



Ministry of Information and Communications Technology

Office of the Minister

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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I am pleased to announce that the first-ever National Media Development Policy for Papua New Guinea has been completed and is ready to be presented to the National Executive Council for deliberation and endorsement.

The National Media Development Policy carries the slogan “A New Era of Media Excellence” because it recognizes and elevates the media to its traditional “fourth estate” role within Papua New Guinea’s Westminster Democratic Sovereign State. Simultaneously, it proactively commits to resource and demand media quality, accessibility, and responsibility in information and news dissemination.

With the golden anniversary of independence due on 16th September 2025, this long overdue policy is necessary to review, update, and upgrade how we have done, and need to do business in the media space in PNG for the development of our country.

In the policy, the National Government recognizes the importance of the role of media within the context of the Constitutionally guaranteed Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information. These freedoms, which are qualified rights for the greater public good of citizens, need to be noted within the context of the overarching National Goals of Integrated Human Development, Equality and Participation, National Sovereignty and Self-Reliance, and Papua New Guinean Ways. Both the goals and the freedoms are equally important and mutually reinforcing to guide the development of our people and our country.

This is why the National Media Development Policy, by legislation, seeks to establish and elevate a National Media Commission as a constitutional body, reporting to Parliament. The NMC will oversee both government media mobilization initiatives to improve access and initiate public-private partnership arrangements for the professional development and self-regulation initiatives within mainstream media.

To ensure "freedom of the press," the legislation will provide for the annual budget appropriation to be released in a timely way without condition – similar to the way the Judiciary funding and the Ombudsman Commission funding are disbursed under the law.

I want to assure the people of PNG that serious consideration was given and due diligence was undertaken to ensure stakeholders' views, concerns, criticisms, suggestions, and propositions were sought, noted, and accommodated in various aspects of this public policy spread over four months in 2023 from February to July.

The stakeholder consultations, desk-top research on media landscape, and academic study of media trends in PNG and the Pacific region informed various updated versions of the draft policy each time. Specific issues and trends informing the near-final draft were then subjected to random sample surveys through an online survey for residents in Port Moresby, Lae, and Kokopo, as well as other centers of PNG. There were in-person surveys conducted also in the regional centers of Alotau, Madang, Hagen, and Buka in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. The sample survey gathered perceptions of the public on population access to information, media diversity, perceptions on the quality of news, including local content, perception of development news and journalism standards, and their thoughts on accreditation. The random, voluntary views of those surveyed augment the overall policy direction of the National Media Development Policy on media quality as well as lack in media literacy, especially among women, and limited access to news and information nationwide.

The policy is broadly divided into two main strands: media quality and media mobilization. Two overseeing bodies will be established by legislation: The National Media Commission will oversee media quality issues, while the Government Media Advisory Committee will focus on mobilizing the all-of-Government media, rationalization review, and expanding access.

The Marape - Rosso Government, as a responsible Government, recognizes that lapses in overall journalism quality are mere symptoms of deeper levels of underlying issues, including lack in education and professional development, lack in resources for the establishment and maintenance of self-regulation, and even issues of on-the-job salary and benefits.

The National Media Commission, once established, will engage with the mainstream media in public-private partnership arrangements. This PPP, resourced by the Government, will assist and enhance the professional development of journalists, assist in the creation of a professional media body run by journalists themselves for the accreditation of professionally trained journalists. It will help establish and resource an independent complaints desk for the public and pathways to media arbitration.

Given the extensive reach of Government-owned media in the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) radio and television, Radio Kalang FM 100, and EMTV – both owned by Telikom PNG Limited, the Government Media Advisory Committee will oversee a rationalization review on Government-owned media. GMAC will also consider the establishment of a dynamic newsprint media covering policy as well as government news to be printed and circulated from provincial headquarters. GMAC will also consider issues of infrastructure and utilities rollout to expand access for government information and news into the yet unreached, remote areas of the country.

Overall, this policy aims to harness and enhance the way we handle media information and news for development as well as to assist and resource the media industry in professional development and self-regulation and expanding access to the masses.

This is in line with the Pacific Islands News Association's concerns that lack of resources among the mainstream media has resulted in a lack of media professional development; and this is shown in news outputs in newspapers, radio, and television. PINA, whose members comprise most Pacific Island media organizations, has taken a proactive approach with the encouragement of national media associations (like Media Council of Papua New Guinea) to engage with their National Governments to ensure training and resourcing for quality in media outputs, partnerships with regional governments, so freedom of the media and self-regulation are assured.

For Papua New Guinea, a media development policy has been absent, and most media-related legislations are also either absent or outdated.


The media is responsible for feeding the public with information – for good or harm. This information must, therefore, be accurate, credible, and balanced. And the disseminators of this information must be responsible – and be held accountable as professionals.

But democratic governments, like the Marape-Rosso Government, have a duty to ensure that democratic institutions, including media as the fourth estate, are allowed to perform their duties without fear or favor for the greater good of the public.

However, this should not be a license for irresponsibility and lapses in professional standards and outputs in publicized, broadcasted, or uploaded information and news. Ultimately this demeans not just individual journalists but the media organizations you represent.

Excuses of lack of resources are going to be addressed by the Government for professional development and self-regulation mechanisms.

It is now time for the media organizations and journalists to rise up and provide the kind of media quality befitting you as professionals as well as the reputable media organizations you represent.


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