



## Budget 2018–2019 Head No. 16: Ministry of Communications

### Background

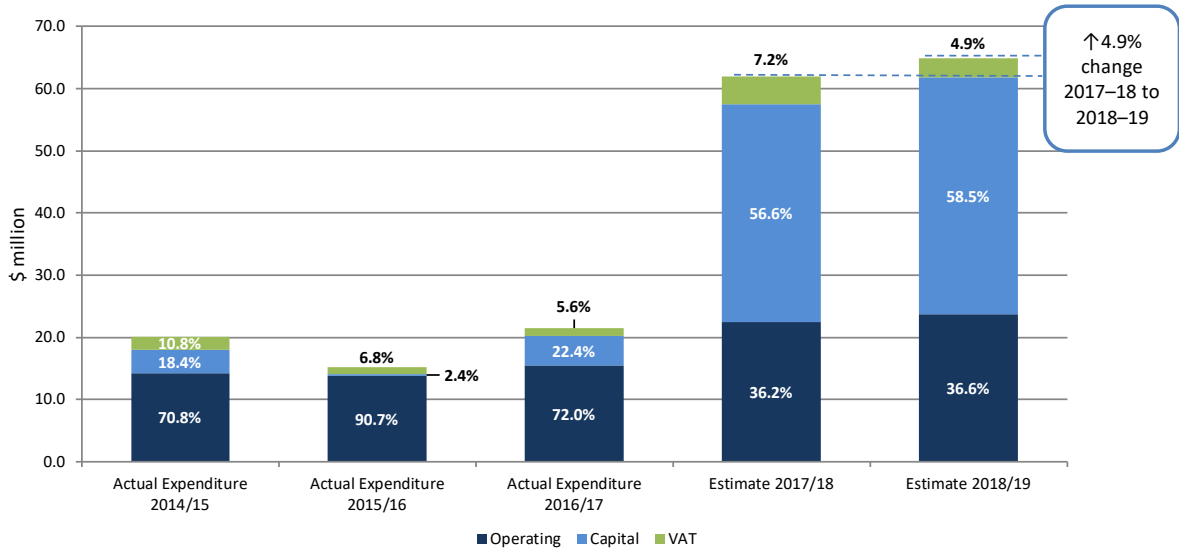
The Ministry of Communications (‘Ministry’) is responsible for keeping Fijians connected to each other and to the outside world by providing efficient, competitive, cost-effective and accessible telecommunication and postal services. It is also responsible for supporting the development of Fiji’s Information, Communication and Technology Sector by providing technical and strategic support to the industry.

### Trends

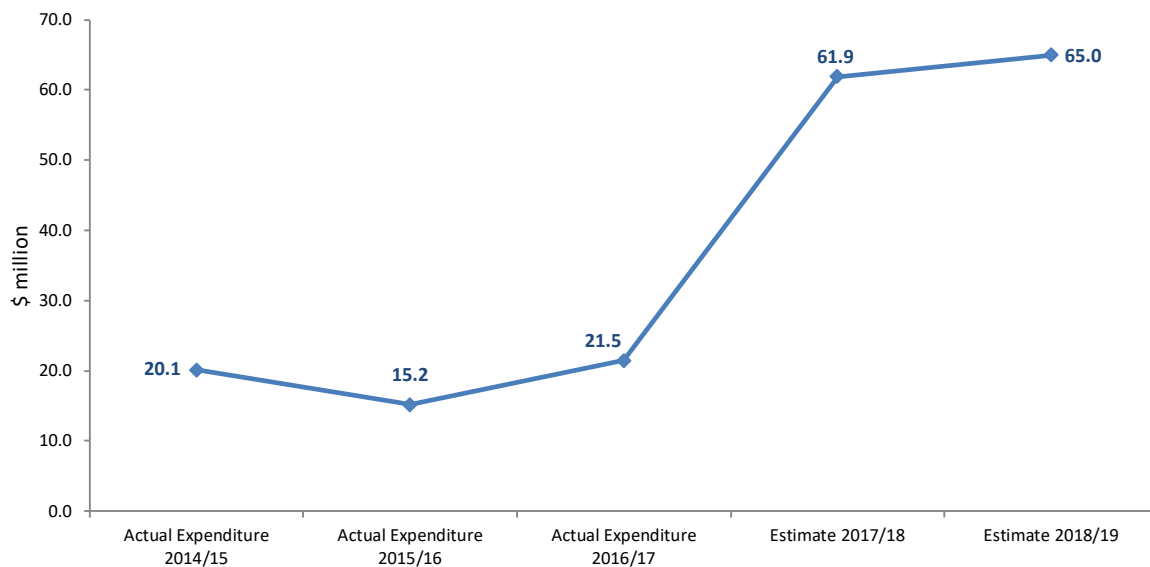
In 2018-2019, total Ministry expenditure will amount to an estimated **\$65.0 million**, comprising **\$23.8 million** for operating expenditure and **\$38.0 million** for capital expenditure. This represents an increase of 4.9 per cent from 2017-2018 figures (**\$3.0 million**). This increase is attributed to funding for the Walesi and DigitalFiji programmes, which are discussed later in this briefing.

The following graphs show funding trends over the past five years.

### Ministry of Communications expenditure by type, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019



### Ministry of Communications total expenditure, 2014-2015 to 2018-2019



### Budget announcements and allocations

The following section highlights some of the new Budget announcements relating to the Ministry.

#### Walesi

The Budget allocates **\$19.0 million** to Walesi, which allows Fijian families to access a package of free-to-air television stations via satellite or mobile device.

#### DigitalFiji

**\$14.6 million** has been allocated for the DigitalFiji project, a flagship programme to transform the delivery of Government services. It will consist of the streaming of processes of a number of government agencies such as the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages and the delivery of host mobile applications that aim to bring Government services to all Fijians.

#### Expanding internet access

The Budget allocates **\$500,000** to set up new telecentres, and **\$300,000** to expand internet access to 371 schools across Fiji.

Other initiatives in the 2018-2019 Budget include:

#### Implementation Analogue to Digital Roadmap

**\$2.0 million** to support the transition from analogue to digital throughout Fiji by subsidising the purchase of set-top boxes for low-income households.



### **Cable connection Vanua Levu (World Bank)**

**\$950,000** in funding for the final phase of construction for the Suva-Savusavu cable connection via the new Samoa-Fiji cable, dramatically increasing Vanua Levu's broadband capacity and internet connectivity.

### **Government Fibre Optic Network Project**

**\$500,000** for critical upgrades to the Govnet network to provide a more stable online environment.

### **Sources**

- Fijian Government (2018) *Budget estimates 2018–2019*, Ministry of Economy, 28 June 2018. [Hard copy.]
- Fijian Government (2018) *Your Government at Work- General Administration sector:2018-2019 Budget Kit*. [Hard copy.]

### **July 2018**

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