



## Ministry of Information & Communications Technology

### Office of the Minister

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#### PRESS STATEMENT

### **CABINET APPROVES USD \$120 MILLION "PUKPUK CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVE"**

**30th January 2026**

I am pleased to inform the people of Papua New Guinea that the National Executive Council (NEC) has approved the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) proposal for a USD \$120 million package of three new international submarine cable connections for Papua New Guinea, now designated by Government as the Pukpuk Connectivity Initiative.

This decision is one of the most important digital infrastructure approvals in our nation's recent history. Undersea cable redundancy is the foundation for reliable internet, more affordable wholesale bandwidth, and the confidence required for major technology investment to take place in Papua New Guinea.

The Pukpuk Connectivity Initiative is structured around a multi-route undersea cable solution, designed to bring three additional international cable connections to serve different parts of Papua New Guinea—specifically to improve redundancy and reduce single points of failure. Importantly, this proposal will come at no direct cost to the State.

#### **Benefits for Business and Citizens**

For citizens and businesses across the country, the Pukpuk Connectivity Initiative will translate into practical benefits, including:

- Better reliability: fewer disruptions when faults occur on any single route
- Improved service quality: stronger, more stable connectivity for households and business operations
- Improved affordability over time: stronger resilience and competition reduce the "risk premium" that drives higher costs

- Better access to essential services: stronger backbone connectivity supports education, health, banking, and digital government

### **Enabling Investment and Job Creation**

This initiative is not only about faster internet. It is about positioning Papua New Guinea as a credible digital investment destination.

With stronger redundancy and predictable wholesale capacity, Papua New Guinea becomes more attractive for:

- Global technology firms and corporate investors to build data centres in PNG
- Major companies to establish regional operational hubs or headquarters in PNG
- Growth in cloud services, fintech, e-commerce, and software development
- Expansion of local digital enterprises—more SMEs selling online, and more digital jobs for young people

A data centre economy also creates real employment—engineers, technicians, network operations, physical and cyber security, facilities management, compliance, and supporting services—while stimulating wider local supply chains, including construction and professional services.

### **Project Sponsor**

Cabinet has assigned the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to take carriage of the initiative as the PNG Government's policy and project sponsor.

DICT will work closely with AIFFP and national stakeholders to undertake the preparatory phase, including:

- Preliminary technical and economic assessments
- Identification of suitable cable landing sites
- Coordination with central agencies, regulator(s), and prospective private sector participants
- Strengthened planning for security, resilience, and operational continuity, consistent with national obligations and treaty-aligned commitments

### **Competition Principles to Protect Consumer Outcomes**

A key aspect of this initiative is that it must be delivered in a way that strengthens competition and consumer outcomes. Therefore there will be comprehensive consultation with the telecommunications industry and private sector on how best these new assets should be structured and managed—consistent with competition principles that support:

- Open and fair wholesale access
- Strong reliability and resiliency standards
- Long-term affordability for consumers and businesses
- Investment certainty for future expansion

A press conference will be held on the last week of February to inform on implementation roadmap.

### **Broader National Connectivity Program and LEO Satellite Adoption**

This NEC approval sits within a broader national program to modernise Papua New Guinea's connectivity architecture.

In parallel, the Ministry is working closely with NICTA and DICT to complete a national Connectivity Blueprint—a structured gap analysis to identify weaknesses in coverage, resilience, and technology deployment, and to recommend the appropriate mix of solutions to close those gaps.

This is also why we are hopeful the Starlink matter will be resolved soon through the court process, restoring certainty to the LEO satellite pathway. Papua New Guinea remains open to seeing other LEO satellite operators enter the market in 2026 as part of a competitive and resilient connectivity landscape—particularly for rural and remote communities.

I thank Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, MP, for Cabinet's approval and for his confidence in the Government's ICT agenda and infrastructure-led development.

I also acknowledge and thank the Australian Government, and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP), for this partnership and investment proposal that will materially strengthen Papua New Guinea's digital future.

The Pukpuk Connectivity Initiative is strategic national infrastructure. It strengthens resilience, supports affordability over time, and builds the foundation for major digital economy investment—while remaining aligned with Papua New Guinea's national security responsibilities and our commitments under the Pukpuk Treaty.

Approved for Release



**HON. PETER TSIAMALILI JR., MP**

Minister for Works and Highways

Acting Minister for Information and Communications Technology