

# **Briefs: Kiwi minister urges Telecom to make a deal**

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New Zealand's communications minister said Monday he was open to talking with Telecom New Zealand about a deal that would head off new regulations.

David Cunliffe said he would be open to hearing from Telecom about their ideas for investment and other steps that would "give some confidence about the existing market structure."

Telecom has been at the center of a growing controversy between the company and the government over the pace of broadband growth in the island nation where Internet demand is high but prices are considered overly steep. Critics accuse the nationwide telco of blocking infrastructure access for potential Internet competitors.

Prime Minister Helen Clark upped the volume last week with a public speech warning that the government was ready to enact new regulations on the entire telecom industry.

Cunliffe told National Radio that the door was still open for Telecom for take steps on its own to remedy the situation, ZDStuff reported.

"What the prime minister has done is stress to the public the urgency with which the government is treating this issue and what she has not done is lay out or disclose what policy tools will be used," Cunliffe stated.

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