- ICPC opens up Membership to GOVERNMENTS, SHIP OPERATORS, SYSTEM SUPPLIERS, and SURVEY COMPANIES.
- ICPC AND IASA sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- ICPC membership lobby GOVERNMENTS to support UN approval of the Oceanic Resolution on the Oceans and Law of the Sea.

2008:

2004:
- First power cable operator joins the ICPC.

1996:
- First long haul self-healing submarine cable ring network installed (IOT/13 across the Atlantic, operating at 2x 500 Mbit)

1995:
- The Submarine Cable System was opened to the public.

1988:
- First long haul Metropolitan submarine cable system installed (2x24 across the Atlantic, operating at 200 Mbit).

1986:
- First international blue optic submarine cable system installed (UK-Belgium 5 operating at 140 Mbit).

1972:
- The title “EXECUTIVE” for the Sub-committee was first used in that year’s Plenary meeting.
- The ICPC video “The Cable That Nobody Wants” was produced.

1969:
- The title “PLURALITY” for the Main Committee first appeared.

1963:
- First cable from New Jersey to England.

1958:
- The CABLE DAMAGE COMMITTEE was established and Membership was open to SUBMARINE CABLE OWNERS and OPERATORS.

1956:
- The first trans-Atlantic telegraph cable, TAT-1, was laid.

1967:
- The name was changed to the INTERNATIONAL CABLE PROTECTION COMMITTEE (ICPC).

www.iscpc.org
Notable Activities

❖ In 2018, the ICPC was awarded Consultative Status at the United Nations as the first (and only) submarine cable organisation to participate

❖ ICPC membership lobby Governments to support United Nations approval of an Omnibus Resolution on the Oceans and Law of the Sea

❖ Centre for International Law (CIL) Workshops I & II ASEAN: Singapore (organised by CIL and ICPC)

❖ APEC–ICPC engage the Telecommunications and Trade & Investment forums to increase awareness of submarine cable issues and best practices

❖ ICPC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with International Seabed Authority (ISA) enabling workshops of practical solutions to issues such as deep-sea mining and cables

❖ ICPC Member of ITU/UNESCO-IOC/WMO Joint Task Force on submarine cables and climate monitoring

❖ Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) proposed measures for moving forward at a regional level to protect submarine cables, reduce the risks to submarine cables, and improve repair

❖ Granted Observer status with the OSPAR Convention in 2014
Notable Activities and Participation

❖ International workshop on HVDC power Cables in the context of international submarine cables and pipelines and the ABNJ.

❖ Produced videos ‘Ocean Currents -The world of submarine power cables’ and ‘The ICPC-Keeping the world connected’

❖ Ghana Cable Awareness Workshop

❖ Inaugural workshop with ICPC and the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs

❖ ICPC and International Seabed Authority (ISA) joint workshop: ‘Submarine Cables and Deep Seabed Mining—Advancing Common Interest and Addressing UNCLOS ‘Due Regard’ Obligations’ resulting in ‘ISA Technical Study 14’

❖ ICPC/ISA Side Event at ISA 22nd Annual Session in Kingston, Jamaica

❖ ICPC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SubOptic, ISA, European Subsea Cables Association (ESCA) and International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)

❖ ICPC Side Event BBNJ Prep Com 2nd Session at the United Nations
Membership Details

more than 170 Members
from more than 65 countries & territories

❖ 1958: Established for Owners and Operators of submarine cables
❖ 2010: Membership opened up to Governments, Ship Operators, System Suppliers and Survey Companies
❖ 2013: Associate Membership class created for Industry supporters
❖ Current Members include: Australian, UK, Malta, New Zealand and Singapore Government Departments
Membership Coverage

ICPC represents 98% of International Cable Kms.
How Do Submarine Cables Underpin the Global Economy?

- **International telecommunications links** are predominantly provided by submarine cables because of low latency and scalability. Satellites are limited by physics and the Sun.

- **Financial transactions** affect all aspects of the economy, (not only banks), typically involving many billions/trillions of US dollars each day, dependent upon the individual country.

- **Major events impacting multiple cables** can effectively isolate a country’s economy and other countries relying upon the financial services provided by that country.

- Many companies and institutions **rely on offshore processing of financial transactions**.
ICPC and the Environment

- The ICPC works in the marine environment and is a responsible steward
- Joined UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](https://www.unep.org)) regarding research on cables and the marine environment (*1 UNEP-ICPC peer-reviewed report*)
- Facilitated research on the interactions of whales and cables (*peer-reviewed paper*)
- Assisted graduate research on the carbon footprint of the cable industry (*MSc. thesis*)
- Ongoing long-term university research on leaching from submarine cables (*1 report*)
- Pioneering research published in peer review journals on turbidity currents triggered by Tsunamis and typhoons (*3 peer-reviewed papers*)
- Alert for opportunities to partner with marine scientists and graduate students on environmental issues and cables (*1 PhD thesis, 1 peer-reviewed paper*)
- Publishes the *Environment Update* (a newsletter for ICPC Members to improve global awareness)
International Submarine Cables: The Challenge of Change

- Decision making and policy development with limited facts on submarine cables
- Rapid development of offshore renewable energy and deep-sea mining
- Increased incidence of damage caused by shipping
- Seabed becoming crowded in some areas
- Need to maintain harmony with other seabed users
- Need to ensure harmony with seabed environment
- Need to improve the security of submarine cables
International Cable Protection Committee

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ICPC

Thank you,
Malcolm Eccles
Basslink Pty Ltd
ICPC Chair

Sharing the seabed in harmony with others

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