

FIJIAN ELECTIONS OFFICE
My Election, My Fiji

2018
**GENERAL
ELECTION**

**Final Report by
Supervisor of Elections**

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10 JANUARY 2019

2018
GENERAL
ELECTION

JOINT REPORT

By
THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
&
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

Contents

I. Forward	1
II. Introduction	2
III. Key Dates	8
IV. 2018 General Election	9
V. Voter Education	15
VI. Political Parties	17
VII. Electoral Complaints	18
VIII. Legal Challenges	19
IX. Election Expenditure	20
X. International Support	21
XI. Inter-agency cooperation	23
XII. Conclusion	24
XIII. Recommendations	25
XIV. Annexes	29
2018 General Election - Final Report by the Supervisor of Elections	1-121
2018 Fijian General Election - Final Report of the Multinational Observer Group	1-71

I. Foreword

We present this joint report on the 2018 General Election in accordance with Section 14(g) of the Electoral Act 2014 [Act].

The Electoral Commission [EC] and the Fijian Elections Office [FEO] conducted the 2018 General Election on 14 November 2018. Due to heavy rain and flooding in some locations, it was decided to adjourn Polling in those locations and a re-poll was conducted on 17 November 2018 allowing all voters the opportunity to access the Polling places and cast their vote.

The General Election was contested by six (6) Political Parties while there were no Independent Candidates. A total of 235 Candidates contested the election which saw a total turnout of 71.9% of the registered voters.

In this Joint Report, details of activities of the EC are highlighted together with joint responsibilities of the EC and the FEO. The operational details of the election, together with details of FEO activities were outlined by the Supervisor of Elections [SoE] in his report of 10 January 2019. This Report also annexes the Report by the Multinational Observer Group on the 2018 General Election in Fiji.

We again take this opportunity to acknowledge the Fijian Government, the International Community, local stakeholders, FEO staff and the voters for a combined effort in making this election a success.



Suresh Chandra
Chairperson
The Electoral Commission



Mohammed Saneem
Supervisor of Elections
Fijian Elections Office

II. Introduction

The Electoral Commission

The current Commission was appointed by His Excellency, the President on 3 February 2017. This Commission is the second under the Constitution. The Previous Commission had been appointed in 2014 and their terms concluded in January 2017 at the end of three (3) years.

The following members were appointed:



CHAIRPERSON OF THE
ELECTORAL COMMISSION
Mr. Suresh Chandra



COMMISSIONER
**Ratu Paula
Halaiwalu**



COMMISSIONER
**Mr. Simone
Naiduki**



COMMISSIONER
**Mr. Grahame
Southwick**



COMMISSIONER
Mr. Jawahar Lal



COMMISSIONER
**Mrs. Margot
M. Jenkins**



COMMISSIONER
**Mrs. Kavita
Raniga**

The Commission has the responsibility for the registration of voters and the conduct of free and fair elections in accordance with the written law governing elections and any other relevant law, and in particular for the registration of citizens as voters, and the regular revision of the Register of Voters; voter education; the registration of candidates for election; the settlement of electoral disputes, including disputes relating to or arising from nominations, but excluding election petitions and disputes subsequent to the declaration of election results; and monitoring and enforcing compliance with any written law governing elections and political parties.

The February 2017 amendments to the Electoral Act also appointed the Supervisor of Elections, Mohammed Saneem, as the Secretary to the Commission.

The previous Commission is acknowledged for the work they did in achieving a free, fair and credible election in 2014. The handing over was done through the secretariat that was maintained at the FEO.

The year 2017 began with one full-time personal assistant who was employed by FEO. In May, the Commission had a secretariat with three full time staff following the approval of the revised organization structure for the staffing of the EC Secretariat. The Electoral Commission also received technical support from Australia in terms of a full time Technical Advisor.

The Secretariat also underwent training by Technical Consultants from New Zealand particularly in terms of streamlining the correspondence and complaints mechanisms. The Secretariat also revised a majority of the forms that were used by the Commission to enable effective information gathering and transfer.

The Commission approved the re-branding of some of the Commission's letterheads and other publicity materials. This became necessary to align the Commission's publication materials with the legal provisions.

The Secretariat also established various registers as per the requirements of the Electoral Act to ensure that information is recorded properly and as per good practice. A proper registry was also established for Commission documents.

EC internal meetings

The EC met 22 times in 2018 and held a total of 12 monthly meetings to discuss general matters and correspondence of the Commission, and ten [10] "Election Mode" meetings from October 2018 to November 2018 to discuss all matters relating to the 2018 General Election. This included complaints and correspondence relating to the election.

Meeting with Political Parties

The EC and the FEO held meetings with Political Parties in its effort to discuss election-related matters. Details of the meetings are as follows:

1. EC and FEO meeting with Political Parties - 3 April 2017 at the FEO Conference Room;
2. EC and FEO meeting with Political Parties - 16 June 2017 at the FEO Conference Room;
3. EC and FEO meeting with Political Parties - 12 September 2017 at the FEO Conference Room;
4. EC and FEO meeting with Political Parties - 1 May 2018 at the Southern Cross Hotel;
5. EC and FEO meeting with Political Parties - 9 August 2018 at the FEO Conference Room; and
6. EC meeting with Leader of Unity Fiji - 6 September 2018 at the EC Conference Room (HQ).

Meeting with External Stakeholders

The EC conducted various meetings with external stakeholders such as EDAWG, MIDA, FICAC, CSO's and Diplomatic Corps in preparation for the 2018 General Election. The list of meetings with stakeholders are as follows:

Table 1.0 [Refer to annexes]

Media Engagements

The EC had a total of 30 media engagements in 2018, in the lead up to the General Election. These included press conferences, media statements and talkback shows.

Table 2.0 [Refer to annexes]

Events attended by the Commissioners

The EC attended a total of 31 events in 2018. These include local and international forums and workshops, launches and handover ceremonies.

Table 3.0 [Refer to annexes]

Overseas Visitors Program Participation

Three Invitations for overseas visitors' programs on electoral matters were received.

The first event was the Electoral Justice Toolkit Piloting conference in Jakarta, Indonesia from 30 April 2018 till 3 May 2018 attended by the Chairperson of the EC and the Public Relations Officer of the FEO.

The second event was New Zealand Electoral Commission overseas visitor program. This was held from 6 June 2018 till 10 June 2018. The event was attended by Commissioner Simone Naiduki along with the Executive Assistant, Stakeholder Engagement and Awareness Officer and the Public Relations Officer of the FEO.

The third event was the 7th Local Elections in the Republic of Korea from 7 June 2018 till 14 June 2018. This was attended by Commissioner Kavita Raniga and the Manager Procurement and Assets of the FEO.

Note: All costs for the participants were funded by the National Election Commission of Indonesia, National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea, and the New Zealand Electoral Commission.

The Electoral Commission Budget & Expenditure Report

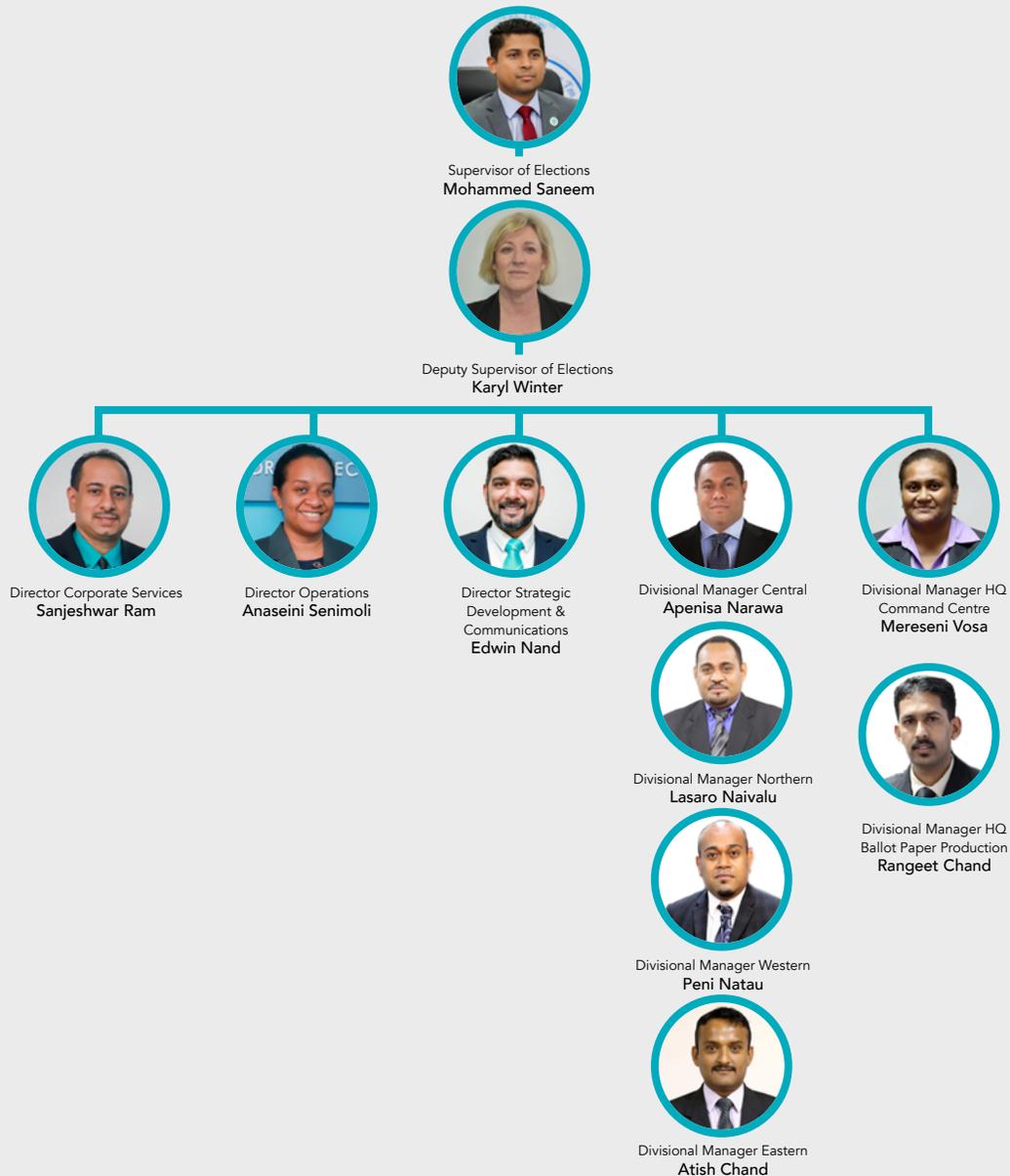
From January 2018 - December 2018:

Table 4.0

Activities	Budget	Expenditure
Electoral Commission Allowance	185,000.00	205,278.26
Legal fees	25,000.00	18,974.51
Marketing Costs	54,949.00	27,987.79
FNPF Contribution	16,590.00	2,000.00
Freight	100.00	7.80
Office Administration Expense	67,320.00	41,475.09
Telecommunication Expenses	12,300.00	12,300.00
Travel and Accommodation Expense	83,706.00	42,905.24
EC and Office Meeting Expense	29,600.00	9,987.94
Tax Expenses	3,794.00	2,403.38
Total EC Operating Budget and Expenses	478,359.00	363,320.01

The Fijian Elections Office

The FEO is an independent Electoral Management Body **[EMB]**, established in March 2014 under the Electoral Act, 2014. The mandate of the FEO is to conduct general and other elections in Fiji. Under the Electoral Act 2014, the Supervisor of Elections is the head of the FEO. The FEO is divided into 5 divisions as elaborated below:



The FEO is made up of 60 core staff and employs upto 400 short term staff during elections. The FEO's strict adherence to merit-based recruitment has allowed it to attract professional and committed personnel to deliver its mandate.

Following the 2014 General Election, the FEO embarked on developing its first five (5) years Strategic Plan. It established its strategic foundations in terms of its Vision, Mission and Organizational Core Values which include:

- Right to vote
- One person, one vote, one value
- Secrecy of the ballot
- A single National Register of Voters
- Honesty, Integrity, and Transparency
- Independence and Impartiality
- Professionalism
- Innovation

The FEO administers the conduct of Voter Awareness, Voter Registration, Political Party Registrations and Disclosures, and National Elections. In addition to these activities, the FEO has also been tasked to conduct the Trade Union Elections.

The FEO is recognized as a Centre for electoral information in Fiji. It also analyses electoral data collected during elections and from other sources to enhance the quality of its planning. The data is also used to produce literature on elections in Fiji for reference purposes.

International Events Hosted by the FEO

Over time, the FEO had built enough capacity and was ready as a regional leader to venture into hosting key regional and international electoral events. In 2018, the FEO hosted two (2) such events and showcased Fiji as a capable host to plan and deliver key electoral events.

Hosting these electoral events also built the capacity of the FEO to deliver an Election Visitor Program for the 2018 General Election.

Table 5.0

Timeline	Event	Details
March 2018	6 th AWEB Executive Board Meeting	Attended by delegates representing Romania, Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Croatia, Paraguay, Guinea, Uzbekistan, El Salvador, Kenya, and Fiji, as well as Kosovo as the Oversight and Audit Committee and the USA, South Africa and Korea as Observers.
September 2018	PIANZEA Advisory Group Meeting	Attended by the PAG Advisory Group representatives from Melanesia (Fiji), Micronesia (Kiribati), and Polynesia (Tuvalu) as well as representatives of the PIANZEA Secretariat from the Australian Electoral Commission

FEO Media Engagement

In the period between national elections, the FEO conducts capacity building programmes for all Fijians about elections. The FEO also conducts in-house training for its long term and short term staff.

The FEO conducted 107 press conferences from November 2017 until the end of the 2018 General Election. These were vital in order to engage with mainstream media and propagate key messages for voters and other stakeholders.

A total of 43 press releases were issued in order to update the media on FEO activities during the *Writ* period. Accredited media were also invited or allowed access to the following key events:

- Issuance of the *Writ*
- Nomination of Candidates
- National Candidates List Ball Draw
- Printing of Ballot Papers
- Shredding of spoilt Ballot Papers and offcuts
- Packing of sensitive material (Pre-Poll and Election Day)
- Dispatch of Ballot Boxes to the Divisions
- Receipt/verification of Postal Ballots
- Launch of Pre-Poll voting
- Election Day voting
- Counting of Pre-Poll and Postal Votes (National Count Centre)
- Entry of provisional results (National Results Centre)
- Data flush and entry of final result (National Results Centre)
- Handover of Final National Results Tally
- Seat Allocation
- Return of *Writ*

All FEO updates on Election Day were carried live by the national TV news services, Fiji One News and FBC News. This is in addition to live Facebook videos run by other news organizations as well as the FEO's own social media accounts.

More details are provided in the Final Report of the Supervisor of Elections, published on 10 January 2019.

III. Key Dates for the 2018 General Election

- 1 October 2018-
 - *Writ* Issued to the Electoral Commission
 - Voter Registration Closed
 - Political Party Registration Closed
 - Postal Vote Applications open
- 2 October 2018-
 - Nomination of Candidates open
- 8 October 2018-
 - Display of Provisional Voter List
- 13 October 2018-
 - Display of Provisional Voter List concludes
- 15 October 2018-
 - Nomination of Candidates closed at 12 noon
- 16 October 2018-
 - Withdrawal of Nomination by 12 noon
 - Objections and Appeals by 4pm
- 17 October 2018-
 - EC finalised Appeals and Objections decisions
 - Ballot Paper Production Commenced
- 18 October 2018-
 - National Candidate's List Draw
- 24 October 2018-
 - Postal Vote Applications Closed at 5pm
- 26 October 2018-
 - Ballot Paper Production completed
- 28 October 2018-
 - Final Voter Lists printed
- 5 November 2018-
 - Pre-Poll Voting Commenced
- 7 November 2018-
 - Verification of Postal Ballots Commenced
- 10 November 2018-
 - Pre-Poll Voting Concluded
- 14 November 2018-
 - Election Day
 - Provisional Results announced
- 17 November 2018-
 - Polling at 22 Adjourned Polling -Venues
- 18 November 2018-
 - Final National Results Tally handed over to the EC
 - Seat Allocation announced
 - EC Returns *Writ* for the 2018 General Election to the President of Fiji His Excellency, (Retired) Major General Jioji Konrote

IV. 2018 General Election

Issuance of Writ

The *Writ* for the 2018 General Election was issued by the President of the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency, (Retired) Major-General Jioji Konrote to the Chairperson of the EC, Mr Suresh Chandra at the Grand Pacific Hotel on 1 October 2018 at 10am.

Nomination of Candidates

Following the issuance of the *Writ*, candidate nomination commenced on 2 October 2018 and closed at 12 noon on 15 October 2018. The FEO received 235 nominations from six (6) registered political parties.

All nominating Political Parties were required to submit their nominations in the approved form, accompanied with a deposit of \$1,000 per candidate. They were also required to submit one (1) recent passport size photo as well as a digital copy in JPEG or PNG format of 300 ppi.

After receiving the completed nomination forms, the details of each candidate were verified with the Chief Registrar's Office, Crime Records Office, Department of Immigration and the Official Receiver's Office. Once each candidate was cleared from all the four (4) agencies, their nomination was deemed accepted.

During the period of nominations, four Political Parties submitted their applications on the second week between 8 and 12 of October 2018. On the last day of nominations, two (2) Political Parties submitted their applications.

The nomination process is governed by section 26 of the Electoral Act 2014 and the eligibility requirements are outlined in section 56 of the Constitution.

Summary of Nomination Forms Received

Table 6.0

Political Party	No. of Nominations received	No. Rejected	No. Approved
FijiFirst	51	1 (1 replaced)	51
SODELPA	51	1 (1 replaced)	51
NFP	51	1 (1 replaced)	51
FLP	25	3 (3 replaced)	25
Unity Fiji	31	3 (1 appealed)	29
HOPE	28	-	28
Total	237	9 (7 replaced)	235

Withdrawal of Nominations

The deadline for withdrawal of nominations was 12 noon on 16 October 2018 and there was no withdrawal received from any candidate.

Objections

Objections were received from the public against the nomination of a candidate. The objection period closed at 4pm on 16 October 2018 and was handled by the EC.

Seven objections to candidate nomination were received and the details are provided as follows:

Table 7.0

No	Candidate	Party	Objector	Party/Other	EC Decision
O01/2018	Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum	FijiFirst	Mikaele Radrodoro	Private	Dismissed
O02/2018	All HOPE candidates	HOPE	Bimal Prasad Chaudhry	Private	Dismissed
O03/2018	Sachida Nand	FijiFirst	Uma Ready	Private	Dismissed
O04/2018	Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama	FijiFirst	Jone Dakuvula	Unity Fiji	Dismissed
O05/2018	Faiyaz Koya	FijiFirst	Jone Dakuvula	Unity Fiji	Dismissed
O06/2018	Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum	FijiFirst	Jone Dakuvula	Unity Fiji	Dismissed
O07/2018	Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum	FijiFirst	Jone Dakuvula	Unity Fiji	Dismissed

Appeals

Appeals were received from candidates whose nominations were rejected by the SoE. The appeal period closed at 4pm on 16 October 2018 and was handled by the EC.

The EC had three days to make a decision after the close of the appeal period. There was one (1) appeal received and details are provided as follows:

Table 8.0

No	Candidate	Party	EC Decision
A01/2018	Laitia Matalomani	Unity Fiji	Allowed

National Candidates List Draw

On 15 May 2017, the EC conducted a barrel draw on live television and approved 508 as the first number on the ballot paper for the 2018 General Election. This was to ensure compliance with section 36(7) of the Electoral Act 2014 which required that the three (3) digit number used in the previous election must not be used in the next election.

The National Candidates List Draw was held on 18 October 2018 at the Grand Pacific Hotel. This venue was central and sufficiently large enough to cater for the expected number of guests. Pursuant to section 36 of the Electoral Act 2014, it was done in the presence of the public including the media, international observers and political parties. The draw was also broadcasted live on FBC, Fiji One television and on social media.

Two hundred and thirty-five (235) white table tennis balls (equal to the number of Candidates whose nominations were accepted) were numbered from 508 to 743 and placed inside a specially designed barrel. The number '666' had been excluded by the EC from the series as agreed to by political parties.

The names of Candidates were announced in alphabetical order with the last name appearing before the first name as required in section 36 of the Electoral Act 2014. The SoE called out the number drawn for that announced Candidate name. The entire process was repeated until the numbers had been allocated to every Candidate.

The National Candidates List showed the Candidates number, their name and their photograph. The National Candidates List was prepared and published in the Gazette and the daily newspapers the following day, as well as broadcast on radio and social media. Copies of the National Candidates List were provided to the EC, registered Political Parties and their Candidates as well as copies displayed at all FEO sub-offices for public viewing. The National Candidates List was also displayed on billboards and standees placed around the country.

The Voter Instruction Booklet contained the National Candidate List and was widely distributed to all the voters.

Postal Voting

Postal Voting provided an opportunity to voters who were overseas and those who could not attend a polling station on Election Day to cast their vote. All voters that wanted to Postal Vote required to apply once the date of the General Election was announced.

When applications were received by the FEO, they were checked for completeness before being data entered into the EMS. This system had a module on Postal Voting which was specifically created to manage Postal Voting Application for the 2018 General Election.

Once a Postal Application was approved, a postal package was dispatched to the nominated address of the voter as stated in their application form. Two (2) postal courier companies were engaged for the delivery of Postal Voting packages to overseas and local voters. In cases where EMS could not deliver to local addresses, the FEO made these deliveries itself.

The residential details on the postal database were supplied to DHL and EMS accordingly. This enabled the courier companies to prepare satchels pending receipt of completed packages from FEO.

Postal Voting packages contained the following:

- Voter Instruction Booklet;
- One (1) Ballot Paper;
- Secret Envelope;
- Transmission Envelope;
- Prepaid Return Envelope;
- Postal Voting Process Pamphlet; and
- If courier, a returned prepaid courier satchel.

Postal Ballots that were returned and received by FEO were entered in a Register by scanning in the barcodes into the EMS and stored under Police Guard.

Of the 11, 227 postal votes sent out, 10, 315 were received. On 23 November 2018, DHL and EMS returned satchels of which 48 were categorized as “received late” and 268 as “undelivered”. Before the deadline of 5pm on Wednesday 24 October 2018, many Postal Applications were submitted at the last minute through emails and hand deliveries to the Area Offices.

This resulted in these applications being processed over the next three (3) days after close of postal applications on 24 October 2018. The FEO also found an additional 411 applications that had been made on time but were not processed by the Postal Team. The SoE authorized that since the applications were on time, they be processed and satchels dispatched accordingly.

Pre-Poll

There were 582 Pre-polling stations identified in accordance with section 82 of the Electoral Act 2014. This list was submitted to the EC and following the EC’s approval, it was published in the newspapers and also gazette.

An awareness program to inform voters of Pre-Poll schedules was launched using various communication tools. Apart from using the *Roko Tui’s*, Provincial Administrators, District Officers and Divisional Commissioners to convey Pre-Poll schedules and polling times to each village, letters were hand delivered to each *Turaga-ni-Koro* on the polling time of their village. Pre-Poll schedules were also displayed at every pre-Poll Venue.

The material required by each Pre-Poll team was prepared in Suva and provided to each team for the commencement of their schedules. A variety of transport methods including road, boat, helicopter and fixed wing aircraft was used.

For the 2018 General Election, FEO tents were used as Polling Venues replacing private residences. Pre-Poll teams generally comprised a Team Leader [**Presiding Officer**] and up to four (4) other staff. There were 92 Pre-Poll teams.

Table 9.0

Division	Total No. of Polling Venues	Total No. of Registered Voters	Total No. Voted
Central	96	14,379	9,452
Western	165	22,466	14,041
Northern	134	14,896	9,847
Eastern	187	18,825	12,379
TOTAL	582	70,566	45,719

Pre-Poll was scheduled between 5 to 10 November 2018. In the majority of cases Pre-Poll schedules were adhered to as planned, however, in some cases, there were amendments made due to unforeseen or uncontrollable circumstances e.g. weather, tides, etc. Where it was necessary to reschedule polling, approval was sought from the EC and changes were made accordingly.

In most instances, the amount of time allocated for Pre-Poll at a particular Venue was adequate for the turnout of voters. The polling times for the 2018 General Election were based on the plans and schedules of the 2014 General Election but slightly amended to suit the current situation of 2018.

The EC visited pre-poll stations in all four Divisions, making a point of travelling to very remote pre-polling stations in Naitasiri, Namosi, Serua, Ra, Ba and some Resorts in the Mamanuca Group. It found that voters, even in these remote areas, were enthusiastic about voting.

However, the EC observed that some voters expressed surprise at pre-poll voting as they were under the assumption that they had to vote on 14 November 2018. In addition, some potential voters did not vote because their names were not in the Voter List even though they had apparently registered in that particular area. The EC upon confirmation with the SoE, allowed those voters to cast their vote. The EC noted the presence of political party agents in various pre-poll stations.

Polling and Counting

On 14 November 2018, the members of the EC went individually to observe at various polling stations throughout Fiji, except for the Eastern division which had been largely covered by pre-poll. Majority of the Polling Stations began operations at 7:30am and closed at 6pm to begin counting. Polling Agents and International Observers were permitted into the Polling Stations. The FEO ensured that the maximum number of voters at any Polling Station was 500. Voters were assigned to a Polling Station closest to their residential address.

It was observed that many voters took the opportunity to vote early. Some voters arrived at polling stations with voter identification cards but discovered their names were not on the Voter List in that particular station even though they were apparently assigned to that particular polling station and upon confirmation with the SoE, they were allowed to vote.

A total of 854 Polling Venues were assigned for Election Day. However, due to accessibility issues caused by bad weather, 22 Polling Venues had to have voting adjourned to 17 November 2018 and those who had voted on 14 November in those venues were required by law to re-vote for their votes to be counted. A total of 4,853 voters voted on 17 November 2018.

All the election materials required for polling including Voter Lists and ballot papers were delivered to Presiding Officers at their Polling Stations either on Tuesday 13 November or early morning on Wednesday, 14 November. Polling Day Workers who were recruited and had signed their contract were required to attend a briefing at an allocated time with their Presiding Officer.

All votes taken on Election Day were counted at the respective Polling Stations. The results from the Count were transmitted by Presiding Officers to a toll free dedicated number at the National Results Centre.

The Presiding Officers were required to paste the pink copy of the Protocol of Results (POR) outside the polling station before sending the original copy of POR to the National Results Centre. The EC witnessed this process as well.

On completion of the Count, all election materials were packed and collected by the Hub Leaders. These materials were then transported to the various Area Offices under the escort of the Fiji Police Force Officers.

All sensitive election materials collected on November 14 were securely stored at the FEO warehouse in Suva by 17 November 2018. For those Polling Venues which were adjourned due to adverse weather conditions and flooding, their materials were in storage in Suva by 18 November 2018.

The presence of Police Officers at all Polling Stations during the delivery and collection of election materials demonstrated to the general public that the process was secure and safe at all times.

The turnout for the 2018 General Election was 458,532 out of 637,527 registered voters making up 71.9%. The total number of invalid votes was 4,197 out of the 458,532 amounting to 0.92%.

Final National Results Tally, Declaration of Results and Allocation of Seats

From the night of 14 November, the FEO employed staff to count all votes including pre-poll and postal votes. The EC observed this process.

As the count progressed, the provisional results were progressively made available on the FEO Apps. However, the posting of the provisional results was terminated and the Final National Results Tally began, based on the original protocols of results from each polling station.

On Sunday 18 November 2018 at 3pm, the EC received the Final National Results Tally from the SoE in accordance with Section 103 of the Electoral Act 2014.

It proceeded to allocate the seats of Parliament in accordance with the Electoral Act, 2014 and by 4pm was able to announce the names of the 51 candidates elected to Parliament.

Below is the table of the results by party:

Table 10.0

Name	Votes	No. of Seats in Parliament
FijiFirst	227241	27
SODELPA	181072	21
National Federation Party	33515	3
Unity Fiji	6896	0
HOPE	2811	0
Fiji Labour Party	2800	0

Return of Writ

The *Writ* for the 2018 General Election was returned by the Chairperson of the EC, Mr Suresh Chandra, to the President of Fiji, H.E. (Retired) Major General Jioji Konrote, at 5pm on 18 November 2018 at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

V. Voter Education

The FEO conducted extensive awareness sessions nationwide educating voters on the electoral processes. This was done through the FEO's existing as well as new channels of communications, which the FEO evolved over the years from traditional methods of awareness and advertising to a more complex integrated method, using mediums such as the digital platforms.

To expand on its voter awareness and education process, the FEO designed and administered three (3) major awareness drives aptly termed "Know Your Election" (KYE) Awareness Drive, between April and November 2018, in which 3,870 voter awareness sessions were conducted in Fiji and Rotuma.

The awareness sessions included a flip chart presentation on the electoral processes leading up to the 2018 General Election as well as general information about the voting process. Teams deployed for this awareness drive also used a 3D model [diorama] to illustrate the voting process inside a Polling Station. Special attention was paid to Pre-Poll voting areas with a specifically designed voter information flip chart presentation, supplemented by Pre-Poll Voting brochures. The awareness sessions saw Electoral Commissioners and Senior Management Staff of FEO out in the fields to educate voters, conduct awareness sessions, and answer any election related queries.

The FEO based its awareness programs on six general themes:

- When to vote
- Where to vote
- How to vote
- All Fijians should vote
- General reminder for Election Day and Pre-Poll voters
- The ideal voter

Similarly, 221 overseas voter awareness sessions for Fijians living abroad, was also conducted. Countries visited include Australia, New Zealand, USA, UAE, Kuwait, Europe, Indonesia, Canada, Hawaii, UK, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Korea. For the first time in Fiji's electoral history, an overseas voter registration kit was developed specifically for overseas postal voters. This contained the overseas voter registration flyer, promotional materials such as bookmarks, wristbands, postal voting information brochure and FEO's Lavetiviti newsletter to keep overseas voters abreast with the latest from Fiji in as far as preparations for the 2018 General Election was concerned.

To ensure that voters have required information regarding the electoral processes, the FEO produced 673,000 Election Information Booklets containing information on voters' rights and obligations in the electoral process with further explanations of the importance and process of voting. It was prepared with the Fijian people in mind and FEO wanted it to be accurate, apolitical, and as informative as possible focusing on our electoral system. The booklet was distributed in every village, community, settlement and schools in Fiji and Rotuma. It was also inserted into the two (2) daily newspapers on the weekend following its launch. Electronic copies were also made available on the FEO websites, as well as placed in mailboxes and distributed to the four (4) divisional offices. The key focus areas of the booklet were based on the six general themed mentioned earlier. Taking into consideration the multicultural background of Fiji, the booklet was translated five [5] languages. The breakdown

is as follows:

- ITaukei – 200,000
- Hindi – 120,000
- Chinese – 5, 000
- Rotuman – 10, 000
- Banaban – 3, 000
- English – 335, 000

Close to the 2018 General Election, this was supplemented by brochures about specific aspects of the Election, i.e. Postal Voting, Pre-Poll and Election Day.

The FEO took another significant step towards voter engagement and education in Fiji with the inclusion of a disability feature on the revamped FEO website, for persons living with disabilities, which allowed them to read and understand voter information by clicking on the disability icon and selecting the option that best suits them. The website has been vastly improved to keep FEO's stakeholders abreast with the latest electoral information as well as subscriptions to the website, in which the website sends subscribers via email, the latest updates.

Voter education was further enhanced with the introduction of the Call Center which served as the receiving point of all election and FEO-related queries. It was extremely important that all avenues were exhausted in ensuring Fijian voters were educated and well-informed about the voting process.

In addition, the FEO capitalized on existing and new channels of communication to educate voters. Key communication channels include (1) Radio (2) TV (3) Social Media (4) Banners (5) Campaigns (6) External newsletters. A total of 19,000 advertisements aired. Pre-recorded or announcer mentions was employed to relay the voter awareness and registration schedules; information relating to the date, time and venue of the sessions.

This was to assist voters in independently being able to make a selection, based on factual information. It was about a voter knowing HOW TO DEAL with a ballot paper and HOW IMPORTANT THE DEAL with the ballot paper is before dropping it in the ballot box. It was about dealing with the nervousness that comes around selection. It comes around the voters conscious and it was also about the voter thinking about the future. That is why the FEO created such a systematic platform that once a voter is inside a Polling Station, they are devoid of any relationship, connection or bond.

A detailed description of the entire voter awareness exercise is available in the final report of the Supervisor of Elections published on 10 January 2019.

VI. Political Parties

Political Parties were registered in accordance with the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Act 2013 [PPA].

The SoE is also the Registrar of Political Parties under the PPA. Since the inception of the PPD, a total of nine (9) political parties have been registered. From the nine (9) political parties, only two have been de-registered for non-compliance with the PPA and they are One Fiji Party and People's Democratic Party.

In the 2018 General Election, only six (6) Political Parties submitted nominations except for the Freedom Alliance.

Details of each party are as follows:

Table 11.0

Name of Party	Name of Registered Officer
FijiFirst	Mr Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum
Fiji Labour Party (FLP)	Mr Mahendra Pal Chaudhry
Freedom Alliance	Mr Jagath Karunaratne
Humanity Opportunity Prosperity Equality (HOPE)	Mr Nemani Vakacakau
National Federation Party (NFP)	Mr Dalip Kumar
Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA)	Adi Litia Qionobaravi
Unity Fiji	Mr Savenaca Narube

VII. Electoral Complaints

The FEO and the EC view complaints as an important way for the management of an organization to be accountable to the public. The FEO received numerous complaints before, during and after the election. The voters were encouraged to air out their grievances through our complaints platform which included a complaints email; FEO website complaints portal; FEO Facebook pages and phone calls to the FEO Call Centre.

Table 12.0 – Electoral Complaints directed to FEO [Refer to annexes]

Table 13.0 – Electoral Complaints directed to EC before Election Day [Refer to annexes]

Table 13.1 – Electoral Complaints directed to EC after Election Day [Refer to annexes]

VIII. Legal Challenges

At the conclusion of the 2018 General Election, the EC and the FEO were served with three (3) different Petitions from different individuals challenging the 2018 election results. The Petitions are titled as follows:

1. HBM 140 of 2018
Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka & Biman Prasad -v- Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama & ORS
2. HBM 141 of 2018
Jone Dakuvula -v- Supervisor of Elections & ORS
3. HBM 142 of 2018
Satish Kumar -v- Salik Ram Govind & ORS

In the case HBM 141 of 2018, the EC was named as one of the Respondents. The other two (2) cases HBM 140 and 142 of 2018, the Commission made an application to join in the cases by intervener applications. The Commission engaged the services of a local Law Firm and in all the three actions and it stated its own position clearly against the three Petitioners.

All the three (3) Elections Petitions were called in Court on 19 December 2018 and upon hearing interlocutory applications from the Petitioners and upon rulings thereafter the Petitioners sought leave to withdraw the Petitions in Court one by one. Leave was granted by the Court and all the three Petitions were withdrawn and dismissed

IX. Election Expenditure

The expenditure of the FEO as at 31 December 2018 was \$18,752,999.00.

More details are provided in the Final Report of the Supervisor of Elections, published on 10 January 2019.

X. International Support

To successfully carry out its functions under the Constitution and the Electoral Act 2014, the FEO received support from Fiji's international partners. Support from countries included technical support, in-kind support and funding.

A special acknowledgement is extended to the following technical advisors who provided the much needed expertise in the field to assist the FEO. Technical advisors provided support and also quality control on the processes. Each of them ensured that careful attention was paid to detail and accuracy in every aspect of the process.

Robin Boyd	-	Australia
Gordon Webster	-	Australia
Craig Rickards	-	Australia
Yvonne Lea	-	Australia
Narelle Long	-	Australia
Kym Maguire	-	Australia
Shayne Mathieson	-	New Zealand
Ross Shadbolt	-	New Zealand
Sarah Kedzlie	-	New Zealand
Brendan Clarkin	-	New Zealand
Stasi Turnbull	-	New Zealand
Ko Seung Han	-	Republic of Korea

In order to assist and support the SoE, the Deputy Supervisor of Elections, Ms Karyl Winter was appointed. The Government of New Zealand provided top-up salary and additional allowance during her term. Ms Winter had brought the essential knowledge and skills required to build capacity at the FEO and at the same time ensure that critical timelines and milestones were achieved as required. The following international support was provided to the Commission and the FEO:

New Zealand

- 3003 boxes of Cardboard Voting Screens were received in January 2018
- FEO Personnel - Salary top-up & allowances for Deputy Supervisor
- Technical Advisors
 - Technical advisors: Training - 2
 - Technical advisor: Operations - 3
 - Technical advisor: Communications - 1
 - Technical advisor: Election Management Project - 1
- One (1) EC and three (3) FEO staff visited to Auckland [Visitors Program] hosted by the NZ Electoral Commission (NZEC)

Australia

- Technical Advisors
 - Technical advisor: Operations - 5 [1 Long-term and 4 Short-term]
 - Technical advisor for the Electoral Commission - 1

India

- Funding for purchase of five (5) Mahindra Vehicles: FJD\$291, 830
- 60 cartons containing 6, 000 boxes of indelible ink.

Indonesia

- One (1) EC and one (1) FEO staff attended the Electoral Justice Toolkit Piloting conference in Jakarta – Visitors Program

Korea

- Technical Advisor for Logistics - 1
- One (1) EC and one (1) FEO staff attended the 7th Local Elections in the Republic of Korea – Visitors Program

The FEO and the EC expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the donor partners.

XI. Inter-agency Cooperation

A special appreciation is extended to all state institutions and government departments for the cooperation and support provided to the FEO. All these institutions ensured that assistance to the FEO was provided in a timely manner.

It was also very encouraging to note that the institutions prioritized FEO requests and also ensured that contingency plans were in place to cater for FEO's needs.

The Chief Registrar's Office, Fiji Police Force, Solicitor General's Office, MIDA, Department of Immigration, Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Provincial Development, Ministry of Lands, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Fiji Roads Authority, Office of the Official Receiver and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acted as close partners in ensuring the delivery of the 2018 General Election. The EC and the FEO acknowledge any contributing department or organization that is not listed.

XII. Conclusion

The 2018 General Election was the second election in Fiji's electoral history which again used the open list proportional representation system. The exceptional voter turnout is indicative of the groundwork conducted by the Electoral Commission and the Fijian Elections Office in preparing the country for election. The extremely low rate of 0.92% invalid votes too was an encouraging result.

The assistance from both the international community and the cooperation from the people of Fiji enabled a successful Election.

The 2018 General Election is a testament to the collective will of the people to maintain democracy.

The EC and the FEO looks forward to conduct another successful election in 2022.

XIII. Recommendations

Voter Registration

The 2018 General Election was the first General Election that was conducted after the publication of the Fiji National Polling Venues Directory 2017. All the venues that had been approved by the Polling Venues Selection Committee were put to test and following the General Election, the FEO now has comprehensive data on the experiences of each venue.

It is recommended that the VoterCard is further enhanced to include the Polling Venue details of the voter. The presence of this essential data directly on the VoterCard should negate the need to search for the voter's polling venue closer to the election. It may be prudent to expire the VoterCard 1.0 during this election cycle and to have all voters migrate to the new VoterCard to achieve the most recent and up-to-date details of the voter.

It is further recommended that the voter education process is redesigned to create awareness amongst voters relating to the responsibilities following registration. The FEO carries out national voter services exercises, however, other external stakeholders that use the VoterCard as an ID should be engaged to promote the correction and updating of details of voters.

Voter Lists

It is recommended that the legal framework is amended to allow the Electoral Commission to fix appropriate timelines for the FEO to finalize and publish Provisional Voter Lists. It may be procedurally prudent that the first provisional voter list is available at-least 18 months before the first date the *Writ* for the General Election can be issued. Consideration should be given to Political Parties and other stakeholders to carry out verification exercises and report to the FEO inaccuracies in voter lists for rectification. The Electoral Commission may set out appropriate procedures for dealing with voter list verification.

The FEO may need to re-look at its training of the Election Officials to minimize issues in locating names of voters in the Voter List.

Polling Venues

It is noted that the Fiji National Polling Venues Directory 2017 was the first ever comprehensive compilation of Polling Venue information from around the country. Venues that had been identified and selected by a committee comprised of various stakeholders. As per the Electoral Act 2014 the Electoral Commission was able to approve these venues officially for use once the *Writ* was issued in 2018. The FEO had continuously published the venues and the details, however, this did not carry legal authority and was merely advisory in nature.

It is recommended that the legal framework is amended to allow the FEO to propose a full list of venues for the following General Election for approval from the Electoral Commission at least two (2) years prior to the first date the *Writ* can be issued. The procedural framework would also be required to ensure that at-least a three (3) months consultation process is available for comments and suggestions from Political Parties and other interested stakeholders in respect of these polling venues. Following from this process, the Electoral Commission would finalize the Polling Venues and approve the same for publication. It would be prudent to consider allowing the Electoral Commission to approve additional or changes to existing venues as per the recommendation of

the FEO and the process ought to accommodate an expedited process keeping in mind the tight operational timeline closer to the election.

Pre-Poll Polling Venues

Pre-Poll venues for the 2018 General Election had been identified in the Fiji National Polling Venues Directory 2017. The final approval for the Pre-Poll venues was done by the Electoral Commission in 2018 close to the announcement of the *Writ*.

It is recommended that the legal framework is amended to allow the FEO to propose a full list of venues to be classified under Pre-Poll at least two (2) years prior to the first day the *Writ* can be issued. The procedure to be adopted as proposed above for finalizing polling venues.

Overseas Voters

The FEO recorded over 7,000 voters registered overseas. It is recommended that consideration is given to the setting up of a special polling station in Suva for voters who may be registered overseas, and did not apply for a postal ballot, to attend to cast their vote. Consideration should be given to allowing the ballot boxes from this Polling Station to be counted at the National Count Centre in addition to the relaxation of the maximum of 500 voters per polling station rule specifically for this venue.

Overseas Voter Postal Vote Applications

The FEO recorded over 7,000 registrations from Fijians who lived overseas, however, only 1,187 voters applied for a postal vote. At the close of the application period, the FEO found that a large number could not successfully complete and forward their applications as they did not wish to engage the services of a Notary Public as further costs were associated with the exercise.

It is recommended that the legal framework is amended to facilitate the application process by overseas voters without the need to complete a statutory declaration. It will be possible for the FEO to verify voter information directly from its records to avoid fraudulent activity. Procedurally, the FEO would then be able to facilitate the overseas Postal Ballot Application online.

Election Timetable

The 2018 General Election recorded the first election in Fiji's history wherein the timetable for various activities and milestones were widely published. It is therefore recommended that the Electoral Commission publishes the timelines for key milestones leading up to a General Election at least two (2) years prior to the first date the *Writ* for the next General Election may be issued. This will boost the electoral understanding and preparation for all stakeholders.

It is also useful to conduct a workshop to train Political Party Administrative officials by the FEO.

Voter Instruction Booklets

The Voter Instruction Booklet is the only material that a voter is permitted to take into the Polling Station to the voting screen when they come to vote. In 2018, it was noted that some areas in Fiji complained of not having any party come to them to campaign. Accessibility and financial issues may have also prevented candidates to successfully disseminate their numbers to some areas.

Since Fiji has a modified proportional representation system where voter votes for a candidate and that vote is then added to the overall party vote to determine the threshold, it is prudent to consider sorting the candidates listed in the Voter Instruction Booklets by their Political Party. It is also recommended to list candidates for parties by alphabetical order of surname.

It is anticipated that the above recommendation will reduce the number of errors in the number for each candidate while at the same time allow parties to properly educate voters on their candidate numbers.

Political Party Management

The current framework for Political Party Management carries key components that are regarded as good practice globally. It is recommended that the legal framework is reviewed to implement further administrative processes so as to ensure the Registrar of Political Parties has exhausted all administrative processes before referring any matter for prosecution.

It is recommended that some procedural amendments are considered, particularly in terms of the financial disclosure deadlines (to bring it in line with Fiji's Accounting Sector Financial period) and also further clarifications made in regards to timelines for declarations by office holders of Political Parties. There is also a need to formulate appropriate audit and financial standards for adherence by political parties to protect public interest.

It is also necessary to make regulations in relation to donation management and income and expenditure management for Political Parties and individual Candidates. The legal framework would have to also cater for party officials, candidates, and agents of parties and candidates.

The legal framework currently requires Political Parties and candidates to declare their income, assets and liabilities prior to the General Election. It is recommended that the legal framework requires the same persons and entities to prepare and submit another declaration within one (1) month of the General Election to allow the Electoral Commission to assess the election spending as well as compliance with other laws.

The current legal framework requires various declarations are made on specific dates. It is necessary to amend the legal framework to specify the exact cut-off dates for these declarations to remove ambiguity.

There is also a need to enhance the administrative records for Political Parties. It is recommended that additional records are made in the Political Parties Register in terms of all office holders and their term, the names of the Party Auditors, Legal Advisors, Party bank details and the addresses of offices in the divisions and the managers of those offices. Procedurally, an annual update of particulars form should be sufficient to ensure that there is transparency in this area.

Political Party Disputes

It is recommended that a framework is established to allow the Electoral Commission to mediate and if necessary arbitrate on disputes between Political Parties. It is necessary that disputes between parties are dealt with expeditiously and the Electoral Commission is best placed to deal with electoral issues. Consideration can be given to enhancing the enforceability of the decision of the Electoral Commission through the enforcement rules for High Court Orders and necessary pecuniary penalties are prescribed for non-compliance.

Definition of Campaign Period

It is recommended that the legal framework clarifies the definition of 'campaign period' so as to allow proper enforcement of the Electoral Act 2014. It is recommended that consideration be given to declare the official campaign period to commence at-least one (1) month prior to the first date the writ can be issued and to conclude on Election Day.

Use of Government Resources

It is recommended that the legal framework is reviewed and clarity is made on use of Government resources during the campaign.

Enforcement of Blackout Period

It is necessary that any activity that is in breach of the Blackout Period is restrained without delay. The current legal framework allows for subsequent prosecution of offenders, however, it does not immediately stop the breach of the law. It is recommended that the legal framework is amended to empower the Supervisor of Elections to be able to issue an immediate cease and desist directive to any individual, Political Party or entity or to remove any material that is in breach of the blackout period. Any person who may have received such notice may appeal for a reconsideration by the Electoral Commission.

Provisional Results

It was noted that despite numerous trainings and awareness, some political parties demonstrated lack of understanding of Provisional Results. Publishing provisional results is a common practice in numerous countries and it is recommended that Fiji amends its legal framework to allow the FEO to publish the Provisional Results in terms of totals for candidates and totals for parties until 7am the day after the election.

Electoral Petition Rules

It is recommended that rules governing the handling of Election Petitions to the Court of Disputed Returns is promulgated expeditiously.

Final Report on the General Election

It was found in 2018 that there is significant constraint on the part of the Supervisor of Elections to effectively deliver its report within 30 days of the General Election in the event petitions are moved in the Court of Disputed Returns. In the same like, there is significant constraints placed on the Electoral Commission and the Supervisor of Elections to publish a report on the Election in three (3) months.

It is recommended that consideration be given to extend the timeframes to allow for the Petition timelines. It is also necessary to consider that the joint report on the General Election be made to be due at least six (6) months following the election to allow for comprehensive review and reflection on the election. It will also allow the Electoral Commission and the FEO to properly assess and analyze the recommendations and findings of the Observers of the Election and if necessary incorporate the same in their own report. Such timeframes will also facilitate appropriate time for necessary consultations with Agencies such as the Solicitor General's Office, the Office of the Auditor General and FICAC to name a few.

XIV. Annexes

Table 1.0- Meeting with Stakeholders

No.	Date	Activity
1.	1 February 2018 to 2 February 2018	Pocket meeting for the Provisional Voter List verification at Tailevu Provincial Office. This was attended by Commissioner Simone Naiduki.
2.	6 February 2018	Meeting with the Election Disability Access Working Group [EDAWG]
3.	17 April 2018	Meeting with the EU Ambassador, Ms Julian Wilson and the Deputy Supervisor of Elections
4.	19 April 2018	Meeting with the Citizens Constitutional Forum and Rainbow Pride Foundation
5.	30 April 2018	Meeting with the Diplomatic Corp – addressed by the Supervisor of Elections
6.	24 May 2018	Opening of the meeting with Civil Society Organizations
7.	5 June 2018	Meeting with Mosese Saitala, Chief Electoral Officer, Solomon Island Electoral Commission
8.	23 July 2018	Meeting with Ms Deidre Brooks, Manager Corporate Legal, New Zealand Electoral Commission and the Supervisor of Elections
9.	13 August 2018	Meeting with Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption [FICAC] Commissioner, the Supervisor of Elections and the FEO Review and Compliance team.

Table 2.0 – Media Engagements

No.	Date	Activity
1.	11 January 2018	Launch of “Year 10 – Introduction to Elections” curriculum. Media statement delivered by the Chairperson of the EC
2.	18 January 2018	Launch of FEO Publications
3.	19 January 2018	“4 the Record” talk back show recording with the Chairperson of the EC
4.	23 January 2018	Opening of Rakiraki Voter Services Centre by Commissioner Simone Naiduki
5.	8 February 2018	Launch of “1500 SMS Polling Venue Locator”. Media statement delivered by the Chairperson of the EC
6.	23 February 2018	Interview with FBC regarding the 51st seat in the parliament
7.	5 March 2018	Launch of “Know Your Election” Awareness Drive. Media statement by the Chairperson of the EC
8.	9 March 2018	Voting Screen Handover by the New Zealand Electoral Commission. Media statement by the Chairperson of the EC
9.	14 March 2018	“Know Your Election” Awareness Drive at Grand Pacific Hotel

10.	15 March 2018	"Know Your Election" Awareness Drive at Natabua High School. Media statement delivered by Commissioner Kavita Raniga
11.	15 March 2018	"Know Your Election" Awareness Drive at Marist Brothers High School. Media statement delivered by the Chairperson of the EC
12.	15 March 2018	"Know Your Election" Awareness Drive in the Northern Division. This was attended by Commissioner Simone Naiduki
13.	5 April 2018	Media statement by the Chairperson of the EC to Civil Society Organizations
14.	10 April 2018	Vote of Thanks delivered by Commissioner Simone Naiduki at the Indelible Ink Handover Ceremony
15.	6 May 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC at the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission Brochure Launch
16.	7 May 2018	Vote of Thanks by the Chairperson of the EC at the Vehicle Handover Ceremony
17.	10 June 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC at the FEO Results App Launch
18.	25 June 2018	Statement by the Chairperson of the EC during the President's Visit to the Fijian Elections Office. Media Release sent to the media outlets.
19.	17 September 2018	"Know Your Election" Awareness Drive Launch in Suva
20.	1 October 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC during the Issue of <i>Writ</i> for the 2018 General Election
21.	2 October 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC on the Notice of Nominations
22.	6 October 2018	Media Release by EC on its Decision on Electoral Activities during Public Holidays
23.	16 October 2018	Media Release by EC on upholding Appeal
24.	17 October 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC on Objections and Appeals Decision
25.	2 November 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC on announcement of Pre-Poll
26.	5 November 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC at the Launch of Pre-Poll voting for the 2018 General Election
28.	10 November 2018	Media Statement by the Chairperson of the EC at the close of Pre-Poll voting for the 2018 General Election
29.	18 November 2018	Declaration of Results and Seat Allocation
30.	5 December 2018	Statement by the Chairperson of the EC at the FEO Staff Awards night

Table 3.0 – Events Attended by Commissioners

No.	Date	Activity
1.	10 January 2018	Year 10- Introduction to Election Curriculum Launch, Suvavou House
2.	18 January 2018	EC Events Launch
3.	22 January 2018	Opening of the Voter Service Centre in Nadi
4.	22 January 2018	Opening of the Voter Service Centre in Rakiraki
5.	23 January 2018 to 26 January 2018	Video production for FEO Jingle – Commissioner Margot Jenkins and FEO Communications Department
6.	6 February 2018 to 16 February 2018	Participation in Election Simulation Exercise
7.	8 February 2018	Launch of 1500 SMS platform, FEO Headquarters
8.	23 February 2018	FEO Final Planning Workshop at Holiday Inn
9.	27 February 2018	FEO Content Creator Workshop at Holiday Inn– attended by Commissioner Margot Jenkins
10.	9 March 2018	New Zealand Electoral Commission handover ceremony for cardboard voting screens, FEO Headquarters
11.	14 March 2018 to 24 March 2018	“Know your Election” Awareness Drive
12.	26 March 2018	AWEB Executive Board Dinner at West Inn Hotel, Denarau
13.	27 April 2018	Full scale Appeals and Objections workshop, FEO Headquarters
14.	30 April 2018 to 3 May 2018	Electoral Justice Toolkit Piloting conference, Jakarta, Indonesia, attended by the EC Chairperson and FEO Public Relations Officer
15.	2 May 2018 to 3 May 2018	Risk Identification and Aversion Workshop
16.	4 June 2018 to 15 June 2018	Participation in the Communications Election Simulation Exercise
17.	6 June 2018 to 10 June 2018	Knowledge Exchange Program to attend NZ by-election in Northcote, Auckland – Commissioner Simone Naiduki, Executive Assistant, Stakeholder Engagement and Awareness Officer and Public Relations Officer
18.	7 June 2018 to 14 June 2018	7 th Local Elections in the Republic of Korea attended by Commissioner Kavita Raniga and Manager Procurement and Assets
19.	7 June 2018	Vehicle Handover Ceremony by Indian High Commission
20.	4 July 2018	Joint International IDEA – FEO – HRADC Forum on Electoral Processes, Holiday Inn, Suva
21.	6 July 2018	Launch for the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (FHRADC) Brochure on Elections, FEO Headquarters
22.	10 July 2018	Launch of the FEO Results App
23.	25 July 2018	Welcome ceremony of His Excellency the President, Major General (Ret’d) Jioji Konrote, FEO Headquarters
24.	8 August 2018	EC Election Readiness workshop, FEO Headquarters

25.	24 August 2018	EC Election Preparation workshop, FEO Headquarters
26.	4 September 2018	Signing of the Multinational Observer Group (MOG) Term of Reference (Australia, Indonesia and India), Suvavou House
27.	21 September 2018 to 23 September 2018	EC Retreat Workshop on Communication– hosted by the New Zealand Electoral Commission at Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort, Natadola, Fiji Islands
28.	13 November 2018	Election Visitor Program
29.	5 December 2018	Post-Election Activities workshop, Holiday Inn, Suva
30.	5 December 2018	FEO core staff Awards night, Tanoa Plaza, Suva
31.	7 December 2018	Opening of the 20 th Attorney General's conference, Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa, Natadola

Table 12.0 – Electoral Complaints directed to the FEO

No	Date Received	Details of Complainant	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
1.	1 October 2018 [via email]	USP student	False information on voter registration services being circulated at the University of the South Pacific.	FEO Communications team put out a voter registration schedule regarding the precise date of our team's visit on radio, social media and newspaper.
2.	1 November 2018	Atish Chand Divisional Manager Eastern	Voter Card Fraud – A Voter Services Centre staff had replaced a VoterCard with distorted picture [damage caused by water] without conducting proper checks. Once the voter left the office, the staff noticed that the distorted image was inserted inside the card. The issue was raised with the following concern that it could be a probable case of fraud with intention to obtain financial advantages.	The issue was immediately reported to FICAC on 1.11.18
3.	12 November 2018	Vika Dilacalaca VR#088775700260	Complaint against FEO services - Vika signed her contract on 11.05.18 with Emele Namakadre as witness, lately she came to know that she was eliminated from the PO's post at Nacavadi village in the North. She has attended all PO training, she visited the office a couple of times and no one told her about this. She also mentioned that the HR officer that she spoke to was rude and she was not satisfied with what she was being told.	SoE managed to call and meet with Vika, they had a discussion and HR was alerted as well. She has been informed that the PO post is still hers and she will still be the PO for Nacavanadi Village in the North. This was resolved on 12.10.18

Table 13.0 – Electoral Complaints directed to the EC before Election Day

No.	Date Received	Details of Complainant	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
1.	8 January 2018	Mr Dalip Kumar [Registered Officer, National Federation Party]	Purported Breach of Electoral Act by FijiFirst	A letter was provided to the FijiFirst with an attachment of the NFP complaint on 10.01.18 and EC responded to NFP via letter dated 18.01.18 providing its decision which stated that EC found no merit in the complaint and dismisses the same.
2.	5 February 2018	Ms Pearlance Antonio [General Secretary, People's Democratic Party]	Complaint – People's Democratic Party Facebook Page	<p>EC responded to PDP and acknowledged receipt of their letter on 6.3.18.</p> <p>A letter was also written to Mr Aman Singh on the same date to provide response on this complaint.</p> <p>EC responded to PDP via letter on 23.02.18 providing its decision that since no campaign has been declared, the EC does not find this is, a breach of any provision in the Electoral Act, 2014. Thus they were at liberty to proceed with their own legal action.</p>

Table 13.1 – Electoral Complaints directed to EC after Election Day

No .	Date Received	Details of Complainant	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
1.	8 November 2018	Mr Ganesh Chand	Breach of Law - FijiFirst Donations	<p>EC wrote to the Supervisor of Elections (SoE) to furnish the Commission with all relevant information with regards to the complaint received on 09.11.18.</p> <p>The SoE wrote to the EC with all the necessary information on 11.11.18.</p> <p>EC responded to Mr Ganesh Chand on 10.11.18 via letter and email providing their decision that following confirmation from the SoE (refer to attachment) the EC is satisfied that there is no merit in their complaint and therefore dismisses the same.</p>

2.	9 November 2018 [via email]	Mr Laryan Grvis Parvarish Verma [Voter ID No.: 0538 075 01537]	Query on your complaints against FijiFirst and its Secretary Khaiyum and Kanas Peka	EC responded to Mr Laryan Grvis Parvarish Verma via letter and email on 12.11.18 providing its decision: "The EC considered your complaint and we are in the view that you may seek to pursue legal action against FijiFirst as you feel aggrieved"; "The EC does not wish to interfere in campaigning by any party unless it specifically breaches any Electoral Law. You have not identified any purported breach" "On the second complaint regarding a Facebook profile, we write to advise that the EC does not have jurisdiction in this matter. We therefore dismiss the complaints"
3.	12 November 2018 [via email]	Mr Rajjat Chaudhary [One world flight Centre]	Breach and Violation of Media Blackout period	EC responded to Mr Rajjat Chaudhary via letter and email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The EC was advised all matters reported after that time were referred to FICAC" "Under these circumstances the EC does not intend taking any further action"
4.	13 November 2018 [Via email]	Mr Savenaca Narube [Leader of Unity Fiji Party]	Objections to the Conduct of the 2018 Election	EC responded to Mr Savenaca Narube via letter and email on the 16.11.18 providing its decision: "EC has no specific authority under the Electoral Act to authorize the recounting of any ballot box" "The SoE is empowered under S89 (6) of the Act to conduct a recount of any ballot box"

5.	13 November 2018 [via email]	Mr Ganesh Chand	Breach of Law - FijiFirst	<p>EC responded to Mr Ganesh Chand via letter and email on the 18.11.18 providing its decisions:</p> <p>“The reporting period is until 31 December each year, with a requirement that the information is provided within 30 days of the end of the financial year”</p> <p>“As such, no information is available about the source of funds for 2018. Once the information has been provided, it will be published as required by the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, funding and Disclosures) Act”</p>
6.	14 November 2018 [via email]	Mr Ganesh Chand	Breach of law - FBC	<p>EC respond to Mr Ganesh Chand via letter and email on the 17.11.18 providing its decisions:</p> <p>“Under S118 of the Electoral Act it is the responsibility of the Media Industry Development Authority to ensure compliance with that section”</p> <p>“The EC has no jurisdiction in this matter”</p>

7.	15 November 2018 [via email]	Mr Sitiveni Rabuka [Leader - SODELPA]; Dr Biman Prasad [Leader - NFP]; Mr Mahendra P. Chaudhry [Leader - FLP]; Mr Savenaca Narube [Leader - UFP]	Joint Opposition Letter-Election - Re: Tabulation and Declaration of Results 2018 General Elections	<p>EC responded to the Registered Officer, FLP via letter and email on the 15.11.18 providing its decision:</p> <p>“All activities conducted at the National Results Centre were able to be observed as is required by s 101 (2)”</p> <p>“Whilst the Act does not define a “provisional” result the process the FEO uses has been dealt with in other correspondence i.e. our letter of 30 July 2018;</p> <p>“At no time did the SoE “suspend the dissemination of all information”.</p> <p>At all times on Wednesday night/ Thursday morning, results received from Polling Stations and the National Count Centre were available at the National Result Centre and on the FEO’s electronic platforms”</p> <p>“The Polling Stations, affected by the adjourned polling will open on Saturday 17 November, 2018 as per normal polling arrangements”</p> <p>“The campaign prohibition period - the blackout extends “until the close of polling at all polling stations”. Hence, this will be as soon as polling closes at all polling stations on 17 November, 2018”</p> <p>“The EC is unsure as to why S107 is mentioned. This section does not come into play until 24 hours after the receipt of the original PoRs from all polling stations. Because of the adjourned polling this is unlikely to occur before Sunday 18 November 2018”</p>
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8.	15 November 2018 [via email]	Mr Jagannath Sami [General Secretary, NFP]	Breach of Electoral Regulations during extended Blackout Period	EC responded to Mr[Jagannath Sami via letter and email on the 15.11.18 providing its decision: "The NFP has been invited to provide the EC with the probable Electoral Laws that are likely to have been breached as per your complaint" "Any other information that will help the EC in ascertaining whether to report this matter to FICAC under section 18 of the Electoral Act, 2014"
9.	15 November 2018 [via email]	Mr Savenaca Narube [Leader of Unity Fiji Party]	Objections to the Election Processes and Results	EC responded to Mr Savenaca Narube via letter and email on the 16.11.18 providing its decision: "The EC has no specific authority under the Electoral Act to authorize the recounting of any ballot box" "The SoE is empowered under S89 (6) of the Act to conduct a recount of any ballot box"
10.	16 November 2018	Mr Kamal K. Iyer [NFP HQ, 124 Princess Road, Suva]	Breach of section 118 of the Electoral Act by Fiji Sun newspaper	EC respond to Mr Kamal K. Iyer via letter and email on the 17.11.18 providing its decisions: Under S118 of the Electoral Act it is the responsibility of the Media Industry Development Authority to ensure compliance with that section" "The EC has no jurisdiction in this matter"
11.	16 November 2018	Mr Jagannath Sami [General Secretary, NFP]	Breach of Electoral Act 2014 - Provision 118 (1)	EC respond to Mr Jagannath Sami via letter and email on the 17.11.18 providing its decisions: "Under S118 of the Electoral Act it is the responsibility of the Media Industry Development Authority to ensure compliance with that section" "The EC has no jurisdiction in this matter"

12.	16 November 2018	Adi Litia Qionibaravi [General Secretary - SODELPA]	Increase in number of polling stations to 2173 from 2170	EC responded to Adi Litia Qionibaravi via letter and email on the 17.11.18 providing its decisions: "Postal Votes are counted in batches of 500 and each batch is treated as a Polling Station for results purposes. At the time the provisional results were being published, a number of postal votes were still undergoing the verification process. On completion of the verification process, a further 3 ballot boxes of postal ballot papers were available to count. These were subsequently included in the total number of polling stations, hence the number increased from 2170 to 2173."
13.	16 November 2018	Mr Saimoni Vuetaki [Voter ID - 0244 122 00550]	Missing Votes - Christian Mission Fellowship Primary School CPE150140	EC respond to Mr Saimoni Vuetakiva via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
14.	16 November 2018	Ms Riddhi Damodar	Missing Votes - FNU Derrick Campus, Samabula	EC respond to Ms Riddhi Damodar via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
15.	17 November 2018	Ms Rajneesh Lata Charan [Voter ID No. : 039908801011]	Anomaly in results/ Missing Votes - WPE0808001, Natabua High School, Station Number 01	EC respond to Ms Raneesh Lata Charan via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"

16.	17 November 2018	Mr Mahendra Kumar [EVR: 0009 607 01375]	Status of vote [his vote]	EC respond to Mr Mahendra Kumar via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
17.	17 November 2018	Ms Rajneesh Lata Charan [Voter ID No. : 039908801011]	Anomaly in results - Postal Ballot	EC respond to Ms Raneesh Lata Charan via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
18.	17 November 2018	Mr Aman Abhishek Nath [NFP Candidate - Voter ID No.: 2281 835 00814]	Missing Votes	EC respond to Mr Aman Abhishek Nath via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
19.	17 November 2018	Ms Crystal Katy Edwina Chute [Voter ID No.: 0023 150 01149]	Vote not Registered - Crystal Katy Edwina Chute	EC respond to Ms Crystal Katy Edwina Chute via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
20.	17 November 2018	Ms Valerie Grace Chute [Voter Id No.: 2264 532 00835]	Vote not Registered - Valerie Grace Chute	EC respond to Ms. Valerie Grace Chute via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"

21.	17 November 2018	Mr Harry Delano Chute [Voter ID No.: 0022 168 00403]	Vote not Registered - Harry Delano Chute	EC respond to Mr. Harry Delano Chute via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
22.	17 November 2018	Ms Rosa Marie Tuivanualevu Chute [Voter ID No.: 0022 168 02599]	Formal Complaint - Vote not Reflected	EC respond to Ms Rosa Marie Tuivanualevu Chute via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
23.	17 November 2018	Mr Ilaija Bavadra	Formal Complaint	EC respond to Mr Ilaija Bavadra via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
24.	17 November 2018	Mr Sheikh Al-Zan [Voter ID No.: 0402 059 00936]	Missing Votes - Polling Venue Name: Raviravi Sangam School and Polling Venue Number: WPE06035	EC respond to Mr Sheikh Al-Zain via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
25.	17 November 2018	Mr Sheik Alziyad	Missing Votes: - Polling Venue: Karavi Public School	EC respond to Mr Sheik Alziyad via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"

26.	17 November 2018	Ms Camari Delai	Missing Vote Query - WPE08140, WPE08072	EC respond to Ms Camari Delai via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
27.	17 November 2018	Ms Farisha Farnaz Begum [Voter ID No.: 0596 036 00605] and Mr. Rizwan Ali [Voter ID No.: 0596 278 01202]	Missing Votes - Kulukulu Public School - Polling station #2	EC respond to Ms Farisha Farnaz Begum via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"
28.	17 November 2018	Mr Opeteia Ravai [Voter ID No.: 0025 178 00603]	Individual Candidate Results at International Secondary School, CPE1504305	EC respond to Mr Opeteia Ravai via email on the 17.11.18 providing its decision: "The entire statistics have not been entered into the system yet. Please continue to follow the updates on the FEO App for progressive statistics as and when they are entered into the system"

29.	17 November 2018	<p>Mr Sitiveni Rabuka [Leader - SODELPA];</p> <p>Dr Biman Prasad [Leader - NFP];</p> <p>Mr Mahendra P. Chaudhry [Leader - FLP];</p> <p>Mr Savenaca Narube [Leader - UFP]</p>	Request for Ruling: Breach of FEO Procedure at National Results Centre	<p>EC respond to Adi Litia Qionibaravi via letter and email on the 17.11.18 providing its decisions:</p> <p>“The SoE has dealt with the issue regarding the supply of copies of the Protocol of Results and RMIS data input records and the other matters you raised about the publications of results”</p> <p>“The alleged anomaly in respect of the Namosi Village Community Hall is of concern. This venue was a Pre-poll Polling Station and as such the count, under Division 7 of the Electoral Act was conducted at the National Result Centre. The count was conducted by trained staff and party agents were on hand to observe. The PoRs for Namosi Village Community Hall was prepared, witnessed and displayed at the National Count Centre. In the absence of information about the source of your record, I can make no further comment”</p> <p>“The EC dismisses your complaint and will be taking no further action”</p>
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30.	17 November 2018	Mr Savenaca Narube [Leader of Unity Fiji Party]	Objections to the Election Processes and Results	<p>EC responded to Mr Savenaca Narube via letter and email on the 16.11.18 providing its decisions using the same paragraph numbering as the letter:</p> <p>“There is no action that the EC can take at this time”</p> <p>“This matter has been dealt with by the SoE and in other correspondence you have received from the EC”</p> <p>“The EC has been advised that Mr Aiyaz-Sayed Khaiyum was present at the Result Centre as were other candidates, which is permitted by S101 (2) of the Electoral Act”</p> <p>“In view of the above there is no further action required at this time; It would be inappropriate for the EC to make any comment without a detailed analysis of any survey on the matter.”</p> <p>“The decision to recount any ballot boxes rests with the SoE and the EC will not be making any direction at this time”</p>
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2018
**GENERAL
ELECTION**

**Final Report by
Supervisor of Elections**

MOHAMMED SANEEM
Supervisor of Elections

10 JANUARY 2019

Table of Contents

Foreword by the Supervisor of Elections 2

Foreword by the Deputy Supervisor of Elections 3

Introduction..... 5

The 2018 General Election 9

Executive Directorate 11

Corporate Services Directorate..... 23

Operations Directorate..... 45

Command Centre Operations..... 68

Divisional Managers 70

Strategic Development and Communications Directorate..... 82

Special Projects..... 96

Conclusion.....121

Foreword by the Supervisor of Elections

I have the honour to present the 2018 General Election Report to the Electoral Commission ["EC"] as per the requirements of section 109 (1) of the Electoral Act, 2014.

I take this opportunity to thank the Almighty for blessing my team and I with the strength, perseverance, courage, commitment, ownership and patriotism to effectively execute all the required processes to deliver another successful General Election.

The Fijian Elections Office ["FEO"], having been formally established by the Electoral Act, on 28 March 2014, conducted the 2014 General Election which transitioned Fiji into Parliamentary Governance under the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, 2013. The 2018 General Election is the second General Election under the same legal framework.

It is necessary to acknowledge that for the first time in history, the FEO remained fully operational in between the General Elections having an adequate complement of staff and appropriate financial support from the State. This allowed the FEO to develop and implement numerous election related operational, administrative as well as capacity building projects during the election cycle.

Recognising the rapid impacts of globalisation and the continuing advancements in election processes globally that constantly uplift the internationally accepted norms of practice in the delivery of elections, the FEO expanded partnerships with regional and international elections organisations. The FEO also established working relationships with other election management bodies both from within the region as well as globally. International outreach by the FEO gave it significant access to more prevalent election practices and at the same time allowed the FEO to share its own advances with other election practitioners.

The FEO utilised 2014 – 2018 period to develop many foundations for platforms that are required to organise credible elections. Groundwork was carried out by the Operations Directorate using latest technologies to identify the Polling Venues. The first version of the Election Management Information System ["EMS"] was also developed to implement and track election logistics. The Corporate Directorate successfully procured and implemented the Financial Management System as well as the Human Resource Management System so as to completely disassociate the FEO from the Government FMIS system allowing the FEO to have complete financial autonomy.

The vision for the 2018 General Election was set by the whole FEO team during the 2015 Strategic Planning workshops. The team at the FEO designed, developed and implemented various innovations to enhance the efficiency of the operational delivery as well as enhance the transparency of the process. The basic concept of 'show and tell' was driven by an excellent set of very committed individuals. The FEO broke many 'glass ceilings' in the 2018 General Election.

I wish to acknowledge the Deputy Supervisor, Directors, the entire FEO team and all our partner agencies for their hard work in delivering the 2018 General Election. I submit the following report to the EC.

Mohammed Saneem
Supervisor of Elections

Foreword by the Deputy Supervisor of Elections

Ni Sa Bula Vinaka

It was with great pleasure that I took up the role of Deputy Supervisor in April after working closely with the FEO since 2013 on the preparations for 2014 General Election. This meant I personally got an opportunity to see the progress and development of the staff at FEO and how their confidence had grown when they successfully carried out projects to a high standard.

This enabled me to bring my experience as a technical advisor working with the teams in a managerial position to oversee the operational activities in the lead up to and during the election. The team at FEO was committed towards a common goal to create an environment to deliver a free, fair and transparent 2018 General Election for all Fijians.

We introduced a more de-centralised structure for the logistics part of the operations which allowed us to have a localised approach to the distribution and return of election materials. The introduction of hub leaders to bridge the gap between Area Offices and polling venues, provide support network for presiding officers was a significant change from 2014 and proved to be very successful.

The delay in the calling of the election provided us an opportunity to have simulations and capacity testing to ensure that our systems were election- ready to proceed when the writ was issued. The FEO staff grew during this time to deliver with confidence and commitment the 2018 General Election. It was good to see all that preparation and dedication come to fruition.

I was extremely proud of the staff and the way they implemented plans in accordance with the timelines and milestones and delivered a high standard of customer service to all voters and stakeholders to ensure they had a positive voting experience.

My year in Fiji has now come to an end and it is with sadness that I leave behind many friends and colleagues at the FEO. I will always think back on my time here with fondness and pride. I wish them all the very best for the future.

Vinaka vakalevu

Karyl Winter
Deputy Supervisor of Elections

List of Laws:

Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, 2013

Electoral Act, 2014

Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Act, 2013

Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act, 2012

List of Abbreviations:

A-WEB	Association of World Elections Bodies
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance & Elections
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DM	Divisional Manager
DSOE	Deputy Supervisor of Elections
EC	Electoral Commission
EMS	Election Management System
EVR	Electronic Voter Registration
EVP	Election Visitor Program
FEEC	Fijian Electoral Education Centre
FEO	Fijian Elections Office
FICAC	Fiji Independent Commission against Corruption
KYE	Know Your Election
MIDA	Media Industry Development Authority
MOG	Multinational Observer Group
PDW	Polling Day Worker
RMIS	Results Management Information System
SoE	Supervisor of Elections
TA	Technical Adviser
VSC	Voter Services Centre

Introduction

The Fijian Elections Office

The FEO is an independent election management body responsible for the conduct of General Elections and other elections in accordance with the legal framework. Under the Electoral Act, 2014, [**“Electoral Act”**] the FEO is the Office of the Supervisor of Elections [**“SoE”**] and is situated at 59-63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. The FEO has 60 core staff and employs up-to 400 short term staff during elections.

As per section 6 (2) of the Electoral Act, the SoE has complete independence to determine the composition of the FEO including the authority to determine the remuneration, the terms and conditions of employment and the recruitment procedure as well as the disciplinary processes to deal with staff at the FEO.

It is a requirement under section 7 (1) of the Electoral Act that the SoE must conduct his duties and exercise his powers in an impartial manner and in accordance with the law. Section 8 of the Electoral Act, further guarantees that in the performance of his or her functions and the exercise of his or her powers, the SoE is not subject to the direction or control by any person, except that he or she must comply with the directions or instructions that the EC gives him or her concerning the performance of his or her functions; and a decision of a court of law exercising its jurisdiction in relation to a question on whether he or she has performed the functions or exercised the powers in accordance with the Constitution and the law, or whether he or she should or should not perform those functions or exercise those powers.

Section 9 of the Electoral Act, further requires that the FEO shall be an independent office which must be properly staffed and equipped to perform its duties and functions in accordance with the Constitution and this Act, with such organisational structure, key positions and authorities, as approved by the SoE. The FEO has full autonomy to open as many sub-offices as it may require.

Section 11(4) of the Electoral Act, has established for the very first time that the state and local government officials must not be appointed as heads of Divisional or district electoral sub offices. The law very clearly requires all state agencies to provide FEO with the necessary support to facilitate an election. It makes it very clear that in providing the support, these agencies must rely on their own budgetary support rather than the FEO.

Section 13 of the Electoral Act, has very clearly outlined the impartiality and non-partisanship framework. It states that the members of the EC, the SoE, and all election officials, including employees, agents and contractors of FEO, must conduct their duties and functions and exercise their powers with utmost impartiality, in compliance with the law, without regard to any political or personal factors. Section 13(2) states that the members of the EC, the SoE, and all Election Officials, including employees, agents and contractors of the FEO, are not entitled to undertake any political or campaign activities at any time during the period of their appointment, employment or contract with the EC or the FEO. The legal framework specifically

requires that Election Officials must refrain from any decision that would raise a conflict of interest.

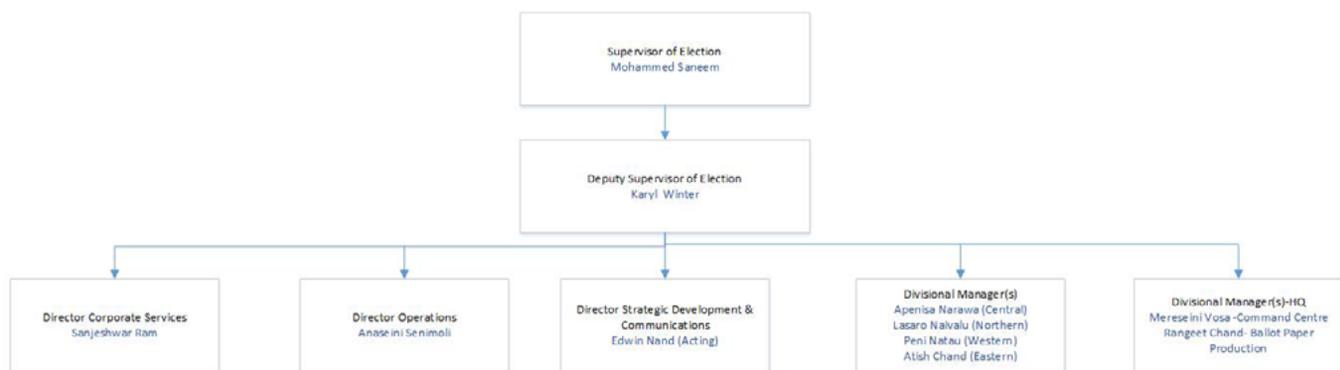
Section 15 of the Electoral Act, has explicitly required that Parliament allocate sufficient financial resources from the State budget for the timely and effective performance of the functions and powers of the FEO. The budget submission mechanism is based on the election cycle approach that is widely considered as an election best practice. Section 16 of the Electoral Act, empowers the SoE by granting him complete control on the procurements and usage of the budget allocated to the FEO. The legal framework has allowed the FEO to establish its own procurement system suitable for election related activities.

Section 17 of the Electoral Act, establishes an electoral complaints handling procedure that permits the electoral system to deal with election related complaints. This is another election good practice as it ensures election related complaints, some of which may be technical in nature, are dealt with expeditiously. Further, it creates an appeals mechanism to ensure that election related matters are resolved expeditiously within the Electoral Framework. The EC's decisions under this section are final and not subject to any appeal.

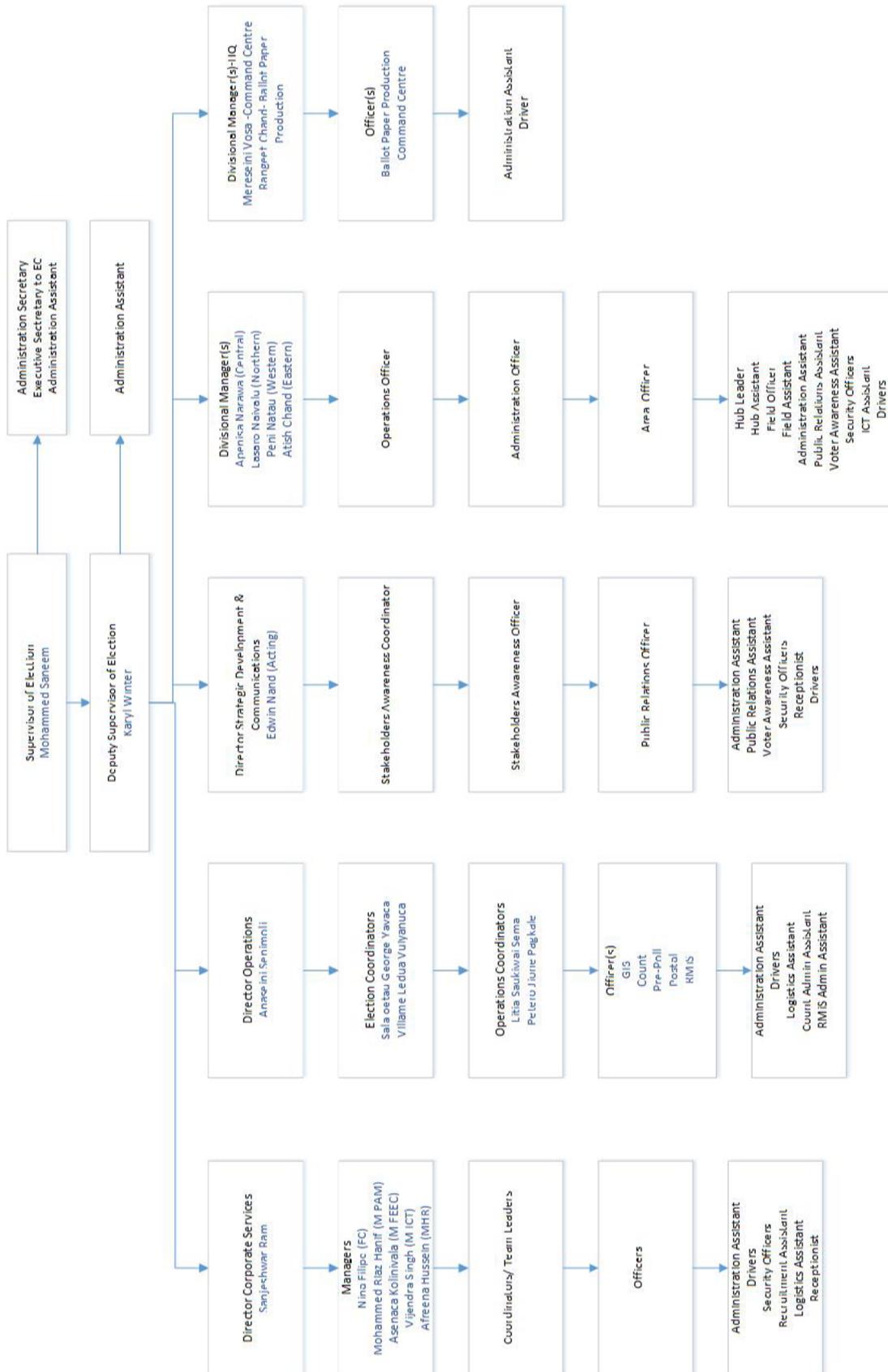
The FEO is guaranteed its independence pursuant to section 9 of the Electoral Act. Sections 10 to 18 of the Electoral Act also set up a highly independent institution operationally. It further has complete financial independence and human resource, as well as election staffing independence.

FEO Governance and Administration

The FEO is divided into 5 divisions as elaborated below:



FEO Organisational Structure:



2015-2019 Strategic Plan

Following the 2014 General Election, the FEO embarked on developing its first 5-year Strategic Plan. The FEO established its strategic foundations in terms of its Vision, Mission and Organisational Core Values.

The infographic is set against a blue background with a large white arrow pointing to the right. At the top, a dark blue banner contains the text 'FIJIAN ELECTIONS OFFICE' in white, with the tagline 'My Election, My Fiji' below it. Three orange horizontal bars serve as section dividers for 'VISION', 'MISSION', and 'CORE VALUES'. Each section contains a bold heading followed by a descriptive paragraph.

FIJIAN ELECTIONS OFFICE
My Election, My Fiji

VISION
Our vision is to be recognised as a leader in establishing best practices in the conduct of elections.

MISSION
Our mission is the professional and independent conduct of credible elections that enables every Fijian to participate in Fiji's democratic process.

CORE VALUES
The FEO believes in:

- Right to vote**
Every citizen over the age of eighteen has the right to vote
- One person, one vote, one value**
Every voter has one vote, with each vote being equal
- Secrecy of the ballot**
Every voter has the right to vote by secret ballot
- A single National Register of Voters**
Every registered voter shall be listed on a single National Register of Voters
- Honesty, Integrity, and Transparency**
The Fijian Elections Office values honesty, integrity and transparency in all its transactions
- Independence and Impartiality**
The Fijian Elections Office is an independent body and shows no preference in either speech or action for any individual candidate or political party
- Professionalism**
The Fijian Elections Office is a professional body that adheres to the highest standards of conduct and practice
- Innovation**
The Fijian Elections Office aspires to introduce the most innovative solutions and practices in delivering its functions

The 2018 General Election

On 01 October 2018, the President of Fiji, His Excellency, (Retired) Major General Jioji Konrote issued the *Writ* for the 2018 General Election to the Chairperson of the EC, Mr Suresh Chandra at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

On 02 October 2018 the Nominations process began and the FEO started the process to finalise the Voter List. The FEO then printed and distributed the Provisional Voter List on 08 October 2018 and on the following day, it then published the Polling Venue List. After the finalisation of voter registration for the 2018 General Election, the FEO re-opened its Voter Services Centre on 11 October 2018 to facilitate replacement of VoterCards.

Candidate nominations officially closed on 15 October 2018 at 12 noon and the process for withdrawals, appeals and objections was opened the following day. The Chairperson of the EC, Mr.Suresh Chandra issued the Notice of Poll and Notice of Pre-Poll on 17 October 2018. At the conclusion of the withdrawals, appeals and objections, a total of 235 Candidates were approved to contest the 2018 General Election.

The National Candidates List Ball Draw was held on 18 October 2018 at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva to assign numbers to individual Candidates. The numbers were drawn for all 235 Political Party Candidates and the numbers ranged from 508 to 743. The number '666' had earlier been excluded by the EC.

The printing of ballot papers commenced on 17 October 2018 at Star Printing in Raiwai, Suva. A total of 764,850 ballot papers were printed for Election Day. By 18 October 2018 the printing of postal ballot papers concluded and the printing of Voter Instruction Booklets commenced for all postal packages. On 20 October 2018 the packing of postal packages commenced and these packages were sent to postal voters via courier.

All applications for Postal Voting closed on 24 October 2018. Pre-Poll commenced on 05 November 2018 and concluded on 10 November 2018. It was carried out in the Central, Northern, Western and Eastern parts of Fiji. 45,719 voters cast their votes during pre-poll. A total of 9,180 postal votes were admitted to the Count out of the 11,227 that were dispatched by the FEO.

The 2018 General Election was held on 14 November 2018 where 398,780 voters cast their vote. Due to accessibility issues caused by bad weather, 22 Polling Venues had to have voting adjourned to 17 November 2018 and those who had voted on 14 November in those venues were required by law to re-vote for their votes to be counted. A total of 4,853 voters voted on 17 November 2018.

The FEO published provisional results on Election Night as counting progressed at Polling Stations and the official and final results was issued on 18 November 2018. The turnout for the 2018 General Election was 458,532 out of 637,527 registered voters making up 71.9%. The total number of invalid votes was 4,197 out of the 458,532 amounting to 0.92%.

The Chairperson of the EC, Mr. Suresh Chandra returned the *Writ* for the 2018 General Election to the President of Fiji His Excellency, (Retired) Major General Jioji Konrote on 18 November 2018.

Key Dates for the 2018 General Election

- 01 October 2018-
 - *Writ* Issued to the Electoral Commission
 - Voter Registration Closed
 - Political Party Registration Closed
 - Postal Vote Applications opened
- 02 October 2018-
 - Nomination of Candidates opened
- 08 October 2018-
 - Display of Provisional Voter List
- 13 October 2018-
 - Display of Provisional Voter List concludes
- 15 October 2018-
 - Nomination of Candidates closed at 12 noon
- 16 October 2018-
 - Withdrawal of Nomination by 12 noon
 - Objections and Appeals by 4pm
- 17 October 2018-
 - EC finalised Appeals and Objections decisions
 - Ballot Paper Production Commenced
- 18 October 2018-
 - National Candidate's List Draw
- 24 October 2018-
 - Postal Vote Applications Closed at 5pm
- 26 October 2018-
 - Ballot Paper Production completed
- 28 October 2018-
 - Final Voter Lists printed
- 05 November 2018-
 - Pre-Poll Voting Commenced
- 07 November 2018-
 - Verification of Postal Ballots Commenced
- 10 November 2018-
 - Pre-Poll Voting Concluded
- 14 November 2018-
 - Election Day
 - Provisional Results announced
- 17 November 2018-
 - Polling at 22 Adjourned Polling -Venues
- 18 November 2018-
 - Final National Results Tally handed over to the EC
 - Seat Allocation announced
 - EC Returned *Writ* for the 2018 General Election to the President
- 14 December 2018-
 - Report by the SoE pursuant to section 109 of Electoral Act.

Executive Directorate

The Executive Directorate of the FEO reports directly to the SoE and Deputy Supervisor of Elections [**“DSoE”**]. -Its primary responsibility is to support the SoE in non-core business areas such as International Relations, Secretariat to EC, Internal Audit, Legal Compliance, Quality Control, Legal Research and Special Projects.

During the General Election, the SoE and DSoE both managed Executive Directorate staff to supervise election processes. Some tasks were directly handled by the SoE as per the requirements of the law.

Karyl Winter was appointed DSoE on 04 April, 2018.

Planning for the 2018 General Election

The FEO in preparing itself for the 2018 General Election conducted 4 major workshops. The objective of the workshops was to develop election activity timelines from August 2017 to November 2018. Each Directorate had to come up with their project activity timelines and demonstrate their plan on how they were going to execute them during the election period.

Workshop Dates:

- 17 July-19 July 2017 (3 Days -Election Operation Planning Workshop)
- 23 February 2018 (50 Day Election Planning Workshop)
- 27 February 2018 (Content Creation Workshop)
- 06 August 2018 (Election Readiness Workshop)

Through these workshops, project owners were able to identify the stakeholders they needed to work with, the various requirements they needed to comply with, the equipment and venues needed in carrying out their project and the transportation plan of their project.

A content creation workshop was also conducted for Communications Department to help them solely with content writing, press releases, advertising, billboard messages, social media, radio and television advertising. These workshops enabled the Communications Team to deliver all the press releases, advertisements and social media engagements.

The key outcome of the planning workshops was the 50-Days plan of operations for the period once the Election Date was announced. The timelines given by the project owners were being monitored and tested in the form of mock exercises.

The FEO conducted 4 major mock exercises to plan and prepare itself:

- Election Simulation Exercise: 05 to 16 February 2018
- Logistics Sensitive Material Packing Exercise: 05 to 07 June 2018
- Count Centre Mock Exercise: 25 July to 26 July 2018
- Results Centre Mock Exercise: 01 July to 04 July 2018

Mock exercises were conducted to test out those plans with the various stakeholders, vendors and suppliers. In doing so, project owners were able to identify the loopholes that needed to be mended.

Undergoing these workshops and mock exercises allowed staff to step out of their comfort zone and gain more expert knowledge, improve their communications skills, network with others and renew their confidence and motivation. Several staff who had not participated in conducting an election were given the exposure in the mock scenarios to prepare themselves.

By September 2018 all FEO staff were ready and well equipped with the knowledge and resources to carry out the 2018 General Election. Confidence level was very high amongst the staff and everyone was ready to deliver the 2018 General Election.

Political Party Management

The SoE is also the Registrar of Political Parties. The Review and Compliance Officer, Mr. Mesake Dawai is the Political Party Officer who administratively manages the requirements under the relevant laws. The Political Parties legal framework makes it mandatory for Political Parties and its Office Holders to file declarations of Assets, Liabilities, etc. with the Registrar and thereafter, the Registrar is required to publish these declarations. The Registrar also maintains the Register of Political Parties.

As at 01 October 2018, eight Political Parties were registered with the FEO. These were:

1. FijiFirst
2. Social Democratic Liberal Party
3. National Federation Party
4. Unity Fiji
5. HOPE
6. Fiji Labour Party
7. Fiji United Freedom Party
8. People's Democratic Party

Political Party Workshops

The FEO in promoting Goal 8 of its Strategic Plan is required to enhance knowledge and skills of the FEO staff and stakeholders through training and capacity building. The FEO had organised various trainings, demonstrations and workshops for Political Parties during the Election cycle to build capacity and for party officials to better understand the electoral processes.

Below is a list of workshops that were organised for Political Parties:

	Event	Date	Venue
1.	Polling Venue Locator Application Workshop	5 August 2016	FEO Conference Room
2.	Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections (BRIDGE)- <i>Introduction to Electoral Administration</i>	9-11 November 2016	Southern Cross Conference Room
3.	Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections	11-13 April 2017	Southern Cross Conference Room

	(BRIDGE)- <i>Polling, Counting and Results Module</i>		
4.	Electoral Processes workshop for individual Political Parties	October and November of 2017	Studio 6 Conference Room
5.	Count Mock for Political Parties	9 May 2018	Patel Samaj Hall, Suva
6.	Results System Demo for Political Parties	9 May 2018	FEO Conference Room
7.	Mock Count of Ballot Papers for Media and Political Parties	3 September 2018	FEO Conference Room
8.	Demo for Polling Station Set up	18 September 2018	FEO Warehouse
9.	Packing of sensitive materials mock	26 September 2018	FEO Warehouse
10.	Logistics Workshop for Political Parties	3 October 2018	Grand Pacific Hotel, Matua Conference Room

Political Party Declarations

Under section 24 and 25 of the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Act, 2013 all registered Political Parties and their individual Candidates were required to declare their assets, liabilities and income for stipulated periods.

Candidates were required to submit their declarations within seven days of their Nomination whilst Political Party declarations were due 30 days before the date of the General Election. The FEO published the approved form for the submission of the declarations by Candidates.

The FEO is required to publish the Declarations and Statements as per the requirements of the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Act, 2013. The Declarations by Candidates and statements of Political Parties were both published in the Fiji Sun Newspaper on Tuesday 30 October 2018.

The People's Democratic Party was the only Political Party that did not submit their statement of assets and liabilities which resulted in their de-registration on 31 October 2018 for non-compliance with the law.

Polling Agent Accreditation

According to section 45 of the Electoral Act, Political Parties and Independent Candidates are allowed to appoint one polling agent to be present at any one time per Polling Station. Polling agents were required to produce a completed "*Polling Agent Appointment Form*" at the polling station or observation area they were appointed to.

The Polling Agent Appointment Form was provided in soft copy version to all registered Political Parties who then had the responsibility of printing the form onto their letterhead and providing a copy of the same to any polling agent that was appointed by them.

The Political Parties were also provided with a Code of Conduct for polling agents, and polling agents were expected to comply with it whilst performing their duties.

In addition, a Polling Agent's Handbook was designed and distributed by FEO to Political Parties on 27 July and 28 July 2017.

The 2018 General Election also saw polling agents being authorised to make observations at various observation areas approved by the SoE. An itinerary was provided to all Political Parties pertaining to different electoral events that allowed polling agent access. Some of these events or observation areas included:

1. Ballot Paper Production;
2. Packing of sensitive material for Polling Day and Pre-poll;
3. Packing of Postal Packages;
4. Verification of Postal Ballots;
5. Hubs;
6. Area Offices;
7. National Results Centre; and
8. National Count Centre.

Nomination of Candidates

The nominations process is governed by section 26 of the Electoral Act and the eligibility requirements are outlined in section 56 of the Constitution.

The *Writ* for the 2018 General Election had specified that the nominations process would commence on 02 October 2018 and close at 12pm on 15 October 2018. During the period of nominations, the FEO received nominations from 6 registered political parties.

All nominating Political Parties were required to submit their nominations in the approved form and accompanied with a deposit of \$1,000 per Candidate. They were also required to submit one recent passport size photo as well as a digital copy in JPEG or PNG format of 300 ppi.

After receiving the completed nomination forms, the details of each Candidate were verified with the Chief Registrar's Office, Crime Records Office, Department of Immigration and the Official Receiver's Office before accepting the Candidate's Nomination.

Summary of Nomination Forms Received and Processed:

Political Party	No. Received	No. Rejected	No. Approved
FijiFirst	51	1 (1 replaced)	51
SODELPA	51	1 (1 replaced)	51
NFP	51	1 (1 replaced)	51
FLP	25	3 (3 replaced)	25
Unity Fiji	31	3 (1 appealed)	29
HOPE	28	-	28
Total	237	9 (7 replaced)	235

During the period of nominations, four Political Parties submitted their applications on the second week between 8 and 12 of October 2018. On the last day of nominations, two Political Parties submitted their applications. Political Parties with rejections submitted their replacement of Candidates.

Candidate Statistics by Gender and Age Group								
Gender	18 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	Grand Total
Female		6	10	16	14	7	3	56
Male	1	10	20	36	70	40	2	179
Grand Total	1	16	30	52	84	47	5	235

Candidate Stats by Party by Gender & Age Group								
Party	Age Cohort							Grand Total
	18 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	
Fiji Labour Party		1	8	6	5	3	2	25
Female			1	2	2		1	6
Male		1	7	4	3	3	1	19
FijiFirst		2	7	13	17	12		51
Female		2	2	2	3	1		10
Male			5	11	14	11		41
HOPE	1	6	6	6	7	2		28
Female		3	4	5	4	2		18
Male	1	3	2	1	3			10
National Federation Party		6	4	12	21	8		51
Female		1	2	3	3	1		10
Male		5	2	9	18	7		41
SODELPA			3	9	19	17	3	51
Female				2	1	2	2	7
Male			3	7	18	15	1	44
UNITY FIJI		1	2	6	15	5		29
Female			1	2	1	1		5
Male		1	1	4	14	4		24
Grand Total	1	16	30	52	84	47	5	235

Ballot Paper Production and Management

The printing of Ballot Papers was tendered to a commercial printer and the successful tenderer organised with the FEO management to instil three security features in all the Ballot Papers. There were no reports of tampering or attempted fraud with Ballot Papers.

Ballot Paper printing was done over nine days and a total of 764,850 Ballot Papers were printed. 20,000 Ballot Papers were machine folded for use in Postal Voting whilst the remaining 744,850

were bound into books of 50 after each Ballot Paper stub was numbered. Each book was also serially numbered for tracking.

An additional 8,900 Ballot Papers were printed on 15 November 2018 for the 22 polling venues where polling was adjourned due to heavy rain and flooding. These Ballot Papers were bound into 178 books.

The Fiji Police Force was present at the printing factory during the printing and also provided security for the transfer of Ballot Papers. Polling agents and international observers were given a tour of the printing process and they also followed the Ballot Paper transfers.

The polling agents and international observers were given a designated area in the Printery to observe the production of Ballot Papers.

Summary of Ballot Papers printed for 2018 General Election

Description	Numbers
<i>Registered Voters</i>	637,527
<i>Polling Stations</i>	2173
Postal Ballot Papers	20,000
Pre-Poll Ballot Papers	92,400
Election Day Ballot Papers	652,450
Election Day (Adjourned Venues)	8,900
Printing Duration	9 Days

National Candidates List Draw

Numbers for Candidates for the National Candidates List were drawn on 18 October 2018 at the Grand Pacific Hotel. This venue was central as well as sufficiently large enough to cater for the expected number of guests. Pursuant to section 36 of the Electoral Act, it was done in the presence of the public including the media, international observers and political parties. The draw was also broadcast live on both FBC and Fiji One television and on social media.

On 15 May 2017, the EC conducted a barrel draw on live television and approved 508 as the first number on the ballot paper for the 2018 General Election. 235 white table tennis balls (equal to the number of Candidates whose nominations were accepted) were numbered from 508 to 743 and placed inside a specially designed barrel. The number '666' had been excluded by the EC from the series.

The names of Candidates were announced in alphabetical order with the last name appearing before the first name as required in section 36 of the Electoral Act. The SoE called out the number drawn for that announced Candidate name. The entire process was repeated until the numbers had been allocated to every Candidate.

The National Candidates List showed the Candidate's number, their name and their photograph. The National Candidates List was prepared and published in the Gazette and the daily newspapers the following day, as well as broadcast on radio and social media. Copies of the National Candidates List were provided to the EC, registered Political Parties and their Candidates as well as copies displayed at all FEO sub-offices for public viewing.

The Voter Instruction Booklet contained the National Candidate List and was widely distributed to all the voters prior to election day as well as handed to every voter as they entered the polling station to vote.

International Relations

Electoral Assistance Received

The FEO had received key election materials as in-kind assistance from New Zealand and India (voting screens and indelible ink respectively) as well as funding from India to purchase key services (vehicles) for the successful conduct of the 2018 General Election.

Country	Assistance Received
New Zealand	3003 boxes of Cardboard Voting Screens were received in January, 2018
India	Funding of FJD\$291,830 received by the Indian High Commission to purchase a total of five (5) Mahindra vehicles for use in the 2018 General Election. The funding was received between June, 2018 to July, 2018.
India	60 cartons containing 6,000 boxes of indelible ink were received in April, 2018

Technical Advisors

As per the Strategic Plan (Goal 3, Objective 1), the FEO had engaged long-term and short-term Technical Advisors from Australia, New Zealand, Korea and Belgium that were based with the different Directorates to provide timely advice and share their knowledge and expertise with the FEO staff. The Technical Advisors helped build capacity of the FEO staff through project planning and implementation.

Australia and New Zealand also provided Technical Advisors for support during the Election period. These Technical Advisors were based with key departments as well as the Divisional Offices. New Zealand’s bilateral support included topping up the salary for the DSoE.

Further deployment details of the Technical Advisors are illustrated in the table below:

Country	Non-Election		Election	
	Number of Electoral Advisors	Based with	Number of Electoral Advisors	Based with
New Zealand	2	Training	2	Training
	3	Operations	1	Operations
	1	Communications	1	International Relations
	1	Election Management Project		
Australia	(Long-term) 1	Operations	1	Operations
	(Short-term) 2	Operations	1	EC
	1	Electoral Commission	4	Divisional Offices
Korea	1	Logistics		N/A

International Election Observation Missions Attended by the FEO

After the successful completion of the 2014 General Election, the FEO was invited to participate in Election Observation Missions in the region. This was also a capacity building opportunity for the FEO as Senior Management that participated in these Missions got exposure to different contexts and were accompanied by regional and international electoral experts, with whom they could network and share experiences. Through this, the FEO has also built strong Pacific networks to provide support through sharing of electoral resource materials (Strategic Plan Goal 3, Objective 2).

Timeline	Country	Mission	Participation Details
May, 2015	Bougainville	Pacific Islands Forum Observer Mission to Bougainville	Attended by the SoE as the Head of Mission
January, 2016	Vanuatu	MSG Observer to Vanuatu Snap Election	Attended by the SoE
June-July, 2017	Papua New Guinea	MSG Observer Group Mission to PNG General Elections	Attended by the Industrial Elections Coordinator
November, 2017	Tonga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Observer Mission to Tonga General Elections • PIF Election Observation Mission 	Attended by the SoE and Director Operations

International Events Hosted by the FEO

Over time, the FEO had built enough capacity and was ready as a regional leader to venture into hosting key regional and international electoral events. In 2018, the FEO hosted two such events and showcased Fiji as a capable host to plan and deliver key electoral events.

Hosting these electoral events also built the capacity of the FEO to deliver an Election Visitor Programme for the 2018 General Election.

Timeline	Event	Details
March, 2018	Sixth A-WEB Executive Board Meeting	Attended by delegates representing Romania, Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Croatia, Paraguay, Guinea, Uzbekistan, El Salvador, Kenya, and Fiji, as well as Kosovo as the Oversight and Audit Committee and the USA, South Africa and Korea as Observers.
September, 2018	PIANZEA Advisory Group Meeting	Attended by the PAG Advisory Group representatives from Melanesia (Fiji), Micronesia (Kiribati), and Polynesia (Tuvalu) as well as representatives of the PIANZEA Secretariat from the Australian Electoral Commission

Membership and Affiliations

Since 2014, the FEO has affiliated with a number of key regional and global electoral agencies to build its capacity and share skills, knowledge and resources through the Electoral Network.

Organisation	Membership Status
A-WEB	Executive Board Member since September, 2017
PIANZEA Network	Advisory Group Member
Commonwealth Electoral Network	Member of Executive Committee
Association of Asian Election Authorities	Member

Media Accreditation

Media organisations and personnel were required to be accredited to be able to cover the 2018 General Election. The “2018 Media Accreditation Form” was developed for this. Prior to accreditation, media organisations and freelancers were required to be registered with the Media Industry Development Authority [“MIDA”], this being specific to the General Election. A Code of Conduct was developed for the media as well.

The FEO produced a Media Handbook that was launched on 18 January 2018 at the Media Training. The Media Training for the 2018 General Election was co-funded by MIDA and the FEO and conducted by trainers from International Foundations for Electoral Systems [“IFES”]. The three days training for 40 media personnel from Fiji took place at the Holiday Inn in Suva and covered an array of topics including the hosting of election debates, Election Day coverage and political reporting.

The FEO accredited 371 media personnel representing 19 media agencies which included eight international media. The accredited media personnel were handed information packages, containing handbooks and other materials published by the FEO.

The FEO worked closely with local media to develop attractive and innovative election coverage techniques to ensure that the general public had access to election information in more convenient modes.

Observer Accreditation

Pursuant to section 119 of the Electoral Act, the Minister Responsible for Elections may appoint or invite any person or organisation to observe any election and these persons or organisations are then accredited by the FEO.

For the 2018 General Election, the Minister Responsible for Elections approved the Multinational Observer Group [“MOG”] which was co-lead by Australia, India and Indonesia under the Terms of Reference [“TOR”] signed by all parties.

This resulted in FEO accrediting 77 International Observers. The Observers were from the United States of America, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand, Korea and United Kingdom. The Melanesian Spearhead Group brought Observers from Bougainville, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as well as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat who

brought in Observers from Rwanda, Tonga, French Polynesia and Federated States of Micronesia.

The FEO had regular engagements with the MOG to ensure that all information necessary for the MOG to carry out its responsibilities under the TOR was available to it in an open and transparent manner. In order to ensure that the MOG was aware of the processes that were to take place during the period, the FEO prepared a comprehensive itinerary of events with dates and times to indicate when and where the MOG may observe the various events.

The MOG was free to observe any part of the process and below is a list of engagements that it recorded with the FEO aside from its general observation work. The following is a non-exhaustive list of engagements that the FEO recorded with the MOG 2018.

List of Engagements Recorded by MOG:

Date	Engagement
20/09/2018	Visited Voter Services Centre in Suva to observe the registration of voters process.
02/10/2018	Media briefing on the FEO operational preparation for the 2018 General Election.
03/10/2018	Attended Logistics Workshop for Political Parties.
05/10/2018	Briefing on Registration Process.
06/10/2018	2014 MOG Report briefing with FEO and EC.
08/10/2018	Postal Pre-Packing at Ratu Sukuna House.
10/10/2018 – 12/10/2018	Visit to Pre-Poll areas in Korovou, Navua, Rakiraki and Lautoka to observe the Display of Voter List
12/10/2018	Awareness briefing with FEO and EC.
15/10/2018	Legal briefing with FEO.
17/10/2018	Briefing on printing of first Ballot Paper.
18/10/2018	National Candidates List Draw. Briefing on Ballot Paper Production.
19/10/2018	Transportation of Postal Ballot Papers to FEO Warehouse.
20/10/2018	Briefing on Packing of Postal Package.
22/10/2018	Briefing on Nominations, Withdrawal, Objections, Appeals, Postal and Pre-Poll Processes.
23/10/18 – 03/11/2018	Observed Presiding Officer/Assistant Presiding Officer Training in Peninsula, Kshatriya Hall, Lautoka, Ba, Sigatoka, Levuka, Nausori and Savusavu.
24/10/2018	Briefing of Observers by EC on their role and responsibilities.
26/10/2018	Transportation of Ballot Papers from Star Printery to FEO Warehouse.
28/10/2018	Observed in the Mamanucas and Yasawa area for VIB Distribution and KYE 3.
29/10/2018	Observed in Bau and Fiji Corrections Services for VIB Distribution and KYE3. Packing of Pre-Poll materials. Inspection of off cuts and shredded ballot papers. Briefing of Observers on Election Day voting process and Count process. Movement of 1 st Pre-Poll container to the Northern Division.
30/10/2018	Observed packing of pre-poll materials. Observed in Vunidawa for VIB Distribution and KYE 3.

31/10/2018	Packing of Election Day materials at the FEO Warehouse. Observed in Namosi, Tamavua and Nasinu area for Voter Instruction Book Distribution and KYE 3.
01/11/2018	Observed Count Demonstration.

List of Engagements Recorded by MOG continued:

Date	Engagement
05/11/2018 – 09/11/2018	Observed Pre-Poll in Lau, Yasawa, Nailega, Fiji Corrections Services, Naval Base, RFMF QEB, Beqa, Taveuni to name a few.
07/11/2018	Verification of Postal Ballots. Observed the transport of election materials from FEO Warehouse to Naval Base. Observed RMIS training.
11/11/2018	Debriefing on Pre-Poll matters.
12/11/2018	Briefing of Observers at Holiday Inn.
13/11/2018	EC meeting with Co Leads to discuss on complaints process and allocation of seats. FEO meeting with Co Leads to discuss on preparation leading up to the 2018 General Election.
14/11/2018	FEO organized a media event for the observation of Australian Co Lead at Suva Grammar School. Observed Election Day throughout the four Divisions.
16/11/2018	Observed packing of sensitive materials for all Polling Venues that were postponed for Election.
17/11/2018	Observed voting at adjourned polling venues.
18/11/2018	Observed handing over of National Results Tally to EC at the Media Centre.
21/11/2018	Debrief on Election Day matters.

To facilitate the accreditation process, specific Observer Badges were created for ease of access to Polling Stations, National Count Centre, National Results Centre, Media Centre and venues where electoral processes were conducted. The FEO also authorised MOG Support staff to enter Polling Venues so as to provide logistical support.

Accreditation under Section 115 of the Electoral Act 2014

The Act mandated all Civil Society Organisations [“CSO”] to seek approval from the EC or FEO for voter awareness and education programs that they wished to conduct following the announcement of the election date.

On 17 May 2018 the EC approved the Guideline, Application Form, Appeal process and Appeal Form under section 115. Following this approval from EC, the SoE hosted the CSO’s to an information session on 24 May 2018 highlighting to them the process under section 115. This process was also published on the FEO website.

CSO’s were informed to complete and submit the Application Form together with any content, material or prop and particulars of the Activity in sufficient quantity. Having received the

application, the FEO would make the necessary compliance, accuracy and consistency checks. The FEO ensured that if any matter of inconsistency or inaccuracy with Election Procedure was discovered, the relevant organisation was promptly contacted to remedy the error before approval was given.

Decisions regarding the application were made within 24 hours of receipt of the application and an applicant who had applied for approval and whose application was not approved by the SoE was given the chance to appeal to the EC by completing the Appeals Form and lodging it within 24 hours of receipt of rejection of the Application decision by the SoE. The EC would then decide the Appeal within three days of receipt of the application for Appeal.

For the 2018 General Election the information below highlights the number of applications that were received, approved and or rejected by the FEO.

Applications received	Applications approved	Applications rejected
2	2	0

On 17 October 2018, FEO received an application from the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, promoting gender equality and women's participation in the 2018 General Election. It focused on social media and press releases on women's engagement in the democratization process. The FEO vetted the application and discovered some inconsistencies which were rectified by the Applicant. This was then approved on 23 October 2018.

Further, on 09 November 2018, the FEO received an application from International IDEA who intended to send a message of peace to the General Public on television and both newspapers during the black-out period. This was initially approved on 10 November 2018 but the Applicant requested to amend their message again. The amended message was submitted on 12 November 2018 and later approved 13 November 2018.

The FEO did not reject any application under section 115.

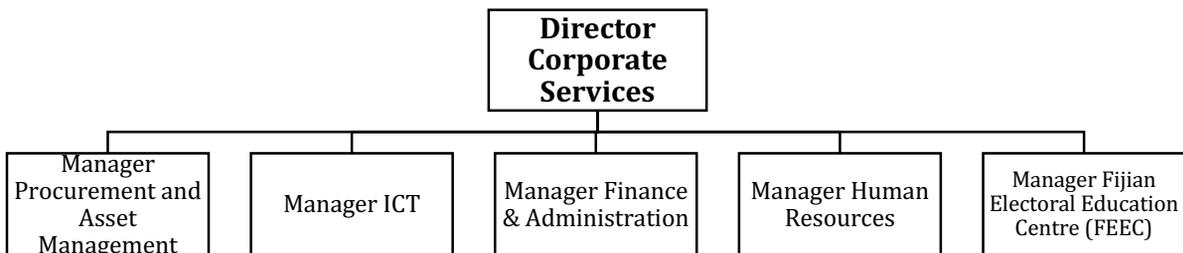
Corporate Services Directorate

The Corporate Services Directorate of FEO is headed by Mr. Sanjeshwar Ram and consists of the following sections led by the Director Corporate Services and assisted by the five Heads of Department:

- Human Resources;
- Fijian Electoral Education Centre;
- Procurement and Asset Management;
- Finance and Administration; and
- Information Technology.

The Corporate Division's role is to facilitate the work of other operational departments by providing the necessary support either in terms of staffing, training, procurement and technology or policy advice. Also to ensure the implementation of corporate governance within the legal framework, to recruit and retain skilled staff, to establish modern ICT systems for the FEO, ensure sustainable management of resources and to exercise prudent financial management.

Corporate Services Directorate Organisation Structure



Human Resources

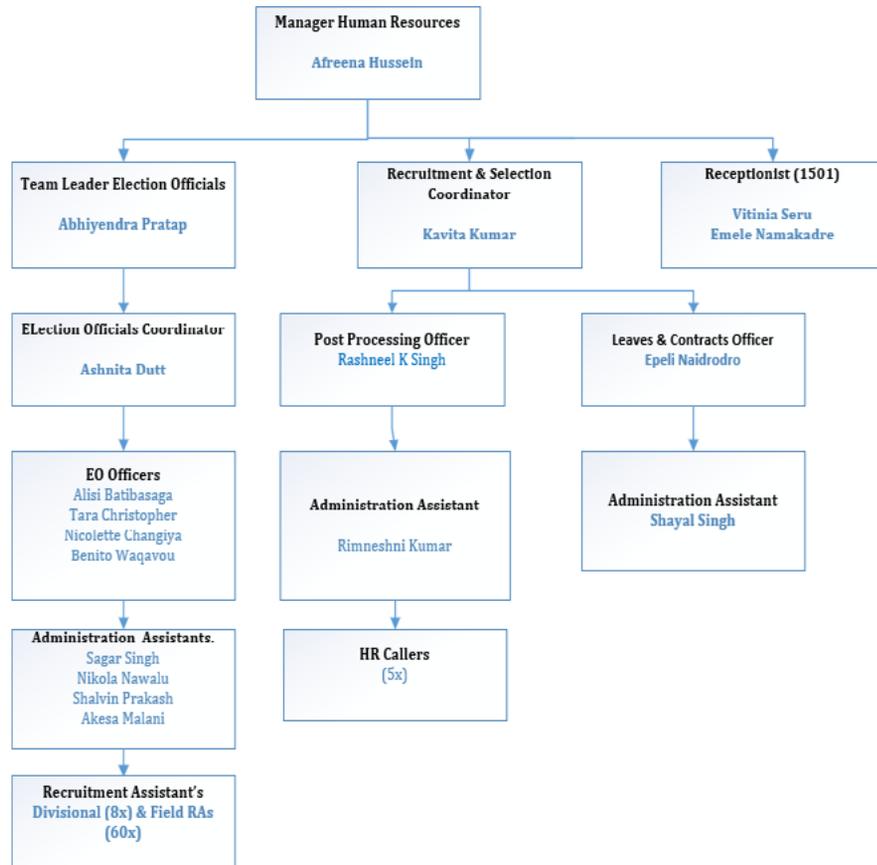
The Human Resources Department is managed by Ms. Afreena Hussein. The core functions of the department are as follows:

- Merit based recruitment and selection focussed on selecting high performing, honest employees with high standards of integrity;
- Providing equal employment opportunity;
- Ensuring position based remuneration and benefits;
- Applying transparency and accountability in decision making; and
- Ensuring fairness and equity in all staffing decisions.

The staffing structure was designed on the basis that certain projects for the General Election would require completion well before the date of the General Election and this meant that some

staff would have short term contracts while others may operationally be needed on long term contracts. The recruitment of all FEO staff was based on merit.

Organisation Structure for Human Resources Department:



Recruitment & Selection Unit

The Recruitment and Selection Unit is led by Kavita Kumar. This section of the HR department manages the recruitment and selection of core staff and project based staff.

The Exolvo Self Service[“ESS”] system which is linked with Finance Pay Global system is used to input staff payroll details and manage staff leave entitlement. The system also allows for printing of individual staff payslips.

There were 76 ongoing positions [Core Staff] that ranged from three to five years and there were 1,618 short term positions ranging from two weeks to 18 months. The table on the following page summarises the 2017 to 2018 recruitment:

OVERROLL RECRUITMENT FOR ONGOING/ SHORT TERM/ PROJECT POOL POSITIONS			
Ongoing Positions	No. Required	Pool Positions	No. Required
1 Network Administrator	1	Recruitment Assistants	51
2 Polling Day Coordinator	1	Graphic Design Assistant	8
3 Trainer	6	Driver	41
4 Executive Assistant	1	Information Technology Officer	8
5 Administrative Secretary	1	Election Officials Recruitment Officer	4
6 Digital Communications & Media Monitoring Officer	1	Operations Officer	9
7 International Relations Officer	1	Area Officer	22
8 Research Officer	1	Public Relations Assistant	1
9 Public Relations Officer	3	Stakeholder Awareness Assistant	1
10 Voter Services Coordinator	1	Field Trainers	80
11 Deputy Supervisor of Election	1	Voter Education Assistants	129
12 Brand & Creative Officer	1	Security Officers	24
13 Photographer/ Editor	1	Photographer	1
14 Stakeholder Awareness Coordinator	1	ICT Assistants	2
15 Helpdesk Assistant	1	Logistics Assistants	108
16 Manager HR	1	GIS Officers	2
17 Divisional Elections Coordinator	5	Administrative Assistant Overall by Projects	
18 Programmer	5	Admin Assistants based in various departments	66
19 Team Leader ICT	1	Area Admin Assistants	22
20 Manager ICT	1	Divisional Admin Assistants	16
21 Training Coordinator	1	VSC Assistants	39
22 Asset Management & Procurement Coordinator	1	Adjudication	29
23 GIS Officer	1	QA's	7
24 Software Development Officer	1	Ballot Paper Production	19
25 Finance Assistants	2	Nominations	43
26 Analyst Programmer	1	Postal	57
27 Receptionist	1	Command Centre	14
28 Storeman	1	Complaints	6
		VIB Printing & Distribution	118
		Postal Ballot Assistants	6
		Media Assistants	7
		Prepoll Leaders	5
		Hub Assistants	101
		Field Officers	7
		Field Assistants	7
		Admin Assistants-Curriculum Project	3
		Count Centre	183
		RMIS	360
		Recruitment Assistants	12
TOTAL NUMBER RECRUITED	44		1618

Election Officials

The Election Officials ["EO"] unit is led by Mr. Abhiyendra Pratap. This unit is responsible for the recruitment and selection of EOs for the 2018 General Election. A Committee led by Director Corporate Services was formed to oversee the logistics for the 2017to2018 Recruitment Drive.

The Recruitment Assistants ["RA"] were recruited and trained to conduct a recruitment drive throughout Fiji. Upon the completion of the Recruitment Drive, 2 RA's per division were offered a 1 year contract. These RA's were responsible for all administrative work related to EO recruitment and contracting.

In ensuring consistent delivery of message a RA manual was developed which outlined the roles and responsibilities of the RA at the Recruitment Centre, updating of EO details and contracting. This manual was developed by the Technical Advisor, Ms. Shayne Mathieson, in consultation with Manager Human Resources, Manager Fijian Electoral Education Centre and Manager Elections Management Information System. SoE then endorsed this manual.

The EOs contract was developed by Technical Advisor, Ms. Shayne Mathieson, in consultation with the Human Resource team and the contracts were vetted by the Solicitor General's Office.

The Communications Department, in liaison with EOs Recruitment Unit, developed leaflets and brochures for prospective staff to read and familiarise themselves with the terms of the engagement.



In addition to these materials, street banners, posters, TV and commercial advertisements were developed to create awareness to the general public.

Furthermore, recruitment schedules were advertised in the daily newspapers, social media (FEO's Facebook page) and websites i.e. www.fijielects2018.org.fj/eofficials and www.elections.org.fj.

The Election Officials Recruitment System

The Election Officials Recruitment System ["EORS"] was developed under the 2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan as part of the Election Management System ["EMS"]. The EORS was implemented to conduct computer based recruitment drive for the EO.

The EORS allowed the FEO to conduct direct recruitment of EOs through a, first ever in Fiji, mass computer based application program. The Applicants were required to complete 20 multiple choice questions (the aptitude test) in order to assist the FEO to rank the Applicants by their score at the Polling Stations they had applied to.

Each Applicant completed the online "Application and Declaration Form" and provided the FEO with their bank details, Tax Identification Number and Fiji National Provident Fund number. Each Applicant was provided with a unique reference number to assist with further enquiries. The EORS was designed to limit staff to selecting a Polling Place within the FEO administrative area. This meant that staff would not incur unnecessary travel expenses and ensured that individuals worked in Polling Venues within their localities.

The recruitment drive for Election Officials for the 2018 General Election commenced on 28 July 2017. Recruitment was conducted at various locations throughout the country. The FEO ensured that recruitment was also done in phases to allow the Recruitment team to reconcile and confirm all information it received before the next phase was done. A gap analysis was also done to identify the areas which were not meeting the expected turnout of applicants.

The FEO carried out extensive awareness programs to ensure it was able to attract as many interested persons as possible. The advertisements for the recruitment drives for EOs were published in the daily newspapers, broadcast on the radio and on social media. The FEO designed the remuneration package that was reasonable and at the same time sufficient to attract quality applicants.

Applications were open to anyone who was a registered voter, including those already in employment elsewhere, provided their employer permitted them to undertake secondary employment. The FEO is an equal opportunity employer.

The FEO received a total of 18,555 applications from Fijians to work as either Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officer, Venue Coordinator or Polling Day Worker. The breakdown on the recruitment drive is as follows:

Recruitment Phase	Applicants
Phase 1- 28 July 2017 -23 September 2017	13,247
Teachers Recruitment Drive	537
Consolidated Phase 2 (round 1 + round 2)	3,715
Reserve Pool	1,056
Total Applicants	18,555

Staffing Formula for the 2018 General Election

The following staffing formula for the 2018 General Election was approved by the SoE:

Number of Voters in a Polling Station	Staffing
≥ 300	5 EOs
≥ 400	6 EOs
≥ 500	7 EOs

Number of PS per PV	Number of Venue Que Controllers
2-3 PS	1 VQC
4-5 PS	2 VQC
6-7 PS	3 VQC
8-9 PS	4 VQC
10-11 PS	5 VQC

EO salaries were equated to general annual FEO salary baselines to ensure that the pay was in line with the workload as well as the Key Performance Indicators of the positions. The FEO equated the number of hours of work necessary for the performance of the duties and also built in contingencies to facilitate any unforeseen delays or extensions. The legal deductions from the pay package was also effected.

Salaries Paid to EOs:

Position	Pay
Presiding Officer	\$410.00
Assistant Presiding Officer	\$320.00
Polling Day Worker	\$180.00
Venue Queue Controller	\$166.00

Number of EOs Employed by FEO for the 2018 General Election:

Position	Election Day		Pre-Poll	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Presiding Officer	486	1,076	47	45
Assistant Presiding Officer	373	1,146	43	49
Polling Day Worker	1,779	4,340	128	139
Venue Queue Controller	151	269	NA	NA
Total		9,620		451

Re - Poll 17 November 2018

Designation	Female	Male	Total
PO	20	6	26
APO	19	7	26
PDW	71	30	101
VQC	1	1	2
Total	111	44	155

On Election Day, 1076 Presiding Officers out of the 1562 were female. The leadership of all Polling Venues on Election Day had 72.1% females, whilst 66.3% of the Election Day staff was female. The FEO ensured that Pre-Poll teams generally had a mixture in terms of gender. The total number of staff that worked as EOs for the 2018 General Election was 10,071.

The EORS allowed the FEO to pay EOs significantly quicker than 2014. As at 29 November 2018, the FEO had effected bank payments to all but 135 staff as this was because the staff had provided inaccurate information.

The Fijian Electoral Education Centre

The Fijian Electoral Education Centre [“FEEC”] is the training and capacity building arm of the FEO. The FEEC was directly responsible for the following:

- Designing and implementing a Training Calendar;
- Designing and conducting a Train the Trainer program for up to 80 Trainers;
- Designing and implementing training programs for various EOs; and
- Conducting field tests for EOs to rank them for Human Resources section.

Trainings were conducted by field trainers who had been shortlisted and selected in May 2017 through a Training of Trainers [“ToTs”] workshop that was conducted for one week. The ToTs was conducted in three, one-week long training sessions for three different batches and special assessment criteria were used to finalise 56 suitable trainers with exceptional delivery skills.

The New Zealand Electoral Commission [“NZEC”] supported the FEEC by providing Technical Advisors to facilitate the designing of training curriculum as well as develop trainer guides. Technical Advisors also helped to train the trainers, facilitate the assessment of the participants to identify the best 56 trainers and thereafter attended majority of the trainings conducted by the trainers to conduct Quality Assurance of the training. The assistance in this area -is acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

The FEO structured the training to ensure that the entire set of EOs receive the same training and as such did not use the ‘cascade method’ of training. All trainers learnt to deliver trainings from Trainer Guides and this ensured that all staff who completed their training were given the same consistent training as well as ensuring that they were examined on a fair scale. The services that the FEO provides remains consistent in any part of the country through the use of such methods. To assess training effectiveness, Polling Day Workers were asked to complete an “*Evaluation Form*” of their training session.

All training sessions involved the following in order to equip EOs with the relevant knowledge:

- Group presentations;
- Hands-on use of voting equipment;
- Written tests (open book test);
- Role playing (scenario based);
- Reading from hand-outs/ manual sections;
- Video on 2018 electoral processes;
- Comprehensive training manuals; and
- Evaluation of training sessions.

Training and Screening Criteria

Staff who passed the Computer Based Test [“CBT”] in the EORS were invited for training. All such Applicants were required to attend a mandatory half-day training and sit a test at the end of the training. This included a written test (open book) and trainer assessment. The results of this test were then conveyed to the Human Resource team that then applied the following criteria to allocate Applicants to more specialised training:

- Election Officials training must have more than 40% CBT and training assessment;
- Presiding Officer training must have more than 80% CBT and training assessment; and
- Hub Leaders must have 85% and above in CBT and have attended a mandatory Presiding Officer training.

Assistant Presiding Officers also attended the Presiding Officer training but were appointed as Assistants following the merit rankings.

Polling Day Workers

EOs training commenced on 29 August 2017 and was completed on 24 June 2018. A total of 14,508 Polling Day Workers were trained in 777 half-day sessions. Every applicant who applied was shortlisted for Polling Day Worker Positions. If the applicant performed well in this training and assessment, then they would be eligible for Presiding Officer or other roles.

The FEEC conducted another refresher of 5148 Polling Day Workers from 10 July 2018 to 11 August 2018. This training served as a refresher to cover all the updated 2018 electoral processes which Polling Day Workers had to be equipped with. At this training, the FEEC distributed the Polling Day Workers Manual for those that had signed their contracts. A lower number attended this training and this triggered the Human Resource team to activate its contingency plans and use staff from the reserve pool.

Another two weeks and two days of EO training was conducted using the EO Refresher Guide, but including a new written test and assessment. This training left ample Polling Day Workers as reserves in case assigned ones continued to withdraw. The 3231 trained served as the reserve pool. The Western Division had fewer confirmed staff and as such it was focussed on by the Human Resource team.

Presiding Officer Training

Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers were trained from 08 February 2018 to 28 April 2018. The training for Presiding Officers was a full day session and was more comprehensive to ensure that those who were eventually made in-charge of Polling Stations had sufficient skills in management and administration as well as good leadership. A total of 244 full day sessions were run and FEEC trained 4762 applicants.

The FEEC conducted Refresher training for Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers who signed their contracts. The Refresher training was mandatory and took place from 22 October to 11 November. A total of 3240 Presiding Officers attended this full day training to get familiarised with all current and updated processes to be implemented in the 2018 General Election.

The FEEC noted that the level of electoral interest demonstrated by certain Presiding Officers was remarkable. This was evident through their responses to questions, group activities and scenario based situations during the training. Presiding Officer training was a full day training focusing on election activities such as setting up of Polling Stations, voting, reconciliation and counting.

Pre-Poll Training

EOs assigned for Pre-Poll voting went through two phases of training, Pre-Poll and Pre-Poll Refresher training. Pre-Poll training was conducted from 21 August to 02 September 2018.

All trainees were trained to follow and complete the Pre-Poll Journal which was the core document that was used in Pre-Poll. This journal contained vital information and instructions such as deployment instructions, activity logs, attendance sheets and Pre-Poll Materials Exchange Site information that assisted Presiding Officers in their role. Following this training,

a mandatory Pre-Poll Refresher training was held. The one day Pre-Poll Refresher training was conducted over a period of six days. This training provided a platform to all Presiding Officers to once again get acquainted with the Pre-Poll Journal and all other resources for Pre-Poll voting.

Another emphasis of this training was taking the trainees through assembling and disassembling of the tents that would be used to construct Polling Venues and checking the contents of the Pre-Poll backpacks for Pre-Poll.

Hub Leader Training

The FEO implemented a new operations management position that formed a conduit between the 26 Area Officers and the 1526 Presiding Officers on Election Day. A total of 98 'Hub Leaders' were trained to manage from as little as 25 Polling Stations to as many as 100 Polling Stations on Election Day. Hub leaders were the "go-to" people for Presiding Officers. They played a key role in managing Presiding Officers and election materials before and during Election Day.

All Hub Leaders were trained in three different phases.

- Hub Leader introduction training;
- Hub Leader logistics training; and
- Hub Leader full training.

Hub Leader Introduction Training

The FEO used various technological advancements to ensure that the tasks for Hub Leaders were being effectively completed. Hub leaders were trained on the use of 'Camscan' and FEO's *Mercury App*. The *Mercury App* is used to scan barcodes and allows for *real time* recording of status on delivery and receipt of election packages while the *Camscan* scans single or multipage documents.

Each Hub Leader was given a hands-on practice and was assessed by the Quality Assurance Officers deployed at each venue. It was necessary to pass this practical exercise to be confirmed as a hub leader.

Hub Leaders Half Day Logistics Training

The main focus was on the logistics involved for Hub Leaders. This training enabled trainees to sort hub packages and then further break it down to Polling Venue packages. It allowed Hub Leaders to gain familiarity on scanning different barcodes which were each coded by a unique colour representing either the hub package or polling venue package and so on.

Human Resources team also had a chance to speak to the Hub Leaders at this training and brief them on administrative tasks such as completion of timesheets, drivers running sheet, Exit Form and contract signing.

Hub Leader Full Day Training

A total of 107 Hub Leaders attended the full training either on 6 November or 7 November. This full day training served as a refresher and provided additional details to what was covered in previous trainings. They were issued with their operations manuals and all were informed to attend a mandatory PO training. Hub Leaders were also taken through troubleshooting scenarios as it was crucial that Hub Leaders could think on their feet and resolve issues as they arose.

All Hub Leaders were issued with a Samsung J5 mobile phone and a car travel charger to assist them in their role.

National Count Centre Team Training

A comprehensive half-day training session was held for 120 teams over four consecutive days to prepare them for counting of postal and Pre-Poll votes.

A half day Training of Trainers was conducted for eight part-time field trainers who then conducted this training in teams of two at four different venues. NZEC Technical Advisors assisted the FEEC trainers in the delivery of this training.

Other trainings conducted by FEEC:

- Recruitment Assistant refresher;
- Recruitment Officer refresher;
- Voter Administrative Assistant training;
- Fire warden training;
- Induction training;
- Nominations Data Entry team training;
- Voter Instruction Booklet printing- Quality Assurance training;
- Voter Instruction Booklet distribution training;
- Logistics training; and
- Results Management Information System (RMiS) training.

Voter confidence inside the Polling Stations was boosted due to the customer service they received. The training was designed to ensure that EOs were polite, approachable and friendly to all voters. The key message was to ensure that every voter registered to the Polling Station is able to exercise their right to vote with the best possible customer service.

Being trained on providing clear and impartial instructions allowed Polling Day Workers to maintain professionalism within the Polling Stations. Further, to ensure consistency in the implementation of voting, counting and packing processes Polling Day Workers were cross-trained on all aspects of running the Polling Stations so that they are able to rotate during emergencies and meal breaks.

The FEEC conducted 1736 training sessions to train 11,061 trainees. The use of comprehensive Trainer Guides and comprehensive operational manuals led to consistency in trainings regardless of the locality where the training was conducted.

Procurement and Asset Management

The objectives of the Procurement and Asset Management department were to acquire quality materials, items and services at the best value from reliable vendors having regard to quality, timely delivery and back up services. Suppliers were selected either through open tender or sourcing of 3 or more quotes. Suppliers that best met the FEO's requirements were retained.

This department ensured that all procurements were conducted in a transparent and accountable manner. The FEO Procurement Policy allows the FEO to procure specific sensitive election items directly from vendors.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Procurement and Asset Management Department advertised tenders for goods, services and works the total value of which was in excess of FJD \$200,000.00. Goods, services and works of lesser value were purchased after obtaining a minimum of 3 competitive quotations.

The following tenders were called and awarded for materials and equipment:

2017/2018 TENDERS			
Tender Number	Item Required	Successful Bidder	Amount
Tender 01/2017	Ballot Box	RC Manubhai & Co Ltd	\$42,010.00
Tender 02/2017	Polling Kits	Kriz Signs Fiji Limited	\$1,431,965.08
Tender 03/2017	Laptops	Janty Bondwell Limited	\$217,350.00
Tender 04/2017	Executive 4x4 SUV vehicle	Asco Motors	\$171,900.00
Tender 05/2017	Promotional Merchandise	Twin Tigers	\$87,200.00
		Premium Signcrafters	\$126,331.00
		Kriz Signs Fiji Limited	\$167,000.00*
		Ishwar Industries	\$ 298,500.00
		CK Patel	\$64,000.00
Tender 06/2017	Ballot Paper Printing	Star Printery	\$189,500.00
Tender 07/2017	Postal Voting Courier - International	DHL	\$217,526.01
	- Local	EMS	155,857.00
Tender 08/2017	Supply of Polling Station Sheds	Formscaff Fiji Limited	\$473,801.20
Tender 01/2018	Printing of Voter Instructions Booklet	Star Printery Limited	\$355,900.00
		Quality Print Limited	\$350,000.00
Tender 02/2018	Hire of Count Centre Tents	Formscaff Fiji Limited	\$299,550.00

**The Supplier later withdrew and did not supply*

The FEO successfully managed to advertise and award tenders for all items and services required for the General Election. Items procured via the tender process were also successfully delivered by the vendors within the timeframe stipulated.

Apart from tender and purchase of materials, the Procurement and Asset Management department were also involved in building renovations, hire of vehicles and charter of boats, helicopters and aeroplanes for the polling teams, printing of Election Day materials and purchase of Pre-Poll equipment including tents, ballot box straps and backpacks.

This department has also assisted in all FEO trainings by hiring training venues, organising flights, accommodation and transportation for trainers, and catering for approved trainings.

The Procurement and Asset Management department hired the FMF Gymnasium and ANZ Stadium carpark for the National Results Centre and National Count Centre for the 2018 General Election. This included catering services provided to the staff engaged for the four days. Meals included breakfast, lunch and dinner as these centres operated 24/7 until the count and results were complete.

Election Period Lease of Office/Warehouse Space

The Procurement and Asset Management department was involved in leasing of office and warehouse spaces for the 2018 General Election operational needs. With the number of projects running concurrently the FEO started to expand from early 2017 in preparation for the 2018 General Election.

It was decided during early 2017 that the Corporate Services Directorate move out of the Head Office in Toorak so that additional staff for the Operations and Strategic Development and Communications Directorates could be recruited. Additionally, the Human Resource department was also expanding due to the recruitment of EOs. In May 2017, the Corporate Services Directorate which included Human Resources, Finance, Training and Procurement moved out to Korobasaga House in Gorrie Street and commenced their operations from there.

With the need for additional office and warehouse spaces to effectively run elections operations, the FEO had leased the following spaces.

1. **Corporate Services Directorate** - leased from Kelton Investment located at Gorrie Street, Suva for 20 months from May 2017. Initially, the FEO had acquired two floors which were ground and second floor. From April 2018, FEO managed to acquire the whole building. Rent per month \$18,809.04 (Total \$307,214.32).
2. **Postal Processing Centre** - leased from Bureau of Statistics located at Sukuna House, Suva for two months from October 2018. The office was co-shared with Bureau of Statistics at no cost to the FEO.
3. **Central Divisional Office** – leased from FNPF located at Victoria Corner Building, Suva for 16 months from September 2017. Rent per month \$4,034.56 (Total \$64,552.96).
4. **Eastern Divisional Office and Voter Services Centre** – leased from Tara’s Supermarket & Milk Bar located at River Road, Nausori for 20 months from May 2017. Rent per month \$2,725.00 (Total \$54,500.00).
5. **Western Divisional Office and Warehouse** - leased from MV Solar Limited located at Bouwalu Street, Lautoka for 20 months from May 2017. Rent per month \$11,990.00 (Total \$239,800.00).

6. **Northern Divisional Office and Warehouse** - leased from Vunimoli Sawmill Limited located at Vakamasisuasua Subdivision, Labasa for 20 months from May 2017. Rent per month \$7,000.00 (Total \$140,000.00).

Voter Services Centres

1. **Nadi** - leased from Payda Limited located at Main Street, Nadi for 14 months from November 2017. Rent per month \$1,417.00 (Total \$19,838.00).
2. **Rakiraki** - leased from Raj and Associates located at Main Street, Nadi for 14 months from November 2017. Rent per month \$1,417.00 (Total \$19,838.00).
3. **Savusavu** - leased from Samad Law located at Main Street, Savusavu for 20 months from May 2017. Rent per month \$1,635.00 (Total \$32,700.00).
4. **Labasa** - leased from Legal Aid located at Main Street, Labasa for 20 months from May 2017. The office space was given to the FEO for free.

FEO had also opened Voter Services Centres in the following areas which were located or co-shared with the Provincial Office of Divisional Commissioner's Office:

- Sigatoka;
- Taveuni;
- Nasinu;
- Nabouwalu;
- Seaqaqa;
- Tavua;
- Korovou; and
- Navua.

In addition to the Divisional Offices, the FEO had opened Area Offices in the following areas to assist with the operational works during this year's General Election. These offices also co-shared office space with Provincial Offices and Divisional Offices:

- Central Division – Suva, Navua, Nausori, Korovou and Vunidawa;
- Western Division – Lautoka, Nadi, Keiyasi, Sigatoka, Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki;
- Northern Division – Labasa, Seaqaqa, Nabouwalu, Savusavu and Taveuni; and
- Eastern Division – Kadavu and Lomaiviti.

Graphic Design section

One Graphics team was assigned to the Procurement and Asset Management department to ensure that artworks for production of training and electoral materials were done on time. This also included graphics for newspaper and gazette publications. The graphics team not only

provided artworks for production externally but also did in-house production of materials for trainings and also for Election Day.

The Graphics team was well equipped with equipment and materials for in-house productions. The graphic section produced the following for the 2018 General Election:

- 2018 Operational Manuals and Handbooks;
- EOs Task sheets;
- Presiding Officers Record Books;
- Envelopes for Packages A – K;
- Application Forms (EVR and Postal);
- Trainer Guides;
- Ballot Box Labels;
- Record Book Labels;
- Tamper Evident Envelopes;
- Protocol of Results;
- Banners (Pull Up, Hanging Banners and Street Banners);
- Pre-poll tents, ballot box strap and hook;
- Media Backdrop;
- Postal Envelopes; and
- Assisted Voting Flip Chart.

The following items were also designed by the Graphics team:

- Meal Pass for five days for each of the three different meals;
- National Count Centre Flag (Red & White);
- Floor Plan:
 - National Count Centre.
 - National Results Centre.
 - Command Centre.
 - National Candidate Ball Draw.
 - Media Centre.
- Triangular Desk Calendar 2018;
- Pocket Calendar;
- Media Backdrop:
 - Electoral Commission.
 - Fijian Elections Office.
 - Media Centre Presentation Table.
 - Electoral Commission Pocket Card of Events.
 - National Register of Voters (Cover design and Inside layout).
- Election Visitor Program ID Badge Brochure. Designing of Certificates for all FEO and FEEC trainings; and
- Year 10 Schools Curriculum materials (electoral materials, students' and teachers' manuals).

The Graphics Team printed some of the materials in-house which included training materials and samples for approval and production. Items which were below 100 in quantity and/or didn't require any major binding and cutting were produced in-house. These included:

- Staff ID cards;
- Temporary Staff ID cards;
- VIP and FEO Official passes for National Count Centre and National Results Centre;
- Meal passes for National Count Centre and National Results Centre;
- Trainer Guides;
- National Register of Voters (inside pages were printed in-house with covers and binding done externally); and
- National Polling Venue Directory (inside pages were printed in-house with covers and binding done externally).

Finance Department

The role of the Finance department includes planning, organising, auditing, accounting for and controlling FEO finances. This department also produces the financial statements for management and various stakeholders including the Public Accounts Committee. The core function of the department is accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, reconciliation, reporting and financial statements, financial control and audit. There are policies and procedures outlined in the Finance Manual that govern the processes in the Finance department.

This department is managed by the Financial Controller and assisted by the Accountant and six core staff. In Election mode the Finance department has a total of 12 staff as compared to 2014 when there were nine staff. In addition, this department has a position of an Accountant and Payroll Officer reporting directly to the Financial Controller.

Budget/Expenditure

The Government grant approved for FEO for financial year 01 August 2018 to 31 July 2019 was \$20,412,496 compared to 2014 with only \$17,971,531 allocated for the year. 85% of the grant was to provide for the 2018 General Election expenses for poll, Pre-Poll and post-election. The approved budget was reduced by \$767,676.44 to cater for the payments for July 2018 financial year.

The FEO opened a separate bank account with Westpac Banking Corporation to manage its funds from 01 August 2017 as compared with 2014 where only 1 line allocation was given to the FEO to manage its operations and the bank account was controlled by the Ministry of Economy.

The Election Budget catered for most of the expenditure but due to the requirement of the FEO to be election ready from three years, six months after an election, (May 2018) and the announcement of the election late in 2018, there was additional cost incurred for refresher training, recruitment of staff and advertising through various means.

The expenditure report from 01 August 2018 to 31 December 2018 included the salary of EOs, charter of vessels and planes, meals, subsistence allowances, hire of sheds, transport, printing of

materials, advertisements for Pre-Poll, poll and catering for the National Count Centre and National Results Centre.

Expenditure Report as at 31 December 2018:

Description	Budget\$	Expenditure\$	% Utilised
Information Technology	276,302	258,346	93.50
Consultancy Fees	256,680	91,986	36.10
Electoral Commission Allowance	130,000	120,412	92.62
Management Expenses	15,000	12,109	80.70
Insurance	15,000	852	5.60
Legal fees	33,500	5,300	15.82
Advertising	1,865,265	1,845,264	98.92
Personnel Emoluments	8,722,190	8,129,540	93.20
Staff Training Expenses	35,000	30,320	86.62
OHS	105,266	76,461	72.63
Postage & Courier	423,054	400,886	94.76
Office Administration	3,703,526	3,698,550	99.86
Telecommunication	795,661	793,965	99.78
Travel & Accommodation	3,027,602	2,630,809	77.97
Financial Expense	20,000	6,252	31.62
EC and Office Meeting	39,004	7,310	18.74
VAT	949,450	914,637	96.33
Total VEP	20,412,500	18,752,999	91.87

FEO operates a Trust fund where funds received from donors is deposited. The funds for the EMS, EORS and the consultant funding is kept in the Trust account with HFC Bank. In addition to the Government grant, the Indian Government donated \$291,830 to procure five vehicles whereas in the 2014 General Election expenditure of \$23,553,936 was from overseas aid.

Finance Management Information System (Navision)

FEO was declared an independent statutory body in 2014 and thus there was a need to separate the operations of Finance from the Government. A tender was called for the implementation of the financial management software in 2016 and this was awarded to UXC Eclipse Company Ltd.

The FEO started using the financial management software on 01 August 2016. The chart of accounts was designed to suit the office operations as per Directorate level, Division, Area and Project. The reporting from the financial management was able to capture the detailed reporting drilling down to various projects and department, capture the fixed assets, generate financial reports, manage and monitor the budget and expenditure and furthermore it provides ad hoc reports.

The Navision software managed to capture assets for the year ending 31 July 2018 with \$5.2 million in the system as compared to the 2014 manual record keeping of \$1.7m. The entire reporting to the external parties and to the management is managed by the system.

The modules provided by the finance system enable the office to undertake the following:

- Generate Cheques;
- Prepare Purchase Orders;
- Provide Reports;
- Provide Financial statements;
- Identify Assets;
- Manage Bank Accounts;
- Manage accounts receivable;
- Capture Accruals and Prepayment; and
- Identify Liabilities.

Transition to International Financial Reporting Standards [“IFRS”] and Reporting on IFRS for Small Medium Enterprise’s [“SME”]

After the successful implementation of the finance software the next project was to transition the financial reporting to IFRS for SME’s. The Government reporting on one-line budget was manually managed by FEO and did not provide much information needed by stakeholders and management. KPMG was engaged to transit the financial report from January 2016 to July 2016 to IFRS for SME’s. The report was able to capture income, expenses, assets, liabilities and retained earnings. The first set of financial reports was prepared through the consultancy services by KPMG. The financial report for the year ended 31 July 2017 has been finalised and audit has verified the report.

Payroll

The FEO independently ran its own payroll on 01 January 2017.

The software was acquired from UXC eclipse through a tender process. Pay Global was implemented and staff payroll for short term and long term was successfully generated and deposited to respective banks by the FEO.

Prior to this, the FEO had to rely on the Ministry of Economy to run the payroll. The newly acquired software provided access to FNPF reports, PAYE reports, pay slips and other reports directly to the FEO Finance department.

The system was designed to cater for payments for the EO training allowance, EO salary, Pre-Poll salary, National Count team salary, National Results Centre team salary and Hub Leader salary.

The below table highlights the payment of the staff:

Description	No. Paid	Turn-around Time
EO training allowance(# of times)	32,403	2 days
EO	10,236	1-2 days
Count	678	2 days
RMIS	918	1 day
Hub Leaders	98	2 days
Prepoll	451	2 days

The Data was generated from the Election Official Management system [**“EOMS”**] in a ‘.csv’ file and loaded in the Pay Global. Each batch which consisted of 3,000 EOs pay took 1 day to process and submit to the bank. The FEO managed to pay 9,672 EOs within three days after Election Day.

In comparison to the process in 2014, manual excel files were used to prepare pay for the EO as the Government payroll system could not cater for the EO pay. This manual process took the Finance department almost a month to process the salary for the staff compared to the current process which takes one to three days.

Corporate Online Banking

The Operations Department was decentralised and each Divisional Office was established. The Divisional Office was setup to control the finance which was dispersed to the divisional account. After consultation with Westpac, four Divisional Accounts was set up (Central, Western, Eastern and Northern.).

Corporate Online Banking was implemented and the FEO started using this on 10 May 2018. The accountable advance for divisions was directly transferred to the Division Account rather than sending funds to the personal account of the staff. The Corporate Online from Westpac provided access to monitor the funds from the source of funds to the receiver of funds. The Divisional Office was able to monitor and control the funding they received from the Finance department and even make payments directly to the vendor’s account.

Record Management System

Record Management system was the E-filing project that was undertaken to streamline the process of filing in the registry. The documents are currently scanned in the system and saved in the system. This process provides easier access to documents and saves time rather than looking for the documents manually.

Information Technology [“IT”] Department

The IT department played a vital role in the design and development of IT based solutions of the modern era to facilitate the work of the FEO. This department also carried out hardware maintenance, networking solutions and provided technical support.

The following upgrades were conducted to ensure uninterrupted support to the delivery of the Election:

Telephone System Upgrade

The telephone system was upgraded to enhance the FEO’s internal and external communications. The old PABX was removed and a hosted PABX was implemented. The new PABX came with advanced features that enabled efficient communication between FEO sub-offices and was cost-effective.

A total of 95 telephone extensions were upgraded to cater for the growing needs of telecommunications as the 2018 General Election was nearing. Apart from the aging infrastructure another reason for the upgrades was cost savings when moving to Vodafone’s Cloud PABX with cheaper call rates.

Component	Qty	Type	MRC (VEP)
Hardware	80	Standard Yealink T-21P	\$ 2,400.00
	13	Manager Yealink T-41 P	
	2	Reception Yealink T-29G	
Services	95	hPBX10	
	1	Auto Attendant	
Support	1	Standard - Included	
Trunk/Bandwidth	2	2 Channel SIP	
	1	30 Channel SIP	
	1	20 Channel SIP	

With the Cloud PABX there is no need to manage infrastructure as this is provided as service and eliminates future cost of upgrading to newer technologies.

Network Security Upgrade

To be up to par with the latest technology and Cyber threats, the IT section acquired new blade servers with virtualised environment. All servers with latest updates, antivirus and regular backup with replication were configured to minimise down-time in an event for both virtual server and physical server failure. Granular security policies were created on all servers to deny inbound and outbound connections and services, except for services that were required for users. An end point antivirus system was upgraded at a cost of \$18,438.44

There were two Fortigate 500D firewalls placed in the FEO network border protection for unified threat management, high availability, redundancy and concrete security policies implemented to eliminate internal and external vulnerabilities. All inbound source connections, outbound destinations connections, activities and sessions were monitored regularly and terminated if any sessions were found to be suspicious.

Fortinet Managed Wireless Access Points were upgraded and security strengthened. All users were authenticated with their given domain credentials on RADIUS server connecting wirelessly and avoiding wireless brute force attacks and users sharing pass key for unauthorised connections to the FEO network. Fortinet Managed Wireless Access Points cost FEO \$7,499.60.

Switching was upgraded with Cisco Catalyst Devices with one Gbps user access and core switching, segmenting traffic from Users and servers. This increased network bandwidth throughput and streamlining network security port control, access control lists, management allowing for redundancy and failover in an event of any switch failure.

The IT department also carried out IT Systems audit and network penetration testing to ensure all systems were security tightened. All detailed findings on Network architecture, internal and external network testing, configuration review and operations was inspected and resolved.

FEO Disaster Recovery Site

After a review of our Disaster Recovery ["DR"] and Backup procedures it was identified that the FEO required an offsite DR site which would could be utilised as a secondary infrastructure in the event the primary site was compromised due to natural disaster, hardware malfunction or a targeted event. The DR site had regular backup and replication that could recover servers/backups at any point of time of failure.

To facilitate this protocol, FEO invested in the following items:

1. Nutanix – NX1365 3 nodes:
 - 96 GB RAM per node.
 - 4 TB Hard Disk per node.
 - Intel Xeon Processor 2.40GHz 6-core per node.
 - Cost: \$96,840.00.

2. 80 Mbps dedicated WAN link to DR Offsite:
 - Cost: \$12,000 per month.

3. Off-site DR Location:
 - 42 RU Rack w/ power supply.
 - Cost: \$4,560.00.

The DR site was tested in a controlled environment a few times to estimate the downtime of services. From these tests in the event where the DR would need to go live, there would be a minimum of 30 minutes of disruptions to network services.

FEO Wide Area Network Automatic Private Network

FEO WAN links to all branch offices were boosted to cater for all temporary staff that required Network and internet services during 2018 Election.

Details	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Site Location	HQ, Toorak	Lautoka	Labasa	Korobasaqa Office	Laucala Beach
VF-FJ Link Type	Local	Local	Local	Local	Local
Equipment	RAD	RAD	RAD	RAD	RAD
WAN Bandwidth Supplied (Mbps)	25	5	5	10	5
Internet Bandwidth Supplied (Mbps)	25				

A private network was set up to extend and remotely access IT services based in Head Office with FEO's primary ISP to successfully carry out the EOs Recruitment Drive Computer based test. The FEO also implemented a secondary ISP link to prevent downtime for FEO services in an event of ISP failure.

CCTV Installation

In the lead up to 2018 General Election it was identified that the FEO warehouse situated in Bulei Road, Laucala Beach would require extensive security as sensitive election materials would be stored there. Surveillance cameras were required to monitor physical security and breaches. The Electoral Security Advisory Group ["ESAG"] identified positions where surveillance cameras would be required to have complete view of all the surroundings of this warehouse.

After identifying the sites, potential suppliers were invited for a site visit to quote for the service required and on the basis of competitive pricing and quality of product, the supplier was selected. The total cost of implementation was \$36,991.38.

26 CCTV surveillance cameras were installed at the FEO warehouse premises for physical security and monitoring with a storage capacity of 20 Terabytes capable of retaining 3 months of footage.

ICT Inventory System

A new inventory management system was implemented to properly record and manage ICT assets. With the new system in place, all ICT assets were tagged and assigned to users, making it easier to locate and track these assets. The system is capable of reconciling assets during stock take to ensure all items are accounted for.

ICT staff travelled to all FEO sites and tagged all items with barcodes. There are currently 1730 FEO ICT assets in the inventory management system. The Asset Management System software with hardware cost \$6,105.96 USD.

Results Management Information System ["RMIS"] Network

Unique Domain Network was setup with 150 devices at the National Results Centre for intrusion and threat protection including IP subnet that is uncommon to small networks, Fortinet firewall border security and Cisco managed switching. All devices were physically connected via industry standard Cat6 Ethernet cables for guaranteed 1Gbps connections.

All computers in the RMIS LAN were denied access to the internet except accessing the RMIS database web portal. Local policies were created to lock down accessing the internet, USB devices and initiate connectivity to other networks from the RMIS data entry laptops. Communications panel was securely placed and locked separately from the main server rack and uplinks protected from being damaged physically.

RMIS server was backed up and replicated in NAS Storage and virtualised for ease of recovery in case of any failure. An additional server was placed in the RMIS centre for high availability and redundancy.

RMIS Network Cost:

Items	Cost \$
Cabling works	14,200.00
3x 48 port Dell POE switch	7,566.39
20 Mbps Internet Link	9,000.00
Total	30,766.39

Operations Directorate

Ms Anaseini Senimoli heads the Operations Directorate. The objective of the Operations Directorate was to ensure that all eligible voters were given the opportunity to register and that sufficient operational activities were carried out to enable a voter to cast their vote during the 2018 General Election.

Voter Registration

Facilitation for voter registration services had ceased on 4 August 2014 and reopened in June 2015. This was to allow the FEO to review its voter registration system and procedures post 2014 General Election. The resumption of voter registration services ensured that voters had ample time to register, correct or amend their voter details before the 2018 General Election.

In 2015, the FEO began its voter registration exercise by embarking on a Nationwide School Registration Drive. This initiative by the FEO has been successful as it ensures students turning 18 years of age are registered and captured in the National Register of Voters [“NRV”]. During the voter registration sessions in schools, students were taken through a voter awareness presentation delivered by the FEO teams. Since then, this event has become an annual event in the FEO’s calendar.

Since 2016, in addition to the School Voter Registration Drive, Voter Registration Centres were set up in major locations around the country. This ensured voter registration services were more accessible and readily available to the general public.

Below are the Voter Services Centres that were opened in order to provide voter services to the general public:

Division	Area	Location	Date Opened
Central	Korovou	Waimaro Building, Department of Womens Office, Ground Floor, Korovou	01/03/2018
	Nausori	Mahendra Patel Building, River Road, Nausori	03/08/2017
	Navua	Ro Matanitobua House, PA Serua and PA Namosi Office	03/03/2018
	Suva	Shop 10, Thomson Street, Suva	24/08/2016
	Vunidawa	Agriculture Building, Vunidawa Government Station	13/03/2018

Division	Area	Location	Date Opened
Eastern	Kadavu	PA's Office, Vunisea Government Station, Kadavu	02/04/2018
	Levuka	Provincial Council Building, Nasova, Levuka	05/03/2018
Northern	Labasa	Legal Aid Building, Jaduram Street, Labasa	21/08/2017
	Nabouwalu	MSAAF Building, Nabouwalu	01/03/2018
	Seaqaqa	DO Seaqaqa Office, Seaqaqa	01/03/2018
	Savusavu	PA Cakaudrove's Office, Savusavu	21/08/2017
	Taveuni	Cakaudrove Provincial Office Building, Somosomo	01/03/2018
Western	Ba	DO's Office, Koronubu House, Ba	01/03/2018
	Keiyasi	DO's Office, Vatumali Government Station, Keiyasi	01/03/2018
	Lautoka	36 Vitogo Parade, Lautoka	05/03/2018
	Nadi	Shop 5, Westpoint Arcade, Nadi	22/01/2018
	Rakiraki	Shop 5, George Shiu Raj Building, Vaile a Street, Rakiraki	22/01/2018
	Sigatoka	PA's Office, Lawaqa, Sigatoka	01/03/2018
	Tavua	DO's Office, Nasivi Street, Tavua	01/03/2018

Then in May 2017, a Nationwide Registration Drive including registration in schools was conducted to provide an opportunity to eligible voters to register and vote during the 2018 General Election. Simultaneously, the NRV was also displayed in all the Voter Registration Centres during this period. The display of NRV allowed voters to check, amend and update their voter information or apply for a replacement VoterCard if necessary.

Breakdown of Voter Registration Tallies Between 2015 to 2018:

Events/Exercise	Dates	New Registration	Corrections	Replacement
Phase I – School Registration Drive 2015	13/07/15 – 07/08/15	6,667	611	3,324
Phase II – School Registration Drive 2016	06/06/16 – 01/07/16	5,087	222	1,222
Phase III – Nationwide Voter Registration Drive 2017	22/05/17 – 08/07/17	14,425	32,592	68,348
Phase IV – Know Your Election Awareness Drive I 2018	15/03/18 – 28/04/18	4,462	10,068	11,869
Phase V – Know Your Election Awareness Drive II 2018	18/09/18 – 27/10/18	865	4,326	3,295
Close of Rolls	28/09/18 – 01/10/18	946	2,060	1,206
Overseas Voter Registration Drive	2017 - 2018	1,809	1,752	388
Card Replacement Services	11/10/18 – 13/11/18			8,465
Other Registrations: Voter Services Centres/Community Outreach, Roadshow/ Expos/ Public Events – Carnivals, etc. (2015 – 2018)		33,256	41,421	63,121

Statistics for the 2018 General Election:

	Division	Total Registered
1	Central	265,184
2	Eastern	26,034
3	Northern	94,094
4	Western	244,245
5	Overseas	7,970
	Total	637,527

The process of using mobile registration teams increased the accessibility of registration services. Voters who were unable to reach the FEO's Voter Registration Centres due to illness or disabilities were given this opportunity to request for mobile registration during home visits.

In addition, the FEO travelled to a number of overseas countries to facilitate the registration of Fijian citizens living there. In total, there were three phases of overseas registration.

Phase I of overseas registration took place in the first quarter of 2017 where certain Pacific Island countries having a high number of Fijian citizens residing in those countries were selected to be covered.

Phase II of the Overseas Voter Registration Drive took place in the last quarter of 2017. The FEO collaborated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the selection of countries to be covered during this registration period based on the interest expressed by Fijian citizens and Fijian Missions.

Then as a final overseas coverage for the 2018 General Election, the FEO revisited a few more countries based on the high number of requests received by FEO.

Overseas Registration Exercise Results:

Pacific Island Registration Drive:

Country	Registration Dates	New Registration	Correction	Replacement
Tonga	25/03/17 – 27/03/18	143	25	6
Kiribati	20/03/17 – 27/03/18	27	10	6
Cook Islands	21/03/17 – 27/03/17	174	102	0
American Samoa	27/03/17 – 03/04/17	124	70	1
Western Samoa	20/03/17 – 24/03/17	53	22	11
Vanuatu	21/04/17 – 25/04/17	31	41	5
PNG	26/04/17 – 02/05/17	19	56	21
Solomon Islands	21/04/17 – 25/04/17	4	8	0
Tuvalu	11/05/17 – 16/05/17	9	32	0
Marshalls	13/10-14/10/17	20	46	21
Nauru	05/12/17-10/12/17	20	77	0
TOTAL		624	489	71

Overseas Voter Registration Drive [2017 – 2018]:

Country	Registration Dates	New Registration	Correction	Replacement
Australia Phase 1	12/10/17-29/10/17	195	185	66
Australia Phase II	15/6/18 - 25/6/18	68	82	15
New Zealand Phase I	05/10/17-15/10/17	234	260	84
New Zealand Phase II	21/06/18 – 21/07/18	106	92	15
Indonesia	10/10/17	5	9	0
USA Phase I	02/10/17-19/12/17	325	296	55
USA Phase II	16/06/18 - 02/07/18	93	156	31
United Kingdom	3/12/17-22/12/17	108	70	29
Korea	10/10/17	14	7	5
Malaysia	10/10/2017	3	9	0
United Arab Emirates	21/06/18 – 30/06/18	18	51	10
Kuwait	29/06/18	3	26	1
Europe - Switzerland, Netherlands, France, Belgium	23/07/18-29/07/18	13	20	6
TOTAL		1185	1263	317

A progressive data-cleaning exercise was also being conducted to remove deceased voters from the NRV. This resulted in a total of 20,590 voters confirmed deceased who were removed from the NRV between 2015 to 01 October, 2018.

As required by law, voters serving imprisonment of 12 months or longer cease to be a registered voter. As such, 501 voters were removed from the NRV under this category.

National Register of Voters Statistics as at 01 October 2018

Division	Gender	18-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81+	Female	Male
Central	Male	6761	35427	31655	22683	19122	10706	4224	1037		131615
Central	Female	6928	34765	31034	22405	19862	11876	5181	1518	133569	
Eastern	Male	436	2931	3202	2418	2440	1550	761	212		13950
Eastern	Female	405	2447	2796	2092	2059	1289	726	270	12084	
Northern	Male	2327	10929	10834	9110	8220	4403	1823	570		48216
Northern	Female	2402	10176	9570	8194	7555	4726	2499	756	45878	
Overseas	Male	42	512	1039	1082	970	514	168	25		4352
Overseas	Female	36	420	874	885	794	459	141	9	3618	
Western	Male	5500	28596	30198	22401	19872	10867	4489	1040		122963
Western	Female	5353	28559	28149	20915	19262	11999	5618	1427	121282	
TOTAL		30190	154762	149351	112185	100156	58389	25630	6864	316431	321096

Summary:	Total	Percentage
Registered voters:	637,527	
Gender:		
Female	316,431	49.63
Male	321,096	50.37
Division:		
Central	265,184	41.60
Eastern	26,034	4.08
Northern	94,094	14.76
Overseas	7,970	1.25
Western	244,245	38.31

Voter List

At the end of the 2014 General Election, the FEO conducted a post- election review to determine shortfalls and gaps in the existing electoral procedures.

One of the problems identified from this review was that the Voter List did not have sufficient information to help the Polling Day Workers or Presiding Officer in identifying and ascertaining voters who did not have their VoterCard on Polling Day.

The lack of such important information on the Voter List meant that Polling Day Workers or Presiding Officers had to spend more time in obtaining and authenticating information from voters before allowing them to vote. This resulted in the delay of voting processes in some Polling Stations.

From this review the Voter List for the 2018 General Election was modified to include the following:

Voter List format for the 2018 General Election:

- Paper Size – A3.
- Orientation – Portrait.

Voter Information in the Voter List:

- VoterCard Number.
- Voters photo.
- Surname.
- First Name.
- Residential Address.
- Gender.
- Check column.
- Voters Signature.

Voter List Stencils

In 2015, the FEO decided to conduct an analysis on the Voter Lists which were used during the 2014 General Election. From this analysis it was discovered that there was inconsistency in the crossing off of names in the Voter List and the untidy signatures by the voters made it difficult for Presiding Officers to reconcile voter signatures at the end of polling.

To resolve this issue for the 2018 General Election, the FEO created a stencil to eliminate the problem and ensure that the Voter List is readable and understandable when Presiding Officers are reconciling the number of signatures at the end of polling.

Polling Venues for the 2018 General Election

In 2014, there were a total of 1371 Polling Venues. This number increased to 1436 in the 2018 General Election.

After the 2014 General Election, the FEO conducted a series of Polling Venue Assessment [“PVA”] exercises to examine the status of Polling Venues that were used during the General Election. The first assessment was carried out from February to June 2016. Field Officers were deployed out to the four divisions to conduct the assessment.

The Field Officers used an offline application to input Polling Venue details. It was also the first time a GPS mapping exercise was conducted to pin point ‘x’ and ‘y’ coordinates of the exact location of Polling Venues. A Polling Venue Assessment Manual and a *Polling Venue Assessment Form* were developed to be used during the exercise.

Thereafter, the Divisional Coordinators carried out reassessments on individual Polling Venues. After their reassessment, a Provisional Polling Venue List was created. This list was then verified by being distributed internally within the FEO for scrutiny by the different Directorates. Each Directorate was expected to provide this scrutiny within 1 week before reporting their findings to the Monitoring Officer. Once the list had been verified and scrutinised, the Monitoring Officer amended the list accordingly and submitted it to the Polling Venue Selection Committee who rechecked the list, endorsed it before submitting to SoE for his approval. Once approval was granted by the SoE, the Provisional Polling Venue List and Polling Venue Maps were published and made available for public inspection.

The Provisional Polling Venue List and Polling Venue Maps were displayed for public inspection and scrutiny in all Division Offices and also on the FEO website. The FEO also sought responses from Political Parties and other stakeholders through meetings to deliberate on the list and map. After consultations with the stakeholders, the last phase of the Polling Venue Assessment was conducted. This phase comprised electronic or telephone or postal contact with Polling Venue owners to verify the current state of the Polling Venue and confirm it to be used in the 2018 General Election.

The FEO published the Provisional Polling Venue List and Polling Venue Maps on 30 July 2016, 18 March 2017, 16 September 2017, 18 January 2018, 22 September 2018, and 26 September 2018. The 2018 Polling Venue List was approved and published by the SoE on 09 October 2018.

Apart from publication in the newspapers, it was also published on the pamphlets and FEO Official website.

Polling Venue Selection Committee

The Polling Venue Selection Committee comprised of the Director Operations FEO Ms. Anaseini Senimoli, the former Director Geospatial at the Ministry of Lands Ms. Akata Takala, the former Director Operations Fiji Police Force Mr. Tito Elo, Elections Coordinators Ms. Sala Yavaca, and Mr. Viliame Vuiyanuca was officially set up on 01 August 2016.

Their role was to select, finalise and recommend to the SoE the list of Polling Venues that was going to be used as Election Day and Pre-Poll Venues for the 2018 General Election. During the course of their duty, they were to consult with FEO officials, Government stakeholders, political parties and the general public to gather their views on the selection of Polling Venues.

Pre-Poll

The venues for Pre-Poll were identified using the criteria outlined in the Electoral Act and incorporated into schedules which were gazetted on 17 October 2018. Pre-Poll was scheduled between 05 to 10 November 2018. The schedules took into account factors such as low numbers of voters and remoteness of the location. The Military bases, naval bases and corrections facilities were also under Pre-Poll.

An awareness program to inform voters of Pre-Poll schedules was launched using various communication tools. Apart from using the *Roko Tui's*, Provincial Administrators, District Officers and Divisional Commissioners to convey Pre-Poll schedules and polling times to each village, letters were hand delivered to each *Turaga-ni-Koro* on the polling time of their village. Pre-Poll schedules were also displayed at every Pre-Poll Venue.

The materials required by each Pre-Poll team were prepared in Suva and provided to each team for the commencement of their schedules. A variety of transport methods including road, boat, helicopter and fixed wing aircraft was used.

For the 2018 General Election, FEO tents were used as Polling Venues replacing private residences. Pre-Poll teams generally comprised a Team Leader (Presiding Officer) and up to 4 other staff. There were 92 pre poll teams.

Division	Total No. of Polling Venues	Total No. of Registered Voters	Total No. Voted
Central	96	14,379	9,452
Western	165	22,466	14,041
Northern	134	14,896	9,847
Eastern	187	18,825	12,379
TOTAL	582	70,566	45,719

While teams were in the field, they had daily contact with their respective Area Officers to report on voter turnout or any issues that may have arisen during the day. Each team was accompanied by two Police Officers at all times.

In the majority of cases Pre-Poll schedules were adhered to as planned, however, in some cases there were amendments made due to unforeseen or uncontrollable circumstances e.g. weather, tides, etc. Where it was necessary to reschedule polling, approval was sought from the EC and changes were made accordingly.

In most instances the amount of time allocated for Pre-Poll at a particular Venue was adequate for the turnout of voters. The polling times for the 2018 General Election were based on the plans and schedules of the 2014 General Election but slightly amended to suit the current situation of 2018.

The recruitment and deployment of staff from the Divisional and Area offices worked well for the purpose of Pre-Poll. It enabled the Divisional Managers to have good control of the engagement of Pre-Poll staff. On a few occasions, staff had to be sent from Suva to cover areas which had little interest shown by the local people during the recruitment drives.

The role of external stakeholders such as District Officers, Provincial Officers and Advisory Councillors in ensuring that the schedule of visits was communicated to the various communities was also beneficial. During the last 2 years, the FEO had been working very closely with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and Rural & Maritime Development in ensuring that information pertaining to Pre-Poll voting and polling times were continuously disseminated and circulated during village meetings and gatherings. FEO Area Officers maintained good relations with *Turaga-ni-Koro's* and arranged for staff accommodation with them.

The timely and coordinated approach given by the Fiji Police Force in terms of providing security for the EOs and materials, allowed the FEO to demonstrate that there was an additional layer of security on election materials at all times.

Within Fiji there are Polling Venues with the same or similar names which caused confusion when allocating resources in 2014. The FEO solved this problem by allocating a code unique to a particular Polling Venue. All election materials pertaining to Pre-Poll were tagged to the Polling Venue code.

The FEO developed "*Presiding Officers Pre-Poll Journal*" for each Pre-Poll team. This Journal was developed by the Divisional Managers and the FEO GIS team to be used by Presiding Officers during the duration of the Pre-Poll period. Each Pre-Poll team was given a customised Journal specifically developed to outline the activities and program the team needed to adhere to during the 1 week Pre-Poll period.

Postal Voting

Postal Voting provided an opportunity for overseas voters and those who could not attend a Polling Station on Election Day, to cast their vote. All voters that wanted to Postal Vote were required to apply once the date of the General Election was announced.

When applications were received by the FEO, they were checked for completeness before being data entered into the EMS. This system had a module on Postal Voting which was specifically created to manage Postal Voting Application for the 2018 General Election.

Once a Postal Application was approved, a postal package was dispatched to the nominated address of the voter as stated in their application form. There were two postal courier companies engaged for the delivery of Postal Voting packages to overseas and local voters. In cases where EMS could not deliver to local addresses, the FEO made these deliveries itself.

The residential details on the postal database were supplied to DHL and EMS accordingly. This enabled the courier companies to prepare satchels pending receipt of completed packages from the FEO.

Postal Voting packages contained the following:

- Voter Instruction Booklet;
- One Ballot Paper;
- Secret Envelope;
- Transmission Envelope;
- Prepaid Returned Envelope;
- Postal Voting Process Pamphlet; and
- If couriered, a returned prepaid courier satchel.

Postal Ballots that were returned and received by FEO were entered in a register by scanning in the barcodes into the EMS, and stored under Police Guard.

Postal Votes Received

Total Sent	Total Received
11,227	10,315

On 23 November 2018, DHL and EMS returned satchels of which 48 were categorised as “received late” and 268 as “undelivered”.

Before the deadline of 5pm on Wednesday 24 October 2018, many Postal Applications were submitted at the last minute through emails and hand deliveries to the Area Offices. This resulted in these applications being processed over the next three days after close of postal applications on 24 October 2018. The FEO also found an additional 411 applications that had been made on time but were not processed by the Postal Team. The SoE authorised that since the applications were on time, they be processed and satchels dispatched accordingly.

Election Day

Polling took place on 14 November 2018. The majority of the Polling Stations began operations at 7:30am and closed at 6.00pm to begin counting. Polling Agents and International Observers were permitted into the Polling Stations. The FEO ensured that the maximum number of voters at any Polling Station was 500. Voters were assigned to a Polling Station closest to their residential address.

The final Polling Venues for Election Day which was published on the Notice of Poll on 17 October 2018 were as follows:

Division	Total No. of Polling Venues for Polling Day
Central	201
Eastern	223
Western	228
Northern	202
TOTAL	854

However, although confirmed and published, certain Polling Venues became unavailable. This resulted in the FEO setting up temporary Polling Station Sheds. In addition, partitions were set up in Polling Venues which had multiple stations. The breakdown is as follows:

Overall Breakdown of Sheds/Partition Required (PV Sheds + Spill overs)				
Division	PV Sheds	Spill overs	Total # of sheds required for E-Day	Total # of Partitions Required
Central	64	23	87	36
Western	42	10	52	0
Northern	27	4	31	4
Eastern	7	2	9	8
Total	140	39	179	48

All the election materials required for polling including Voter Lists and ballot papers were delivered to Presiding Officers at their Polling Stations either on Tuesday 13 November or early morning on Wednesday, 14 November. Polling Day Workers who were recruited and had signed their contract were required to attend a briefing at an allocated time with their Presiding Officer.

All votes taken on Election Day were counted at the respective Polling Stations. The results from the Count were transmitted by Presiding Officers to a toll free dedicated number at the National Results Centre.

The Presiding Officers were required to paste the pink copy of the Protocol of Results [**“POR”**] outside the polling station before sending the original copy of the POR to the National Results Centre.

On completion of the Count, all election materials were packed and collected by the Hub Leaders. These materials were then transported to the various Area Offices under the escort of the Fiji Police Force Officers.

Due to the adverse weather conditions on Election Day, the SoE, in consultation with the EC, had to adjourn polling for 22 Polling Venues with 25 Polling Stations around the country. This was adjourned to 17 November 2018.

All sensitive election materials collected on November 14 were securely stored at the FEO warehouse in Suva by 17 November 2018. For those Polling Venues which were adjourned due to adverse weather conditions and flooding, their materials were in storage in Suva by 18 November 2018.

The presence of Police Officers at all Polling Stations during the delivery and collection of election materials demonstrated to the general public that the process was secure and safe at all times.

Logistics

A logistics structure introduced for the 2018 General Election is the recruitment of Field Officers, Hub Leaders and Hub Assistants. This additional structure enabled logistics delivery and collection of election materials to and from Polling Stations to be easily managed and administered by the Divisional Managers and their teams.

Prior to *Writ* Day, polling kits, voting screens and other non-sensitive election materials were delivered to the Divisional Offices who then further divided and distributed these non-sensitive materials to the Area Officers who are the focal storage points out in the field. Estimates on the quantities of items to be used for the 2018 General Election were based on the number of registered voters for the General Election and the number of Polling Stations that would be generated based on these voter numbers.

A comprehensive delivery and collection schedule was devised by the Divisional Managers and based on these plans the GIS team developed logistics route maps for Area Officers and Hub Leaders. These route maps were a guide in terms of distributing and collecting election materials from either the Pre-Poll Exchange site or Hub Office.

The packing of sensitive election materials for Pre-Poll commenced on 29 October 2018. A total of 587 ballot boxes were packed by priority areas and ready for distribution to the Area Offices from 30 October 2018. In total, ten 20 ft. containers were used to transport and transfer the sensitive materials to the various Area Offices across the country.

Packing of sensitive materials for Polling Day commenced from 31 October 2018. A total of 1,567 ballot boxes were packed during these 6 days. The ballot boxes were again packed by priority areas and ready for distribution on 3 November 2018. In total, twenty-two 20 ft. containers were used to transport and transfer sensitive materials from the FEO warehouse to the Area Offices.

The Tamper Evident Envelope [“TEE”] storage containers containing the TEEs for Pre-Poll were received at the FEO warehouse on Monday 12 November while the Polling Day TEEs were received progressively at the National Count Centre from 15 November to 18 November 2018.

The ten Pre-Poll 20ft containers were transferred to the National Count Centre on the morning of Polling Day (14 November) while the Polling Day 20 ft. containers were progressively received at the FEO warehouse from November 15 to 18 November, 2018.

At the Return of the *Writ* on 18 November 2018 all pre-poll 20 ft. containers were transferred from the National Count Centre to the FEO Warehouse.

The FEO warehouse was very convenient in providing space for not only packing of election materials but as well as storage of 20 ft. containers.

Operations Warehouse

During the Mock Election in February 2018, it was decided that in order for the smooth running of the logistics operations it was necessary that the Operations Directorate manage, monitor and control warehouse No. 8 during election year, as this warehouse would store all the election materials for the 2018 General Election. As such, Director Corporate Services officially handed over the Operations warehouse to the Operations Directorate on 27 March 2018 which was then handed over to the Logistics section on the same date.

Since this warehouse would be storing election materials it was necessary to convert the warehouse to a more secure storage area. Therefore, a secure holding area was constructed to hold the sensitive materials such as the Voter Lists, Ballot Papers, Ballot Box Seals and Indelible Ink. Other items which were also placed in the secure holding area included the Protocol of Results and TEE.

Awnings were fitted onto the sides of the warehouse lobby to provide the extra shade and coverings for the Packing teams during hot or rainy days.

The Ballot Boxes and other election materials were stored on racks away from the secured holding area and labelled for easy retrieval. Access to these 20 ft. containers was only to authorised personnel.

Non – sensitive materials

The following materials were transferred to the Operations Directorate during the hand over.

Items	Quantity
Ballot Boxes – 45L	776
Ballot Boxes – 80L	2,434
Polling Kits	3,002
Voting Screens	3,003

All non-sensitive materials including polling kits and voting screens were stored in the warehouse before being transferred to the Divisional Warehouses.

Breakdown for transfer of non-sensitive materials to the Divisional Warehouses is as follows:

Items	Divisions			
	Central	Western	Northern	Eastern
Polling Kits	650	700	500	550
Voting Screens	650	700	500	550

For contingency purposes FEO management decided that it was prudent to store additional non – sensitive materials in a secured location. This was to replenish FEO stock in case a mishap should occur where the loss of non – sensitive materials is encountered.

The following is a breakdown of additional non – sensitive materials stored in a secured location which could be used as contingency if needed:

Items	Quantity
Ballot Boxes – Pre Poll	100
Ballot Boxes – Polling Day	400
Polling Kits	450
Voting Screens	500

Upon the transfer of non-sensitive materials to the Divisional warehouses and the contingency supply to a secured location, ballot boxes for Pre-Poll and Polling Day were pre packed prior to *Writ* Day. This was to ensure the Logistics section was able to adhere to the strict timelines during the sensitive materials packing period.

Pre-packed materials included operational manuals, task sheets, blank count sorting cards, assisted voting brochures and secret envelope with only cardboard label (Pre-Poll only).

Items	Quantity
Pre Packed Ballot Boxes – Pre Poll	600
Pre Packed Ballot Boxes – Polling Day	1700

Additional Items

Additional items ordered and delivered to the Warehouse included the following:

Items	Quantity
Pre Poll Tents	180
Ballot Box Straps	250
Pre Poll Bags	250
Container Nettings	32
Container Roller Racks	32
Ballot Box Hooks	33
Container Ramps	10

Sensitive Materials

The following sensitive materials were received at the Operations Warehouse.

Item	Quantity
Indelible Ink	(packs of two bottles) 3,000
Ballot Paper Books – Polling Day	(books) 13,227 books (incl. 178 for the adjourned polling)
Ballot Paper Books – Pre Poll	(books) 1,848
Voter Lists – Pre Poll	587
Voter Lists – Polling Day	1567
Seals – Pre Poll	16,000
Seals – Polling Day	44,000
PO Record Book – Pre Poll	600
PO Record Book – Polling Day	1,600
PO Record Book - Postal	30
Protocol of Results – Pre Poll	600
Protocol of Results – Polling Day	1,700
Tamper Evident Envelope – Pre Poll	3,525
Tamper Evident Envelope – Polling Day	4,350
Tamper Evident Envelope – Postal	4,000
Tamper Evident Envelope – Count Centre	4,343
Secret Envelopes – Pre Poll	80,000
Secret Envelopes - Postal	25,000

Monitoring of Movement of Sensitive Materials

The development of the Sensitive Materials Handling Procedure provided the necessary processes to monitor the dispatch of items or materials from the warehouse. Areas covered under this procedure included the movements of Voter Lists and Ballot Papers.

Security of the Warehouse

The FEO installed CCTV cameras inside and outside of warehouse 8. This is to ensure that the FEO were able to monitor the movement of people, vehicles and materials to and from the Warehouse at all times.

The Fiji Police Force also provided the necessary security at the warehouse. The FEO built a temporary fence and gate house based on the recommendations of the Fiji Police Force. This was to ensure that all personnel entering or leaving the premises were properly screened and vetted.

Voter Instruction Booklets

A total of 1,412,000 Voter Instruction books ["VIB"] were printed by Quality Print Limited and Star Printery. These were the two printing companies that were awarded the tender to print the VIB's. The initial tender agreement was for both companies to print 650,000 VIB each but due to the need for extra VIBs to be printed to cater for the contingencies the two companies were required to print the following quantities:

Name of Company	Extra Books Printed	Total Number of Books Printed
Star Printery Limited	75,000	725,000
Quality Print Limited	38,100	687,100
Total Books Printed	113,100	1,412,000

The printing of the VIB was from 19 October 2018 to 09 November 2018. The initial plan was to finish all printing by 02 October 2018 but due to the need to print extra VIBs the timeline was further extended for another week. A total of 36 staff were engaged to conduct QA for the individual VIB's being printed. Staff were required to inspect every VIB to ensure that all the pages were present and that the print quality was good.

VIB Distribution and “Know Your Election” (4) Campaign

There was a total of 50 teams that were deployed around Fiji to the Pre-Poll areas and the Polling Day urban areas to deliver the VIB’s to the voters. Below is the breakdown of teams that were deployed for the drive:

Division	Number of Teams
Northern	6
Western Division	20
Eastern Division	15
Central	9
Total	50

Teams were deployed to conduct voter awareness as well as distribute VIBs to the voters and below is the breakdown of VIBs distributed to the respective divisions:

Division	Number of VIBs Delivered
Central	250,710
Western	219,890
Northern	58,600
Eastern	8,800
Total Distributed	538,000

Newspaper Inserts

As part of the awareness program, the two main newspaper companies namely Fiji Times and Fiji Sun were engaged to insert VIB’s in the newspapers on Saturday 27 October 2018. This was to reach out to voters that had access to newspapers and enable them to get a copy of the VIB. Below is the total number of VIB’s distributed through both newspapers:

Name of Company	Number of Books Distributed
Fiji Times Limited	28,000
Fiji Sun Limited	35,000
Total	63,000

Pre-Poll and Polling Day VIB's

The printers also printed VIB's that were to be handed to voters inside the Polling Stations on Pre-Poll and Polling Day. The required number of VIBs to be printed plus the contingencies came to a total of 651,272 VIB.

Polling Day Breakdown			
Division	Voters	Contingency	Cartons in 50s
Central	201889	206949	4395
Eastern	87641	90601	1955
Northern	78838	81548	1760
Western	190839	195779	4168
Total	559207	574877	12278

Pre-Poll Breakdown			
Division	Voters	Contingency	Cartons in 50s
Central	14777	15777	363
Eastern	19019	20909	509
Northern	14553	15883	380
Western	22176	23826	554
Total	70525	76395	1806

The VIBs were checked by the Area Officers and Presiding Officers. A few reported that they found some defects in the VIB. This was rectified when extra VIBs were sent to replace the defective ones.

National Count Centre

The National Count Centre was set up at the National Gymnasium car park due to the unavailability of the Vodafone Arena. This Centre comprised two large tents measuring 50 by 40 (50 x 40) metres. The setup provided sufficient area for the construction of counting cubicles for the 60 Counting teams and ample space for storage areas. The FEO organised air conditioners for both tents.

All Pre-Poll and postal votes were counted at the National Count Centre starting from 6pm on 14 November 2018 and continued until the early hours of 16 November 2018. All counting was undertaken in the presence of Polling Agents, International Observers and Police Officers.

The National Count Centre ran three 12-hours shifts with two Count Managers per shift. Shift times were from 6pm to 6am and 6am to 6pm. The Count Managers ensured that the correct procedure for the counting of ballot papers were followed by the Counting teams and also liaised with polling agents, international observers and Police Officers. In addition to the Count Managers, Count Supervisors consisting of trainers were also engaged to monitor the Count teams. There were six Count Supervisors per shift.

No. of Staff per 12-hours Shift:

Position	No. of Staff per Shift
Managers	2
Supervisors	6
Administration	15
Distribution	7
Runners	12
Count Teams	240

The ballot boxes from 587 Pre-Poll Venues and 19 postal boxes were counted. A copy of the POR from each station was displayed at the National Count Centre in the designated areas.

The counting of ballot papers and movement of ballot boxes were undertaken with security provided by the Fiji Police Force. At the end of the counting and processing of results, each ballot box was stored in 20ft containers under 24 hours security provided by the Fiji Police Force.

The National Count Centre was also the receiving point for all TEEs containing original POR, Presiding Officer Record Book and Tendered Ballots. Once received, these were logged in and filed before the original POR was dispatched to the National Results Centre.

National Results Centre

The National Gymnasium was the venue for the National Results Centre. On Election night, 14 November 2018, the Centre had two functions:

- Call Centre for the receipt of the results '*phoned in*' from the Election Day Polling Stations for tabulation of provisional results; and
- Tabulation of Final National Results Tally.

Results

Results Management Information System ["**RMIS**"] was the application software used by the FEO to capture the data contained in the POR forms, which consolidated these results into the National Results Tally for progressive display of results. RMIS also provided the consolidated results to the SoE and the EC to prepare the Final National Results Tally.

RMIS used two modes to progressively display the results:

- Provisional Mode - The mode of operation of RMIS where the Results of Count for each Candidate from each Polling Station is called into the National Results Centre and entered into the RMIS for immediate publication. The provisional mode operated only on election night or until 70% of Polling Stations had called in.
- Official Mode - The comprehensive information from the original POR, including all reconciliation fields, were entered into RMIS. Official data was entered using double blind data entry, data validation and was subject to audit mechanisms prior to release into the National Results Tally and eventually totalled into the Final National Results Tally. The Official mode was used to produce the official results of the election.

RMIS used the same roles as 2014 but additional roles were included to ensure a more accurate and transparent data process. The double-blind entry of results from the official POR received from each Polling Station involved the results being entered into the database by one operator and then independently re-entered by another operator. Thereafter, the Supervisor checked the data entry for any mismatches and allocated the work to the operators as required.

Audit checks (if an audit was triggered) were undertaken when any data discrepancies were identified. The Audit Manager checked and obtained the SoE's decision on any issues with the POR. In addition to this, Quality Control was a new role that assured that each POR data was the same as the corresponding data in the system.

The National Results Centre Manager signed-off on each processed results by doing a final QA on the e-copy of the POR with the physical copy. The Political Party Officer who looked after polling agents gave them the e-copy of the POR entered in the RMIS with the copy of the original POR.

The RMIS database included the information listed below, to record the data for consolidated reports. Results were able to be reported by:

- Polling Venue.
- Registration Summary.
- Polling Station.
- Polling Summary.
- Party.
- Division – Administrative and Logistical.
- Audit.
- Candidate.

The following number of Protocols of Result were entered into the RMIS system:

- Polling Day –1567.
- Pre-poll –587.
- Postal – 19.

When Election Day began there was only 16 Polling Stations allocated for postal votes. After the collection and verification of the remaining postal ballot boxes around the country on the night of 14 November 2018, Polling Stations for postal votes increased by an additional 3 ballot boxes which brought the number for polling stations from 2170 to 2173.

The following reports were produced for the SoE and EC. These reports were also projected and displayed at the Media Centre for viewing by stakeholders and the public:

- National results tally –votes by party by candidate;
- Candidate results –votes by candidates; and
- General report –votes by individual candidate by Polling Stations.

The RMIS system worked effectively and was an efficient way to produce the Final National Results Tally for the FEO to provide to the EC for the allocation of seats.

The RMIS system was developed with Datec for the first phase changes, then for all other changes this was completed by the FEO Analyst Programmer Mr. Amendra Chand and the finalisation of the system was done by the National Results Centre Manager.

Tabulation of Provisional Results

All Polling Stations were allocated one of the four discrete telephone numbers to telephone the results to.

The Call Centre at the National Gymnasium had 100 telephone operators who were split into four groups. The operators received calls from the Division they were allocated to and upon receiving the call, directly transferred the results into the RMIS as provisional results. Tabulation of provisional results continued from Election night until 6am the next morning, 15 November 2018, before the Final Results Tabulation began at 7am.

Tabulation of Final National Results Tally

All Polling Station results were tabulated for the National Results Tally at the National Gymnasium commencing from 7am on 15 November 2018 and continued until 3pm on 18 November 2018. The RMIS results tabulation process was undertaken in the presence of polling agents and international Observers.

There were two Shift Managers working 12-hours shift each while data entry was divided into three 8-hours shifts from 6pm to 2am, 2am to 10am and 10am to 6pm. Shift Managers ensured that the correct procedure for the results tabulation were followed and also liaised with other external counterparts who required clarification or guidance from the National Results Centre.

In total, 2,173 PORs were processed. A copy of the PORs together with an automated report of results for each Polling Station from RMIS was submitted to each polling agent.

The National Gymnasium was a suitable premise for this exercise. It provided sufficient working areas, storage area, catering area, was well ventilated and maintained well by the premises owner.

Command Centre Operations

To ensure that it is in line with its five year Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019 the FEO acknowledged the need to develop a unit that monitors FEO election projects at Divisional level.

The Command Centre was established to monitor the following election related activities:

1. Divisional Monitoring Process;
2. Information Request Process;
3. Call Centre Process;
4. Incident Management Process;
5. Change Management Process; and
6. Media and Weather monitoring process.

A total of 14 staff were engaged to operate the Command Centre and were rostered into two shifts that not only provide services to the Divisional Office but also to the public through the 1500 call centre platform.

The Command Centre started receiving queries from September 2018 when the Vodafone Call Centre was launched and officially closed on 20 November 2018. The following table summarises the calls escalated through from 1500 as well as direct calls from Presiding Officers and Hub Leaders seeking assistance.

Calls on Polling Venue Location	Calls on assigned Polling Venue for voting	Calls from Election Officials	General Calls	Total
152	194	56	48	450

Receiving of escalated calls at the Command Centre were only very active during Pre-Poll week and on Election Day. Calls received in September and October were mainly from EOs who were following up on their duty station for polling.

Command Centre staff were also trained on other main election processes in FEO's main projects such as voter registration, postal votes, EO recruitment, training, voter awareness and counting process. Such information enabled staff to answer queries and also be able to escalate them appropriately to relevant directorates.

The Fiji Meteorological Services provided weather forecasts and also a seven days' weather outlook which was also sent out to the Divisional Offices and Area Offices to assist them in monitoring their teams. The Fiji Roads Authority also provided latest updated information on road closures which were also sent out to the Divisional Offices and Area Offices.

A total of 86 daily Divisional progress reports were submitted to the SoE as Executive Summary Reports from 1 October 2018 to the Announcement of the Final National Results Tally. The reports not only included situation updates from the Divisional Offices and Area Offices but also progressive reports from the project owners to highlight the status of their individual projects and to identify any setbacks that could hinder the Election Day preparation. The reports also included media and weather updates.

The Divisional daily reports were also compiled and submitted weekly to the EC informing them of updates gathered from the team in the four divisions.

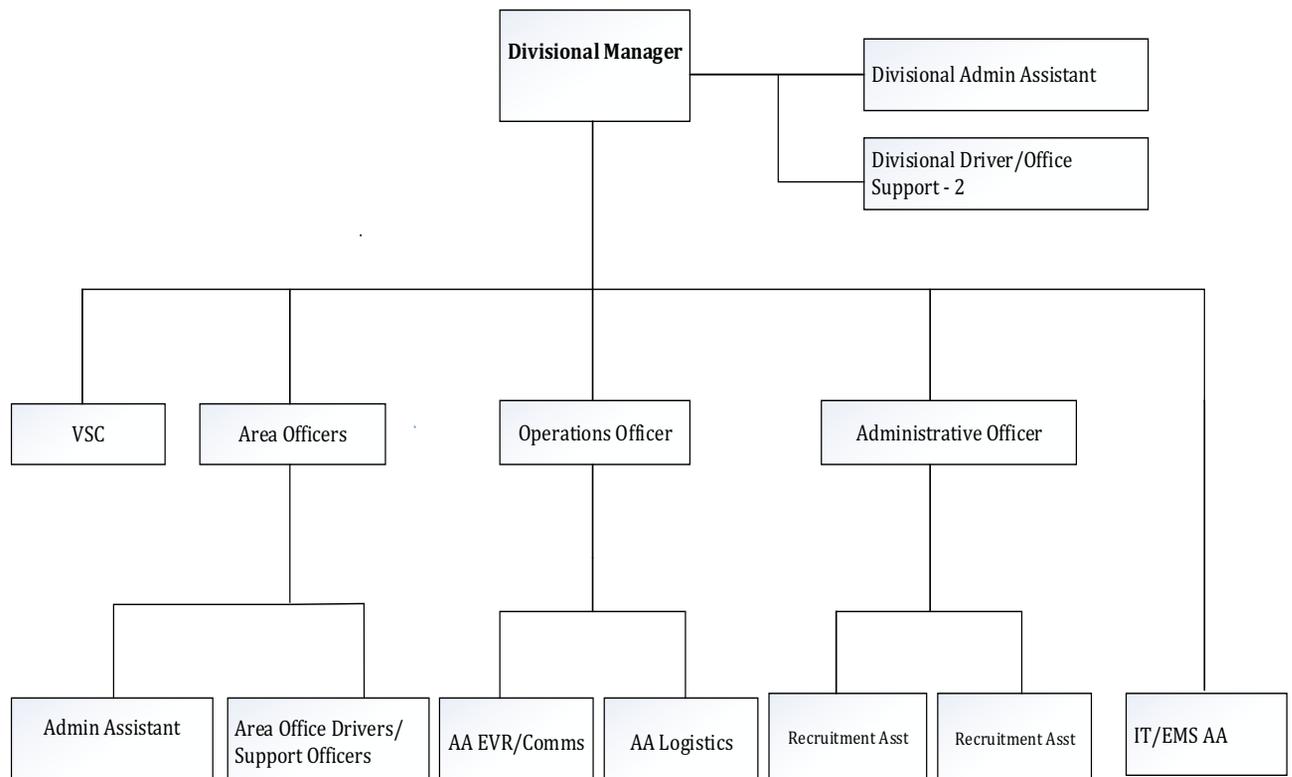
Divisional Managers

To ensure that the FEO achieved its goal in the five year Strategic Plan in delivering a decentralised operational service for effective and efficient service delivery, the Divisional Offices were established. This also allowed the FEO to align its function to the legislative roles and responsibilities and also to strengthen collaboration and networking with stakeholders to build confidence and trust in the FEO.

The primary role of the Divisional Offices was to ensure that all election operations in the divisions were carried out efficiently within the approved budget and timeline. A major challenge faced in all the divisions was the voter distribution and their geographical locations which made planning and scheduling of events for the different projects quite difficult.

The four Divisional Managers were appointed in September 2017 to manage the Divisional Offices in the Northern, Western, Eastern and Central. From September to December the Divisional Managers were attached with the different directorates at headquarters, to learn those processes that were to be decentralised.

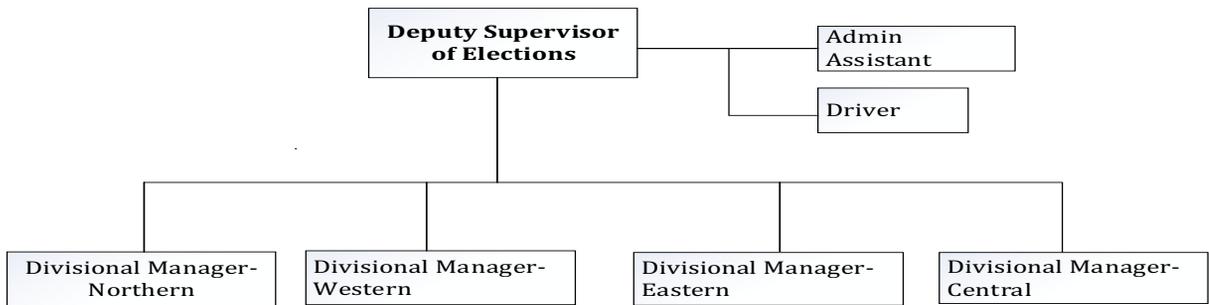
The organisation structure was developed by the four Divisional Managers; Mr. Lasaro Naivalu (Northern Division), Mr. Peni Natau (Western Division), Mr. Atish Chand (Eastern Division) and Mr. Apenisa Narawa (Central Division). It was designed to ensure that all departments had designated staff in the Divisional Office to monitor and carry out its activities as stipulated in the FEO 2018 General Election timeline.



The new structure improved the ability of the FEO to carry out its core functions and other supporting roles. It allowed the Divisional Managers to divert resources within the division to provide required assistance to those projects that were executed simultaneously.

The Divisional Managers submitted daily reports to the Command Centre for Senior Management which included the three Directors, SoE and DSoE. The reports highlighted the daily activities and the election preparation progress which also reflected other directorates' preparation through the Divisional Office for the communities.

Any issues highlighted from the daily reports are further addressed by the DSoE during the Directors meeting. The four Divisional Managers reported directly to the DSoE regarding operational activities in the divisions.



Divisional Manager Training

Divisional Managers attended the following workshops and training to equip them in managing the Divisional Office:

- Fleet Management – Organised by Procurement and Asset Management Department;
- Finance Management and Documentation – Organised by the Finance Department;
- Divisional Managers Financial System – Facilitated by Westpac Bank;
- Human Resource Management – Organised by Human Resource Department;
- Election Officials Management – Co facilitated by EMS and HR;
- Electoral Laws – Briefings by SoE and Legal Compliance Coordinator;
- Elections Planning - Facilitated by the SoE;
- Election Management System – Co facilitated by Operations Department and EMS;
- Risk Management for Elections – Co facilitated by the Technical Advisors;
- Assets and Inventory Management – Organised by Procurement and Asset Management Department; and
- Area Officers Workshop – Co facilitated by the Technical Advisors, DSoE and Legal Compliance Coordinator.

Divisional Managers Monthly Meetings

Divisional Managers had monthly meetings with the DSoE to further discuss progress of work in their divisions.

In these meetings, other issues concerning the Division would be deliberated to ensure that other directorates were also aligning their activities to the Divisional Office and services from their end was delivered on time. The meetings were scheduled as follows:

- First Meeting: 23 and 24 May 2018
- Second Meeting: 19 June 2018
- Third meeting: 17 July 2018
- Four Meeting: 02 and 03 August 2018
- Fifth Meeting: 19 October 2018
- Sixth Meeting: 02 November 2018

With the guidance of the DSoE, the Divisional Managers developed the Divisional Office's 2018 General Election Timeline that highlighted key important dates for their divisions. The timeline directly reflected the three directorates timelines.

Divisional Key Events

- Opening of the Divisional Office: 08 January 2018
- Display of National Register of Voters:
- Opening of Voter Services Centres:
 - Suva:
 - Nausori: 03 August 2017
 - Labasa: 15 August 2017
 - Nadi: 23 January 2018
 - Rakiraki: 24 January 2018
 - Opening of Area Offices: 02 April
 - Opening of Voter Services Centres in the Area Office: 01 March
 - Awareness Drives
 - KYE 1: 15 March to 29 April
 - KYE 2: 14 August to 25 August
 - KYE 3: 19 October to 23 October
 - Pre-Poll: 05 November to 10 November 2018
 - Election Day: 14 November & 17 November 2018
 - Close of Area Offices: 23 November 2018
 - Return of Materials to FEO Warehouse: 19 November to 23 November 2018

Different projects also required Divisional Managers to develop logistic plans and schedules to ensure that services were provided to all the formal and informal areas in their divisions. The monthly meetings also gave a platform to the Divisional Managers to raise concerns on pending services from other directorates and project owners.

Teams in the divisions were scheduled to filter through all informal and formal settlements when moving from the rural areas to the urban areas for all projects such as community awareness and voter registration. Mobile teams were always on standby in the office as roving teams to cater for any special request.

Projects that were monitored by Divisional Managers:

Activity	Projects	Work Period
Weekly polling venue update	Polling Venue Assessments	September 2017 to 13 November 2018
1) Deployments of teams for engagement with the voters 2) Arrangement of accommodation and transport 3) Distribution of promotional items	Know Your Election Drive 1, 2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KYE 1 – 15 March to 29 April 2018 ▪ KYE 2 – 14 August to 25 August 2018 ▪ KYE 3 – 19 October to 31 October 2018
1) Deployment of Teams to conduct voter registration services 2) Arrangement of accommodation and transport 3)Data Back Up	Electronic Voter Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15 March to 29 April 2018 ▪ 14 August to 25 August 2018 ▪ 28 September to 01 October 2018.
1) Deployment of teams to distribute the Provisional Voter List 2) Arrangement of accommodation and transport 3) Gathering reports or feedback from voters on displacements and errors	Provisional Voter List Display	<p>PVL 1 – 13 February to 23 February 2018</p> <p>PVL 2 – 15 March to 29 April 2018</p> <p>PVL 3 - 18 September to 28 September 2018</p> <p>PVL 4 – 8 October to 14 October 2018</p>

Projects that were monitored by Divisional Managers *continued*:

Activity	Projects	Work Period
1) Arrangements with business communities on available spaces for service centres in towns 2) Arrangement of accommodation and transport for teams 3) Gathering data backups and reports	Mass Roll Out Plan- Writ Day	28 September to 01 October 2018
1) Distribution of VIB's to pre-poll communities 2) Distribution of VIB's to business in the town areas 3) Distribution of VIB's to Voter Services Centre for the general public	Voter Instruction Booklet Distribution	19 October to 31 October 2018
1) Arrangement of accommodation and transport for the teams 2) Liaising with the <i>Turaga ni Koro's</i> for village information 3) Distribution and collection of election materials 4) Addressing any issues from the communities or service vendors	Pre-Poll and Election Day	Pre-poll: 05 November to 10 November Election Day: 14 November 2018
1) Collecting materials from Area Offices 2) Providing proper inventory updates for assets 3) Delivering materials back to the FEO Warehouse	Return of Election Materials to the FEO Warehouse	19 November to 21 November 2018

Responsible Areas in the Divisions

The table below highlights the different areas that each division looked after during Pre-Poll and Election Day.

Election Mode	Division	Area	Polling Venues	Polling Stations
Pre-Poll	Northern	Labasa	38	38
		Seaqaqa	16	16
		Nabouwalu	22	22
		Taveuni	15	15
		Savusavu	43	44
	Western	Sigatoka	12	12
		Lautoka	49	50
		Ba	15	15
		Tavua	12	12
		Rakiraki	48	48
		Keiyasi	28	28
	Eastern	Lomaiviti	50	50
		Kadavu	61	61
		Rotuma	9	9
		Lau	67	68
	Central	Suva	5	8
		Nausori	9	9
		Vunidawa	40	40
		Navua	34	34
		Korovou	10 (8 Central & 2 West)	

To ensure that the Divisions could cope with the logistics of the Election Day work, the areas were evenly distributed. This allowed the Eastern Division to monitor two areas from the Western Division and two areas from the Central Division as summarised in the table below.

Election Mode	Division	Area Office	Polling Venues	Polling Stations	Hubs
Election Day	Northern	Labasa	60	107	6 (with 2 field offices)
		Seaqaqa	26	33	3
		Nabouwalu	39	39	3
		Taveuni	18	25	2
		Savusavu	59	67	7 (with 2 field offices)
	Western	Sigatoka	84	102	8
		Lautoka	158	297	16
		Ba	51	86	5
		Keiyasi	10	10	1
	Eastern	Lomaiviti	24	24	2
		Kadavu	9	9	1
		Rakiraki (West)	48	55	3
		Tavua (West)	29	47	3
		Korovou (Central)	46	53	4
		Nausori (Central)	64	105	6 (with 1 field office)
	Central	Suva	143	429	25
		Vunidawa	33	34	3
		Navua	30	46	3

Decentralised Processes

In the 2014 General Election the majority of the activities were centralised in the FEO Headquarters. This included the following activities which in 2018 were handled by the Divisional Managers in their own Divisions:

- Polling Venue Assessments
- Training of FEO Divisional Staff
- Arrangement of accommodation and transport for project staff
- Meetings with Stakeholders such as the Divisional Administrative Commissioners, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the Fiji Police Force
- Timesheets and leave approvals
- Budget planning for projects
- Training and Contracting of EO

Human Resources in the Division

Each Divisional Office was responsible in managing leave and time in lieu [**“TOIL”**] for each individual staff member in their division. This ensured that managers carefully monitored the working hours accumulated by each staff member and that appropriate TOIL was taken for any approved overtime work incurred.

In each division, each department had a designated staff who ensured that activities in line with that department were conducted in the division and that reports were properly documented.

Divisions	Total number of Staff in Divisional Office	Total VSC, Hub and Area Office Staff	Staff Total
Northern	13	27	40
Western	28	38	66
Eastern	19	12	31
Central	11	33	44

Election Officials- Contracting and Recruitment in the Divisions

Divisional Recruitment Assistants oversaw the recruitment process in the divisions, from populating the list of qualified officials to maintaining it if someone withdrew. This work allowed each division to closely monitor the availability of human resources required for the General Election.

On the eve of the 2018 General Election up to the morning of Election Day, Divisional Offices still encountered numerous withdrawals from the trained and contracted staff for a variety of reasons. It would have been catastrophic if the recruitment assistants had not been able to regenerate the availability list and immediately re-contract new EOs.

Divisions	Total Number of Election Officials (Pre-poll and Election Day)
Northern	1,699
Western	3,854
Eastern	1,986
Central	3,640

Training in the Divisions

FEO Divisional Staff - Staff were upskilled with electoral knowledge during their inductions at each division. Some of the trainings included voter registration, Polling Venue assessments, and Voter Services Centre training to name a few.

Project Staff Training – Divisional Offices made arrangements for training venues, training materials, trainees allowances and Trainers’ accommodation and transport which was in contrast to the 2014 training planning.

Election Official Training – Divisional Offices were tasked with confirming Eos’ availability, providing a training venue and arranging for meals and refreshments for the trainees. This work was centralised back to Headquarters in 2014.

Divisions	Total Number of Training Venues Engaged
Northern (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Labasa (4) ▪ Savusavu (3) ▪ Nabouwalu (1) ▪ Taveuni (1)
Western (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rakiraki (1) ▪ Tavua (1) ▪ Ba (1) ▪ Lautoka (5) ▪ Sigatoka (2)
Eastern (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kadavu (1) ▪ Levuka (1) ▪ Nausori (4)
Central (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Navua (1) ▪ Korovou (1) ▪ Vunidawa (1) ▪ Suva (8)

Stakeholder Engagement

The Divisional Managers met with the respective Divisional Commissioners on 10 January 2018 and their respective *Roko Tui's* on 23 January 2018 at the FEO main conference room in Toorak. The meeting served as an introduction to formally engage both parties and introduce the FEO's plan for the 2018 General Election.

From this fruitful consultation, the Divisional Managers were able to further meet with other stakeholders in their divisions such as the Advisory Councillors and the Provincial Officers and relay the FEO's plans not only for Pre-Poll and Election Day but also the Voter Awareness Drives.

List of stakeholders

- Divisional Police Commissioners
- Town Administrators
- School Principals
- School Managers
- Government Shipping Services and Staff
- Provincial Administrators
- *Roko Tui's* in the different provinces
- Polling Venue owners

Procurement and Asset Management

In collaboration with the FEO's Procurement and Asset Management department at the Headquarters in Suva, Divisional Offices were able to directly obtain vendors' services.

Divisional Offices were tasked only in approaching possible interested service vendors and providing background checks to validate the vendors' ability to provide a quality service. These services ranged from accommodation, training venues, recruitment venues, transportation and caterings.

Finance

A one-day training program on managing the financial system for the Divisional account was conducted by Westpac Bank to upskill the Divisional Managers into proper financial managers.

The training not only gave the Managers insights into how the system works but also further expanded their knowledge of proper financial documentation and budget planning.

Divisional Budgets per projects:

KYE 1 & EVR

Division	Budgeted
Northern	\$49,610.00
Western	\$74,660.00
Eastern	\$337,577.23
Central	\$431,398.85
TOTAL	\$893,246.08

KYE 2 & EVR

Division	Budgeted
Northern	\$20,835.00
Western	\$34,000.00
Eastern	\$307,390.00
Central	\$32,315.00
TOTAL	\$394,540

KYE 3 & VIB Distribution

Division	Budgeted
Northern	\$26,175.00
Western	\$26,480.00
Eastern	\$151,706.25
Central	\$102,555.27
TOTAL	\$306,916.52

PVL 1 to 4

Division	Budgeted
Northern	\$19,894.00
Western	\$11,220.00
Eastern	\$194,821.85
Central	\$85,905.92
TOTAL	\$311,841.77

Pre Poll

Division	Budgeted
Northern	\$48,885.00
Western	\$41020.00
Eastern	\$530,233.00
Central	\$256,374.80
TOTAL	\$974,282.80

Mock Exercises

Operational processes were better understood by Divisional staff when the Operations Department conducted mock exercises to simulate the activities that would be carried out in each project. The mock exercises not only engaged the Divisional Office staff but also the Voter Services Centres and the Area Office staff. This greatly assisted the Divisional team in addressing issues when they faced them.

Mock Exercise conducted:

- Election Simulation Exercise
- Logistic Distribution of materials from FEO Warehouse to Area Offices
- Postal Voting –distribution and collection
- Mass Roll Out Plan –voter registration on Writ Day

The decentralising of the FEO's operational activities to the Divisional Offices has proven to be successful after the four Divisional Managers successfully managed their respective divisions on time. It also complements and affects the logistic infrastructure for efficient delivery and collection of election materials. It also ensured that there were adequate resources available for all activities in the divisions and that FEO services were effectively delivered to eligible voters across Fiji.

Strategic Development and Communications Directorate

In delivering its key messages for the 2018 General Election, the Communications Department of the FEO used both existing and new channels of communications.

The use of these new channels was due largely to the ever-changing landscape of communications and how brands engage with their target audience. This has evolved over the years from simple radio and newspaper advertising to more complex integrated approaches using a range of communications mediums, such as television, digital publications and social media.

In order to capture our key target audiences (voters), and to ensure the successful delivery of critical information relating to the conduct of elections in Fiji, a multi-media and multi-lingual voter awareness approach was used based on six general themes:

- When to vote
- Where to vote
- How to vote
- All Fijians should vote
- General reminder for Election Day and Pre-poll voters
- The ideal voter

The FEO Website

One of the key projects undertaken pre-Election, was the launch of the new FEO website www.feo.org.fj in April 2017. The website has been vastly improved to disseminate information to members of the public, Political Parties, regional and international organisations and many of FEO's stakeholders.

Perhaps the most significant step towards voter engagement via the website was the inclusion of disability friendly features. Users with visual impairments can increase the size of the font or even enable an automated readout of the text on the page.

Election Information Booklet

The Election Information Booklet ["EIB"] was produced in March 2018 as the primary awareness tool, containing all relevant electoral information for the voter. These included instructions on how to vote, illustrations of a standard Polling Station layout and pictorials, methods of voting, counting process, declaration of results and allocation of seats. The EIB was translated into i-Taukei, Hindi, Rotuman, Banabai and Chinese.

The information below highlights the distribution of the EIB across the country.

Total printed and distributed – **673,000** including:

- iTaukei – 200,000
- English – 335,000
- Hindi – 120,000
- Chinese – 5,000
- Rotuman – 10,000
- Banaban – 3,000

Closer to the 2018 General Election, this was supplemented by brochures about specific aspects of the Election, i.e. Postal Voting, Pre-poll, Election Day, how to vote, where to vote and who can vote.

The ‘Know Your Election’ Awareness Drive I

The FEO’s Voter Awareness Campaign for the 2018 General Election was named the *Know Your Election* [“KYE”] Awareness campaign. Voter Awareness Assistant [“VAA”] teams conducted 3,870 voter awareness sessions in Fiji.

The first phase of the KYE ran for six weeks starting 15 March 2018 to 30 April 2018. Special attention was paid to Pre-Poll voting areas with a specially designed voter information for these voters.

The awareness sessions included a flip chart presentation on the electoral processes leading up to the 2018 General Election as well as general information about the voting process. VAA Teams also used a 3D model to illustrate the voting process inside the Polling Station. Voters were also provided a copy of the EIB at each awareness session.

Awareness teams were deployed using the rural to urban approach, starting from the most remote villages and communities and working their way towards peri-urban and urban areas. During the KYE, the FEO was able to involve the EC in voter outreach programmes. EC Chairperson Mr Suresh Chandra and other members visited communities, schools and villages to speak directly with voters. They also held informal *talanoa* sessions with voters.

The SoE also held similar engagements in the Northern Division accompanied EC Commissioner Mr. Simone Naiduki.

The total budget for KYE was \$1,15,384.88.

Number of areas visited during KYE: 1,589

Central	Western	Northern	Eastern
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 340 villages ▪ 170 settlements ▪ 69 schools ▪ 31 business houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 497 areas visited ▪ 52 schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 278 villages ▪ 34 schools visited ▪ 3 tertiary institutions visited ▪ 18 business houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 201 villages ▪ 13 schools visited

To complement KYE, the FEO ran a mass media campaign to educate voters on the 2018 General Election. These included daily advertising on radio, television, newspapers and billboard advertising.

The FEO also produced two minute educational videos which aired every night on Fiji TV and FBC TV during prime-time viewership. A total of nine videos played over 31 days. The subjects were:

- Key dates
- Registration
- Postal Voting
- Pre-Poll
- Election Day
- Ballot Paper printing process
- Counting of Ballot Papers
- Results – Provisional and Results
- Seat Allocation

Radio	TV	Newspaper	Billboard
4 radio ads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch of KYE1 [x2] ▪ EIB now available in 6 languages [x2] 168 announcer mentions on awareness and registration schedules	4 radio ads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch of KYE1 [x2] ▪ EIB now available in 6 languages [x2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 24 newspaper publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 x Election Information Booklet billboards

The total cost for the KYE Media Campaign was \$280,306.84.



Electoral Commission members at the launch of the *Know Your Election Awareness Campaign* on 14 March 2018. (L-R) Ms Margot Jenkins, Ratu Paula Halaiwalu, Mr Suresh Chandra (EC Chair) Mr Simione Naiduki and Ms Kavita Raniga.

KYE Awareness Drive II

The delay in the announcement of an election date allowed the FEO to launch a second voter awareness campaign. KYE II ran from 18 September to 01 October 2018 - targeting maritime areas.

25 teams were deployed to 282 Polling Venues which would be voting under Pre-Poll and would not as easily be able to access FEO services as those voters on the mainland.

Central	Western	Northern	Eastern
10	43	44	185

105 VAA teams were deployed in all four Divisions. 70,000 Pre-Poll voting brochures were distributed, along with 30,000 Person of Choice brochures and approximately 600,000 Election Day brochures.

Newspaper publication of the awareness schedules ran for 15 consecutive days during the three weeks' drive. The FEO also used radio announcer mentions to disseminate information for voters who do not have access to newspapers or other means of mass communication.

KYE II was also heavily used to encourage eligible Fijians to register to vote in the 2018 General Election. While teams were deployed to maritime areas, the FEO set up mobile registration centres in all major towns and cities.

To market these effectively, the FEO booked live *Outside Broadcasts* with Fiji Broadcasting Corporation and Communications Fiji Ltd.

Details of KYE II OBs

Radio Station	Location/Venue	Station	Date/Time
CFL	Suva/Ivi Triangle	All 5 stations	22 September 2018 9am-1pm
	Nausori/Nakasi	All 5 Stations	29 September 2018 10am-2pm
FBC	Nausori/Nakasi	All 6 Stations	29 September 2018 10am- 2pm

Television ads also ran on FBC TV and Fiji TV urging eligible Fijians to register.

The total budget for KYE II media campaign was \$30,268.66 while the deployment budget for KYE II was \$495,467.92. The nationwide drive concluded a day before when the *Writ* of Election was issued on 01 October 2018.

Overseas voter registration

A total of 221 overseas voter awareness/registration sessions were conducted from 2017 to 2018 in the following countries and cities:

Country	Cities
Australia	Sydney [2]; Canberra; Adelaide; Townsville; Victoria [2]; Western Australia; Queensland [2]; North Territory
New Zealand	Auckland [3]; Wellington [2]; Christchurch; South Island
USA	California, Sacramento [2] Seattle, Santa Rosa, San Rafael, San Bruno; East Coast
UAE	Dubai, Abu Dhabi
Kuwait	Kuwait
Europe	Switzerland, Netherlands, France, Belgium
Indonesia	Jakarta
Canada	Vancouver [2]
Hawaii	Hawaii
United Kingdom	London; Ireland
Marshall Islands	Majuro

Nauru	Nauru
Korea	Seoul

For the 2018 General Election, the FEO developed an overseas voter registration kit specifically for postal voters. This contained the overseas voter registration flyer, promotional materials such as bookmarks, wristband, Postal Voting information brochures and the FEO's *Lavetiviti* newsletter.

FEO Media Events

The FEO conducted 107 press conferences from November 2017 until the end of the 2018 General Election. These were vital in order to engage with mainstream media and propagate key messages for voters and other stakeholders.

43 press releases were issued in order to update the media on FEO activities during the *Writ* period. Accredited media were also invited or allowed access to the following key events:

- Issuance of the *Writ*
- Nomination of Candidates
- National Candidates List Ball Draw
- Printing of Ballot Papers
- Shredding of spoilt Ballot Papers and offcuts
- Packing of sensitive material (Pre-Poll and Election Day)
- Dispatch of Ballot Boxes to the Divisions
- Receipt/verification of Postal Ballots
- Launch of Pre-Poll voting
- Election Day voting
- Counting of Pre-Poll and Postal Votes (National Count Centre)
- Entry of provisional results (National Results Centre)
- Data flush and entry of final result (National Results Centre)
- Handover of Final National Results Tally
- Seat Allocation
- Return of *Writ*

All FEO updates on Election Day were carried live by the national TV news services Fiji One News and FBC News. This is in addition to live Facebook videos run by other news organisations as well as the FEO's own social media accounts.

Media Monitoring

In the lead up to the 2018 General Election, the FEO also commenced its own Media Monitoring exercise. Daily news reports related to the 2018 General Election were compiled and sent to the SoE, the EC and other Senior Management staff.

The Media Monitoring service was also able to conduct fact-checks on articles run by the mainstream media and issue clarifications as well as request corrections where necessary. Articles were sourced from local newspapers, local news websites and social media accounts of news organisations. Media Monitoring also included international coverage of the 2018 General Election.

This service was expanded to include social media pages and accounts closer to Election Day.

Daily updates were sent at 7am, 1.15pm and 5.15pm from July 2017 until 30 November 2018.

Radio and Television Advertising

The FEO capitalised on existing channels of communication, i.e. radio, newspaper and television for mass dissemination of key messages before, during and after the 2018 General Election.

Advertisements on radio and television focused heavily on the following:

- EOs Recruitment Drive
- SMS Polling Venue Locator
- Nationwide Voter Awareness drives
- Contract signing for EOs
- Postal Voting process
- Pre-Poll voting process
- VIB distribution,
- Results App, Election Jingle [in English, Hindi and iTaukei],
- Pre-Poll venues
- What to bring (on Election Day)

Television advertisements

All television advertisements for the 2018 General Election – including 2 minute educational videos were produced by the FEO.

The Communications team includes a camera operator/photographer who is skilled at filming and editing. This has enabled the FEO to produce its own content for national TV broadcasts as well as social media promotion. Existing staff were used as talent in all video productions. All scripts were also written in-house with multiple layers of vetting and approvals.

The FEO is now fully in control of all video content, which will be vital for future Election coverages.

The information below outlines the number of advertisements, and from which commercial service provider, by medium.

Fiji Broadcasting Corporation

Type of advertisement	Number of ads/spots
30 second TV advertisements	134 ads

Fiji Television Limited

Type of advertisement	Number of ads/spots
30 second TV advertisements	168

MaiTV Limited

Type of advertisement	Number of ads/spots
30 second TV advertisements	154 (plus 60 x 1-min segments) <i>Extra 30 x 30-sec ads and 6 x 1-min jingles at no extra cost</i>

Radio advertisements

Fiji Broadcasting Corporation

Type of advertisement	Number of ads/spots
30 second Radio advertisements	7,284 advertisements

Communications Fiji Limited

Type of advertisement	Number of ads/spots
30 second TV advertisements	18, 545 advertisements <i>(based on long term package deals)</i>

The FEO engaged media and publication houses on ‘package basis’ deals to ensure that there is value for money as well as high levels of engagements. Individualizing ad procurement is expensive due to small number of service providers and the generally similar market access.

Web Banner campaign

A web banner campaign was also conducted on Communications Fiji Limited website www.fijivillage.com. The choice of web banner was designed for a particular target audience:

- Contract signing by EO staff– 5 days
- Overseas registration drive – 21 days
- Overseas registration drive – 40 days
- Postal Voting Application opens – 36 days
- Pre-poll venues – 36 days

Cinema campaign

There were two cinema campaigns run during the aforementioned period of November 2017 to November 2018. The campaigns were on:

- Contract signing – four weeks
- All Fijians should vote & Election Jingle English/Hindi/iTaukei – six weeks.

Newspapers & Magazines

Newspapers and magazines provided an integral component of the voter awareness program. Full-page advertisements focused on voter awareness schedules, EO recruitment schedules, training and payment schedules, Pre-Poll schedules as well as general voter information.

The newspaper agencies also allowed for insertions of statistics pertaining to the 2018 General Election, i.e. voter registration statistics, Pre-Poll registered number of voters, Election Day registered voters, postal voters' registration number and the number of registered voters in each division including their age and gender.

The FEO was also able to secure full page wraps on the Fiji Sun which allowed for mass awareness on key messages including the 1500 SMS platform, How to Vote, Results App and the Ideal Voter.

Election Jingle

For the 2018 General Election, the FEO launched an Election jingle in English, Hindi and i-Taukei. This was a new initiative designed to increase voter turnout and generate interest in the 2018 General Election itself.

The 30 second jingle was composed by EC Commissioner Ms Margot Jenkins who has decades of experience in the marketing industry as well as a musical background. The jingle was sung in all three languages by the same artist.

The Election jingle was aired heavily on all radio and TV stations as part of the FEO media campaign in the 2018 General Election.

The jingle provided an innovative approach to engaging with voters rather than traditional means of advertising which were previously employed. The video production of the jingle was also managed in-house.

The 1500 Call Centre

A total of 34,561 calls were received by the 1500 Call Centre from 17 September 2018 to 20 November 2018. The Call Centre was outsourced to Vodafone Fiji Limited.

Call Centre staff were trained by the FEO Communications Division to answer Frequently Asked Questions [“FAQ’s”]. These FAQs were developed and continuously updated by the Communications Division. Up to ten staff operated the Call Centre from 7am to 9pm daily.

Queries that could not be handled by the Call Centre were escalated to the FEO Command Centre.

1500 SMS Text Platform

A free 1500 SMS platform was activated in February 2018 to allow voters to find their Polling Station. The platform which was hosted by Vodafone Fiji Limited was available for use on all mobile phone networks and was a free service.

This platform was designed to assist the voter to find the Polling Venue that they had been assigned to. Nearer to the Election, the FEO was able to put further details such as the exact Polling Station. This greatly assisted voters to be better informed as to which queue they needed to join.

The total number of SMS received for the 2018 General Election was **593,458** for all networks.

Talkback programs

Appearance on radio and television talk back shows continue to be a part of the voter awareness program. The FEO has found talkback shows effective especially when the SoE is on hand to receive calls or queries and provide an immediate response. Callers from locations such as the Lau group and Naitasiri utilised this platform to seek clarifications.

A total of 28 talkback shows were attended by the SoE, Acting Director Strategic Development and Communications, and Director Operations.

Lavetiviti Newsletter

The *Lavetiviti* Newsletter which was launched in April 2017, has seen six editions published and successfully distributed nationwide during awareness drives. The newsletter provides quarterly updates on FEO’s preparation towards the 2018 General Election.

The newsletter is a tribute to the late Ms. Elenoa Lavetiviti who joined the FEO in May 2014. She was a strong, dedicated person who did not let physical disabilities hinder her work.

Lavetiviti in i-Taukei means ‘Lifting Fiji’.

The FEO has to date printed 15,000 copies of the first and second edition; and 10,000 copies of editions 3 to 6. The *Lavetiviti* contains updates on all FEO activities including training, voter engagement, awareness initiatives, engagement with other Election Management Bodies and international organisations as well as profiles of FEO staff.

Due to the high level of activity and constant forward momentum at the FEO, it was seen fit to publish a newsletter which would keep our stakeholders up to date on all activities. All editions of the *Lavetiviti* are available at the FEO Headquarters in Suva, all Voter Services Centres around Fiji as well as an online version <http://www.feo.org.fj/media-centre/publications-2/lavetiviti>.

A Special Edition *Lavetiviti* to commemorate four years of FEO's existence was launched in April 2018 with 10,000 copies printed. The Fourth Anniversary edition allowed the FEO to reflect on achievements since the 2014 General Election and improvements which were to be implemented in 2018.

Other Awareness initiatives

During the *Writ* period, 37 billboards were used to promote key electoral messages such as 'Find out your polling venue by texting voter card number to 1500'; VIB; How to vote (circle, tick or cross) to name but a few. Similarly, 15 standee billboards were put up as well and 28 "Change of Polling Venue" banners.

Brochures

FEO distributed 670,000 brochures in roadshows, corporate events, community, schools, religious organisations business houses and VIB house-to-house distribution drives, displays at major retail outlets, and also through FEO's Voter Service Centres. Brochures were created for the following topics:

- Election Day
- Pre-poll
- Persons of choice – voting with disability brochure
- Postal Voting

Social Media

Social media is the ultimate platform of communication for the FEO. It allows the FEO to engage directly with voters and other stakeholders. Managing our own accounts also means that the FEO can strategically promote key messages relevant to the overall activities of the organisation.

For the 2018 General Election, the FEO managed two Facebook accounts:

- Fijian Elections Office
- Fiji Elects 2018

The main FEO account *Fijian Elections Office* targets voters locally and internationally while *Fiji Elects 2018* is aimed at EOs who were employed for the 2018 General Election.

However, due to the popularity of both accounts, the FEO was able to merge its key messages in order to reach as much of the target audience as possible. The FEO Communications team was able to resolve a number of voter queries received via the private messaging platform.

The types of queries received before and during the *Writ* period, were as follows:

- When is the Election
- Polling Venue location
- How to register
- Where to register
- Postal Voting application
- Overseas Voter services
- EOs queries
- Salary/pay delays
- Disabled voter assistance
- Pre-Poll schedules
- Polling times
- Election result queries

The FEO also used Facebook for news updates by running live videos of all media events, press conferences and other activities carried out in relation to the 2018 General Election. To date, there have been 110 live videos hosted by the FEO.

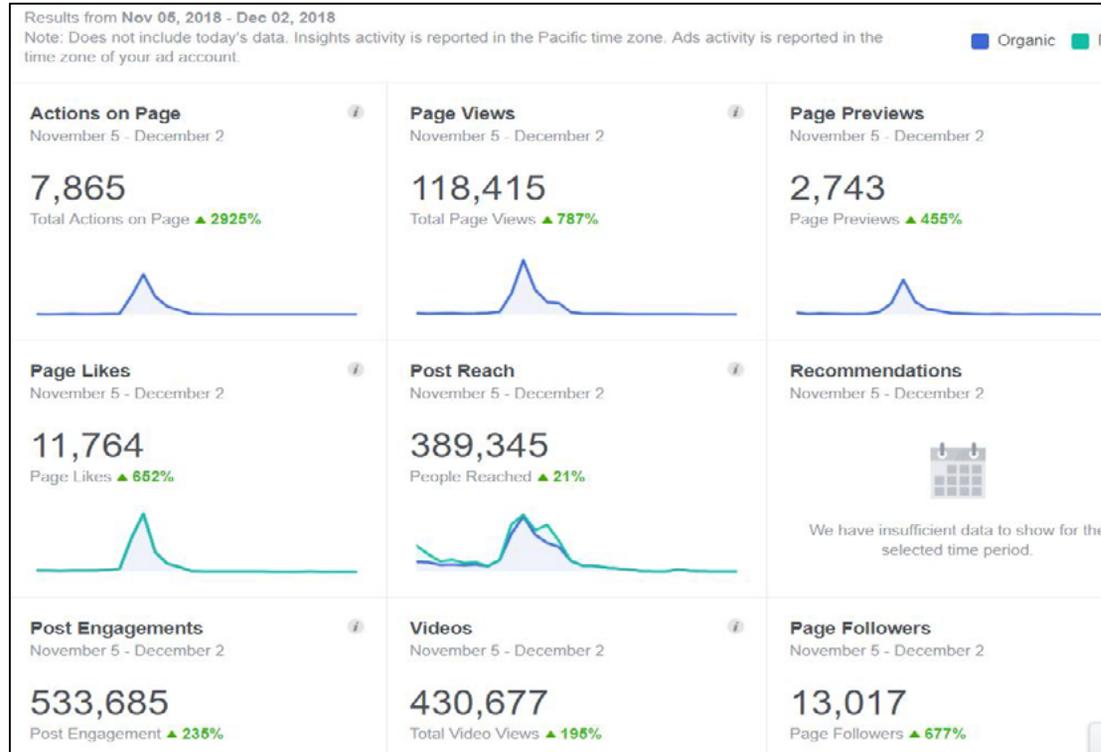
Also a first for the FEO was the live CCTV feed from the secure FEO Warehouse, the National Count Centre and the National Results Centre hosted on both FEO Facebook accounts. These 24-hours video feeds were accessible to anyone around the world. The feed ended once the 2018 General Election was complete.

Below is a table showing total followers for each FEO Facebook account:

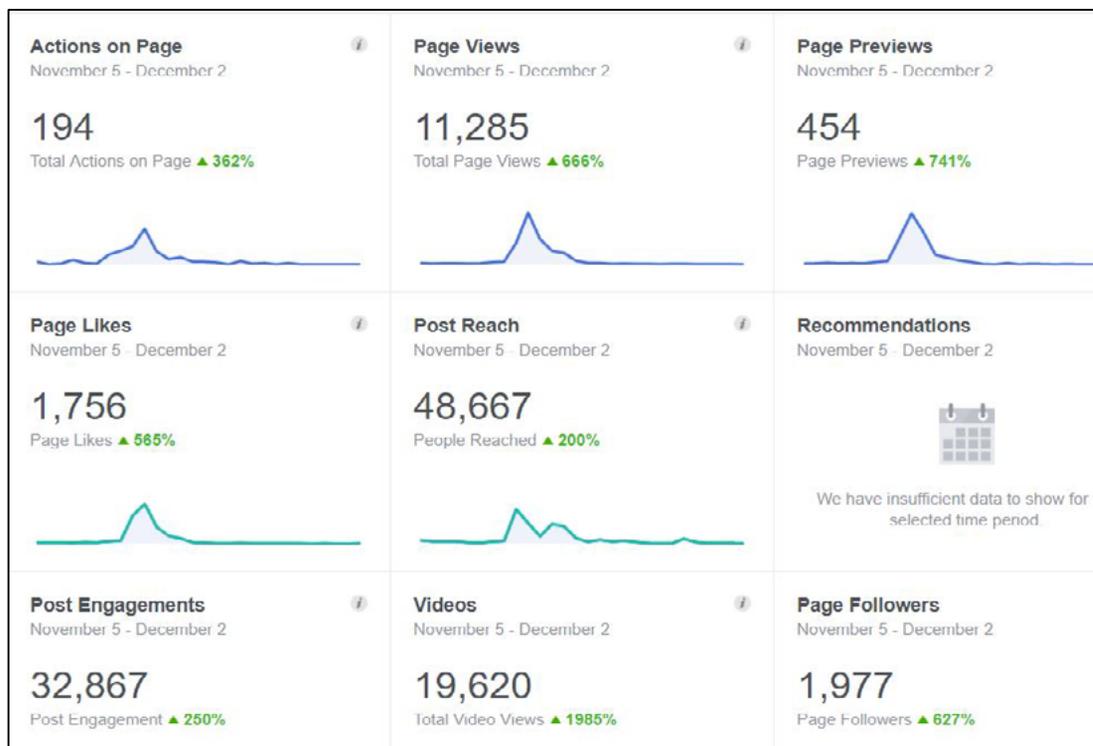
FEO Facebook account	Fiji Elects 2018 account
71,324 likes	37,135 likes
72,345 followers	37,135 followers

Facebook statistics

This table illustrates how engagement and access of FEO peaked during the *Writ* period.



This table illustrates how engagement and access of the Fiji Elects 2018 peaked during the *Writ* period.



Election News and Election Talk

This new initiative by the Communications Department proved to be successful in bringing to the attention of voters' first-hand information about the electoral process and key aspect of the electoral timeline.

In 2018, a total of 57 e-News videos were developed and disseminated via the FEO social media accounts.

The FEO also hosted its in-house LIVE talk back show *Election Talk* [**e-Talk**] where senior management staff – SoE, DSoE, Director of Operations and others were invited to talk on the topic of the week.

This was aired on Facebook LIVE giving public the opportunity to comment and ask questions to the guests.

The FEO had four weekly e-Talk segments in the *Writ* period.

Special Projects

VoterCard 2.0

Due to the continual updating of the National Register of Voters which is required under section 5 of the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012, every voter who has changed or made corrections to their residential address is required to update their voter information with the FEO.

This practice, together with the registration of new eligible voters which is done continually has caused the VoterCards stock balance to decrease drastically over the last four years. In late 2016, before ordering new voter registration cards to replenish its current stock, the FEO decided to look into redesigning and updating information on the VoterCards.

The new design which was approved and launched by the EC in April 2017 saw the following improvements to the VoterCards which became known as the VoterCard 2.0:

- FEO contact details updated including phone numbers and website address.
- Customised to suit the FEO operational needs and ability to track the number of card issues for a voter.
- Incorporation of additional security & safety features to avoid copying and duplication of cards.

In keeping with international best practices, the FEO introduced the VoterCard 2.0 and promoted it to be simple with basic and relevant information, user friendly, durable and readable. The VoterCard is Fiji's most universally used and accepted ID Card.

Year 10 Introduction to Elections Curriculum

The FEO as part of its 2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan, has to ensure that there is always a well-informed community capable of actively participating in the electoral process. A partnership agreement was signed by FEO with the Ministry of Education to create an *Introduction to Elections* curriculum for inclusion in the education sector. This project is in line with Goal 9, Objective 1 and Activity 31 of the Strategic Plan, which is to deliver voter education program targeting newly eligible voters.

An Australian consultant was engaged by the FEO from the period of June to November 2017 to develop this electoral program for Year 10 students called "*The 'Introduction to Elections: A Learning Module for Year 10'*".

The curriculum which was tailored to the Year 10 Social Science subject was handed over to the Ministry of Education on 11 January 2018 consists of:

- Students Workbook
- Teachers Manual
- Mock Election Kit [consisting of mock election materials]

Students will use the Mock Election Kit consisting of mock election materials to conduct a mock election activity in their schools. Some of the materials in the kit include ballot boxes, ballot papers, voting screens, VIBs and VoterCards.

Followed on from the development of the curriculum, 348 teachers from 171 secondary schools around the country were trained on how to use the curriculum resources on 12 January 2018. These teachers escalated the knowledge to more than 16,000 Year 10 students across the country.

The new module enabled the students to have hands-on experience on the voting process and at the same time prepares them for the next two years where they will be eligible to vote in the General Election. It provides them with an opportunity to better understand and participate in an election and to become informed and motivated citizens in the Fijian electoral process.

The FEO is currently focusing on advancing the curriculum by providing monitoring plans and how the curriculum could be further developed into tertiary level in Fiji.

Quality Assurance [“QA”] for 2018 General Election

The 2018 General Election had a QA team setup to assess and evaluate the implementation electoral processes against the approved FEO plans and standard operating procedures. The team comprised eight staff. The team was led by our Internal Auditor.

The legal framework and FEO polices & procedures were used as a guide to evaluate whether all electoral procedures were followed for the election areas. An internal QA checklist was also developed to guide the team members on the scope of each election area.

From 01 October 2018 to 18 November 2018, when the results were announced, the team worked either in eight hour or 12 hour shifts. Some of the election operations such as printing of ballot papers at the printer, packing of election materials at the FEO warehouse, National Count Centre operations and National Results Centre operations were functioning for 24-hours therefore the QA team was scheduled to be present for 24-hours on a shift basis.

During the pre-Election and Election Day period, QA attended the following range of electoral and election related events including:

- From receiving of Postal Voting applications, data entry, scanning, QA process, barcoding to filing process.
- Receiving of Nomination forms from various registered party and close of Nominations.
- National Candidate draw and publication of candidate names in newspapers.
- Publication of Polling Venues.
- Pre-Poll training.
- Election Official Refresher Training
- Presiding Officer Refresher Training
- Logistics training.
- Hub Leader training.
- National Results Centre Management training.
- National Count Centre training.

- Media publications such as election related advertisements in newspapers, radio, Facebook and media conferences.
- Printing of Ballot Papers.
- Packing of election materials.
- Checking of election materials by Presiding Officers at the hub offices.
- Verification of Postal Voting.
- Opening of polls, closing of polls, counting at Polling Stations and transmission of results from Polling Stations.
- Counting of Pre-Poll and postal votes at National Count Centre.
- Data entry of results from Protocol of Results, scanning and filing of Protocol of Results at National Results Centre.

The QA report was presented to the SoE, DSoE and the Directorate heads. It contained issues discovered during QA and suggested recommendations for immediate corrective actions. The FEO will rely heavily on the findings of the QA from the 2018 General Election to review and strengthen election practices for the future.

2018 General Election Visitor Program

The Election Visitor Program [**“EVP”**] was a four day event, held in Suva from Monday 12 November till Thursday 15 November. The FEO had put together a team of three staff who formed the Election Visitor Program Secretariat [**“EVP Secretariat”**] to facilitate the program. The EVP Secretariat comprised the International Relations Officer, an Administrative Assistant and a Photographer.

The FEO hosted a total of 13 participants from seven countries – Australia, Fiji, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tokelau, as well as one participant from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance [**“International IDEA”**]. A total of 15 participants had confirmed attendance, however, due to logistical issues – two of the regional participants (from Kiribati and Federated States of Micronesia) were unable to attend.

Selection of the local participants was based on the submission of Expressions of Interest [**“EoIs”**] to the FEO, which were screened based on merit, interest and the outcomes the participant wished to achieve from the program. The FEO received a total of 14 EoIs from which five participants were selected.

The EVP commenced with the welcome dinner hosted by the SoE on 12 November, followed by a briefing from the FEO Senior Managers on 13 November 2018.

On Election Day, the EVP Participants visited three Polling Stations - Vashisht Muni Memorial Primary School in Navua, Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons Complex in Suva and the FEO Ground Shed at the USP Statham Campus in Suva. The participants also visited the FEO Call Centre based at the Vodafone Headquarters in Tamavua.

During the day, the participants also visited the FEO Command Centre based at the FEO Headquarters in Toorak, the FEO Media Centre, National Count Centre and National Results

Centre based at the National Gymnasium in Suva. These visits were followed by the Election Night Cocktail evening hosted by the EC Chairperson at the Fiji Museum.

The program concluded on 15 November 2018 with the debriefing session at the FEO Headquarters in Toorak with the SoE.

Whilst the Program was compact, it allowed for ample networking opportunities as well as facilitation of the exchange of ideas between interested Fijians, regional electoral practitioners, FEO Senior Managers and the EC. This was reflected through the positive comments and feedback of the participants, that were shared during the debrief session. This was the first time Fiji has hosted a Visitor Program.

Election Management Information System[“EMIS”] Department

The EMIS department was created in 2015. Following the review of the 2014 General Election it was deemed necessary that this department take on the role of creating and looking after systems and data required for the use in the 2018 General Election and moving forward. The department was created under the Executive Directorate and supported five systems which were:

- Election Management System
- Election Officials Recruitment System
- Election Officials Management System
- Mercury App
- Results Management Information System

Election Management System [“EMS”]

The EMS was the application used by the FEO to capture and validate operational data for the 2018 General Election. It consists of five modules which are:

- Polling Venue
- Logistics
- Postal
- Party Registration, and
- Candidate Nominations.

The EMS had two modes, the testing mode that was also used for training, and the production mode which was where the live data was used by the Operations Directorate. The system can be accessed based on role and for some modules by division. This is to ensure demarcation of roles and also data responsibility by location. For example, a Data Entry Clerk can see only venues in their own division for data entry allocations. Consistent roles in the system are Data Entry, QA, Supervisor, Approver and Final Approver. Other roles are present specific to that module due to

the requirement of the process, for example, Party Registration Officer for the Party Registration Module.

Polling Venue Module

This module looks after the Polling Venue Assessment that allows the Operations team to make an informed recommendation, as the assessment stores the GPS coordinates, name, division, the photos of the venue, the availability of storage and the availability of rooms for other Polling Stations. We also recorded contact details of staff, access of the Polling Venue and how to get there. Project staff were able to recommend the Polling Venue for use or to use an alternative Polling Venue.

Statistics from the Polling Venue:

- Polling Venue Number - 1436
- Voters Assigned to Polling Stations - 2173
- Voter Numbers- 637,527

Logistics Module

The Logistics module is used in conjunction with the polling venue module. Materials required by each Polling Venue are given to the logistics team to create '*packages*.' These packages are easy for the logistics team to barcode and assign to each station and track their return. The logistics team also gets the GPS coordinates from the Polling Venue to plot delivery routes and types of transportation for delivery. In 2018 it was possible to barcode and individually identify each package that was created by the logistics team.

Postal Vote Management Module

This module allows for the FEO to record all voters that apply for Postal Voting once the Postal Voting Application process commences. This module is used only during the Election period; it begins on Announcement Day for receiving of applications to when we verify postal votes for counting on Election Day. The Data Entry Team enters in the details of an applicant and the details are then verified against the voter's registration.

The Postal Voting Application form is then scanned and uploaded into the system to store the signature of the voter. During verification the system allows the Postal Officer to compare the signature on the declaration form to the specimen signature on the scanned application in the system. This made the process easier for the postal team by having this information easily accessible.

- Postal Applications received - 11,294
- Postal Applications Approved - 9,180

The Postal module also allowed the team to pack packages and deliver by location. The Categories were as follows:

- Fiji Interior
- Fiji Outer Islands
- Fiji Special

- Australia/New Zealand
- Overseas – Pacific
- Overseas Rest of the World

Activity	Number
Applications	
Applied	11294
Approved	11257
Rejected	37
Packages Returned	
Received	10320
Verified - Rejected	1092
Verified – Admitted to Count	9180
Late	48

During the Election period the Postal Team used the Overseas Division to demarcate from Pre-Poll and Poll. The FEO had used the 2014 data to project that it would have 16 Polling Stations (maximum of 500 ballot papers per station) for its Postal Votes. However, since 9180 ballot papers were admitted to Count, the total number of Polling Stations was increased to 19 in line with the rule of having a maximum of 500 ballot papers per Polling Station.

Division	Polling Stations
Postal	19

Political Party Registration Module

The Political Party registration module allowed the Legal and Compliance team in the FEO to verify and categorise by division each member of the Political Party during registration. This was done to capture the voter details as well as their signature and produce a publication in time for gazetting and publication. In line with the legal requirements, the system verifies that a voter is not a member of more than one Political Party. The address of the voter is pegged to a division and the system checks that they can only sign for their own division. This ensures that each Political Party meets the number required for each division.

The system was used to register three Political Parties: Unity Fiji which was registered in July 2017; HOPE which was registered on 10 February 2018 and Proposed 'Zionist' whose application was rejected on 6 December 2017.

This system reduces data entry and verification time to four days in comparison to 10 days in the past. The registration process has been made more efficient and the processing time for applications has significantly reduced.

There were five Political Parties that were imported from the old system into EMS. EORS cross references this module to check for party membership when an Applicant applies to work at the FEO.

Candidate Nomination Management Module

This module allows the team to enter details for candidates that have been nominated from each party. It allows FEO to scan photos and names of Candidates from voter registration. It also easily generates files from the details captured to be sent to stakeholders for Candidate verification in a timely manner. Once verification is cleared and the Objection Period has ended, the FEO easily generates the Candidate names ready for the National Candidates List Ball Draw., which is a sub-module in this module for simply inputting the number for each Candidate through a dual entry with a Supervisor checking for any mismatches. Once the National Candidates List Ball Draw concluded the FEO was able to generate the VIB through the system and send it out for printing. This proved to be very handy for the team as the window for generating and printing the VIB was very tight.

The system was also able to calculate the number of Ballot Papers and VIBs required for each Polling Station.

Election Official Recruitment System ["EORS"]

The EORS was developed to replace the Recruitment System that was used in the 2014 General Election. The innovation included in this system was the ability for applicants to directly input into the system their own details and allowed them to sit a recruitment test. This cut down on the recruitment time for the Human Resource department in the amount of paper work they needed to process and data entry by their own teams.

At the end of the recruitment, applicants attached required documents with their printed out Application Form and handed it in to the Recruitment teams. The system allowed applicants to choose their preferred Polling Station and role.

Based on the calculation by the system, the FEO was able to move applicants to the second phase of recruitment which was the half-day training for all EOs. The system allowed the FEEC to allocate potential EO's training venues, dates and times. At the end of the training the test marks and trainer's recommendation was entered into the system to allow the Human Resource team and the FEEC to assign them to their appropriate roles.

The system also allowed generated details to be sent for verification to banks, the Police Criminal Records section, FNPF and FRCA to ensure that the FEO would be able to process payment for training allowances and ultimately for Pre-Poll and Polling Day work.

Statistics for EORS:

- Oldest Applicant: 81 years old
- Youngest Applicant: 18 years old

Stages	Total
Recruitment	20,238
Allocated for Training Session	30,842
Contracted to Work (EO & HL)	9,718

** Numbers included refresher training and dual roles.*

1501 SMS Platform

For the ease of communications between the FEO and future Election Officials, the 1501 SMS Platform was used by the team to send out messages requested by the HR and FEEC team.

Below are the statistics of total SMS sent monthly:

Year	Month	Total SMS Sent
2017	July	1,345
	August	27,898
	September	13,193
	October	2,282
	November	5,981
	December	5,917
2018	January	5,469
	February	2,485
	March	7,361
	April	1,769
	May	2,253
	June	1,096
	July	0
	August	542
	September	505
	October	17,189
	November	13,671

Election Official Management System ["EOMS"]

This was a system developed by the EMIS Team to help the Corporate Services Directorate manage EOs that were contracted to work on Pre-Poll, Poll Day and the Count Team. This would be easier for both the HR and Finance team to ensure the smooth payment of EOs without the use of Microsoft Excel and paper between the two departments.

The EOMS imported EO details with their assigned Polling Station and Role from the EORS. The system is web based and was available to the Recruitment Officer at each division to flag attendance for each EO after polling. This was checked by QA team in the HR department at the FEO Headquarters before it allowed the Finance department to generate the pay file. The EOMS system had a few 'smarts' built in to reverse payment schedules or individual payments. The pay file was then uploaded to the Finance System for payment.

Geographic Information Systems [“GIS”]

The establishment of the GIS Unit in 2016 proved to be a successful venture for the FEO. Over the past 2 years, the FEO has developed maps and datasets which assisted the various internal Departments in their projects. The FEO has also shared data with other organisations such as the Fiji Police Force, Fiji Navy, Fiji Military Forces and the National Disaster Management Office.

Below is a summary of the projects completed by the GIS Team:

Project Title	GIS Staff	Date Completed
Pre-Poll Presiding Officers Journal	Josua Koto	November 3 2018
Polling Venue Assessment Mapping Dashboard	Josua Koto and Marika Veikoso	July 2018
Pre-poll Monitoring Dashboard	Leo Vanualailai	November 10 2018
Count Centre Ballot Box Monitoring System	Leo Vanualailai and Josua Koto	November 16 2018
3D Interactive Pre Poll Mapping	Leo Vanualailai	October 24 2018
Logistics Hub Delivery Map	Marika Veikoso	November 12 2018
Live Results Mapping	Marika Veikoso	November 18 2018
Election Information Look Up Map	Josua Koto	July 2018

The Pre-Poll Presiding Officers Journal

The Pre-Poll Presiding Officers Journal was developed specifically as a guide for Presiding Officers when they are deployed to their Polling Venues during the course of Pre-Poll voting. It contains vital information and instructions important for the purpose of Pre-Poll. The role of GIS in this document was to provide maps on each Pre-Poll circuit. There were 92 teams that were deployed during Pre-Poll. Therefore, the GIS team had to create 92 different maps - one for each team.

Polling Venue Assessment Mapping Dashboard

Survey123 for *ArcGIS* was used to explore the potential of using a field data collection application via Android phones to gather detailed information about a Polling Venue. This application enables users to fill out a digital form and is directly linked to an operation dashboard where it is visualised near real time upon uploading the digital form. Other capabilities include push notification via email and auto filling of the Polling Venue Assessment [“PVA”] Form.

3D Interactive Pre – Poll Mapping

Just by scrolling through the Interactive web page, one was able to instantly understand how Pre-Poll teams were going to conduct Pre-Poll voting throughout Fiji. The project was aimed at using the most cutting edge technology available to give voters, stakeholders and the general public an in-depth understanding of Pre-Poll.

The information provided on this 3D mapping platform includes:

- Voter count at each Polling Venue
- Exact locations of all Pre-Poll venues
- The route that teams took to get to the venues
- Flight paths of aeroplanes and helicopters
- Area Offices
- Foot tracks
- Sea navigational routes
- Polling material exchange sites
- Historical aerial imagery
- Geographical terrain in 3D
- Pre-Poll Voting times
- Ballot Boxes the teams have at a particular time
- Team names
- Travel modes

At a glance, one would have gained so much knowledge of the Pre-Poll Schedules and the logistics involved surrounding the movements of the team.

The expected time taken to complete such a massive and complex project was 4 months. However, the project was completed within three weeks.

The completion of this project signifies the capability of the FEO to harness the most cutting edge technology (3D mapping) to provide the best information for its stakeholders. No Election Management Body in the world has undertaken a project such as this, therefore the project is perfectly aligned to the FEO's vision statement which is to be recognised as a leader in establishing best practice in the conduct of elections. It was viewed over 3,600 times in November 2018 and has an average hit of about 120 views per day (without a marketing budget).

It has gained international recognition within the GIS community and they are very impressed with the project which again promotes the FEO within the GIS user community.

Logistics Hub Delivery Map

The purpose of this project was to give all Hub Leaders a mapping brochure that allowed them to view the delivery routes of their Ballot Boxes from one Polling Venue to the next. There were a total of 101 brochures printed and delivered to Hub Leaders.

Each brochure listed the following:

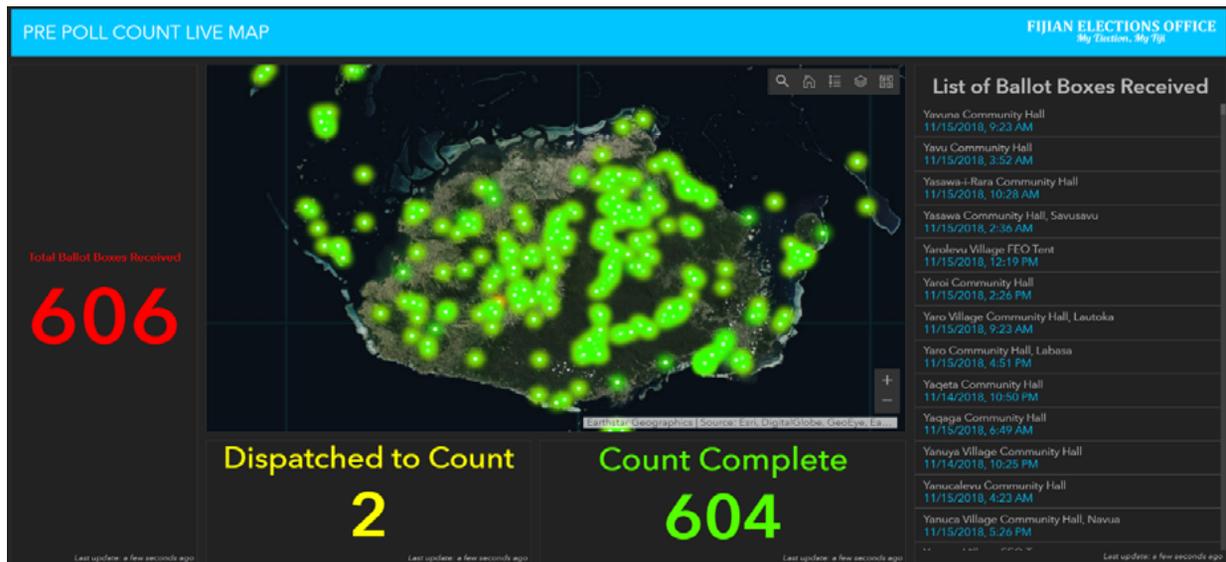
- List of Polling Venues assigned to each hub
- Logistical routes from the hubs to each Polling Station
- Display of travel time, travel distance, and stop dispatch time from the hub to each Polling Station
- Emergency contacts details
- Logistic contacts details

A Mobile Application of the hub delivery map provided with a link from a barcode which is engraved at the back of the booklet which meant that Hub Leaders should be able to view the map on any mobile device (Android or IOS).

National Count Centre Ballot Box Monitoring System

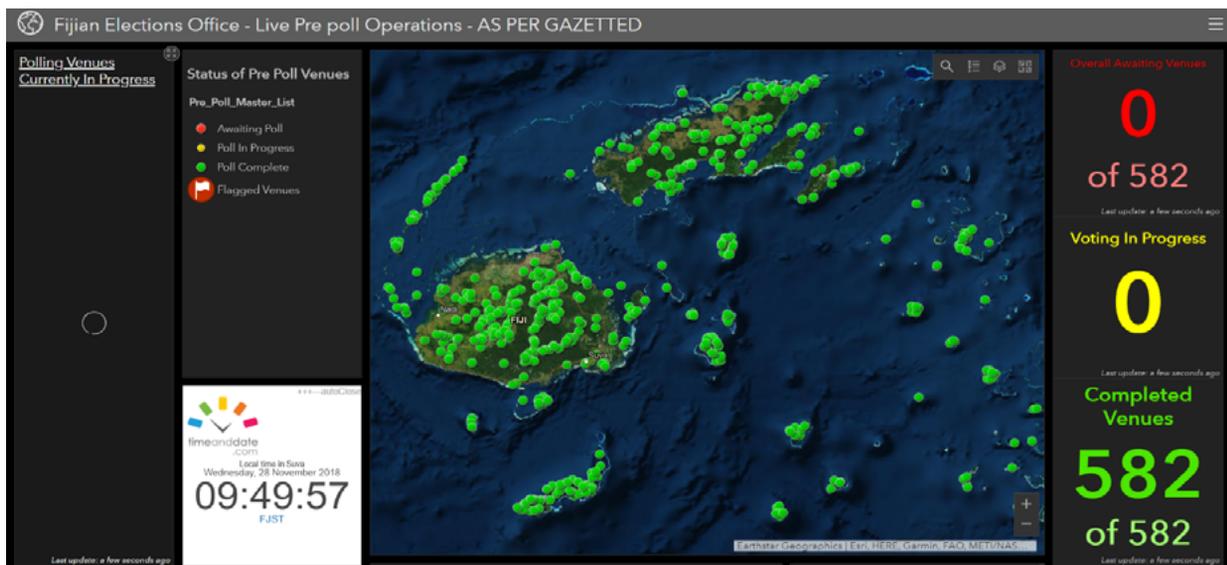
This project was aimed at notifying stakeholders at the National Count Centre of the current status and progress of counting. By viewing the dashboard, one would instantly know the number of Ballot Boxes received, number of Ballot Boxes being counted and the numbers that were yet to be completed. This was monitored by using an app on a smartphone which scans the Ballot Box barcodes and automatically updates the dashboard instantly.

The project was the main tracking board at the National Count Centre as it gave all stakeholders at the Centre a live update of the progress of the count.



Pre-Poll Monitoring Dashboard

The purpose of the project was to give the Operations Directorate and Pre-Poll Coordinator Mr. Villiame Vuiyanuca a constant update on the progress of Pre-Poll during the Pre-Poll period. The project featured a map, number of awaiting Polling Venues, number of Polling Venues that were in process and the number of Polling Venues that were completed.



Elections Information Look Up Map

This Webapp was initially created for risk management in the event that an incident occurred in the field that needed immediate attention; for instance, the immediate evacuation of staff when a natural disaster occurred or if someone needed immediate medical attention.

The application includes the following capabilities:

- Locate the nearest facility (emergency or Polling Venues) using a set buffer distance (figure 1.0)
- Detailed driving directions to and from facilities
- Detailed information on a Polling Venue or emergency facility

The Webapp has extended its reach to the HR department where they need to allocate Polling Day Workers to their nearest Polling Venues. A simple use case would be searching for Polling Venues and getting its exact location on a map and a pop up of the Polling Venue details will be shown such as the manual code, voter count or area.

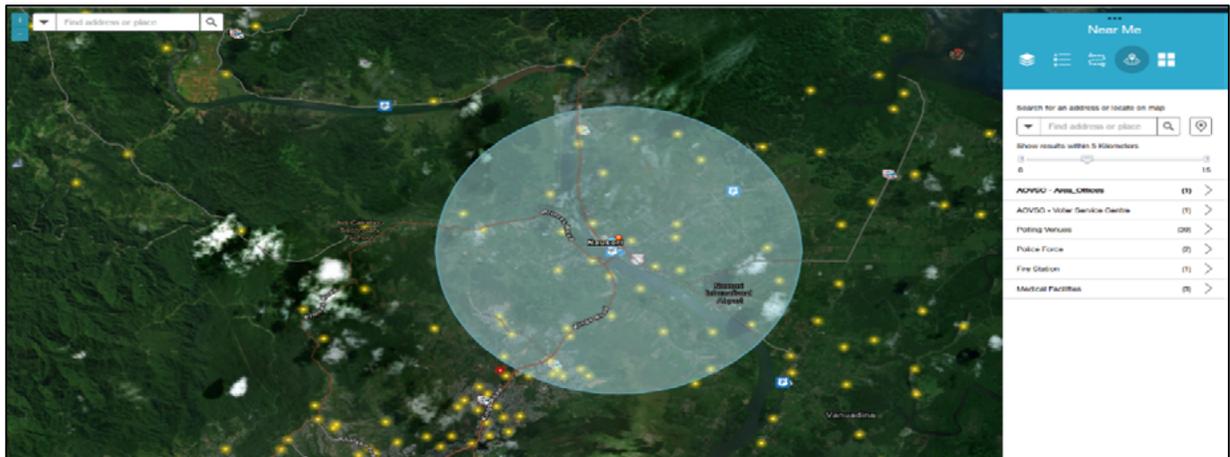


Figure 1.0 shows the buffer distance and the list of available facilities is on the right side of the screen

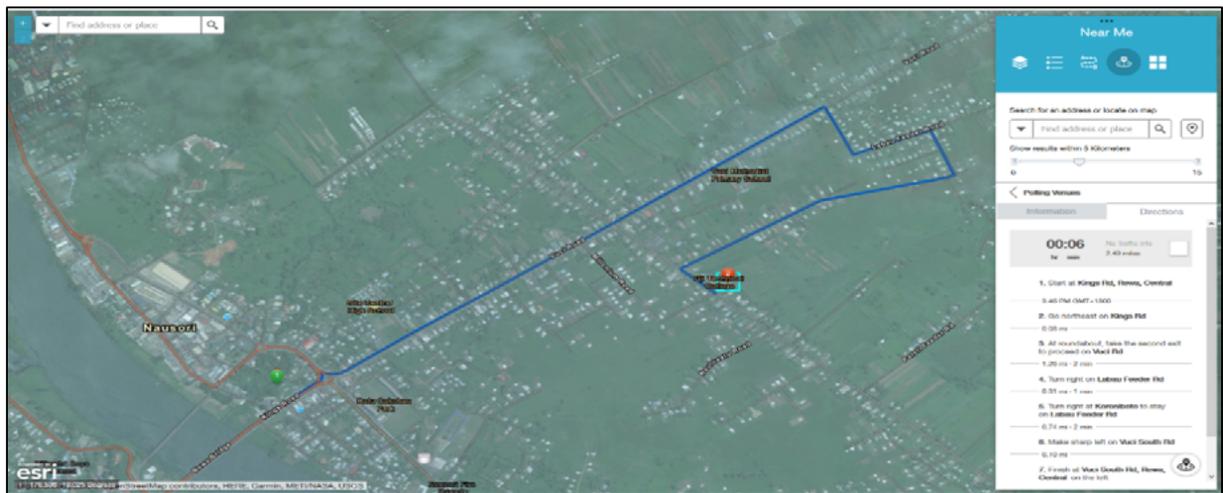


Figure 2.0 shows the detailed directions from point A to B

Electoral Security Advisory Group [“ESAG”]

The ESAG was established on 17 November 2016 to discuss and evaluate security related matters specifically related to electoral activities and provide the necessary recommendations to the FEO.

A Terms of Reference [“ToR”] was signed by the FEO, the Fiji Police Force and the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption [“FICAC”] to convene the ESAG committee.

The ESAG is chaired by FEO’s Director Operations and the members are representatives of the three organisations as outlined in the ToR. The committee held its first meeting on 25 January 2017. Since this first meeting the committee has been meeting regularly, once a month, to discuss security and risk related issues on the various electoral processes of the FEO.

Core Responsibilities:

- Review and analyse the FEO Operations Plans to identify and highlight security issues that are likely to arise;
- Based on the issues highlighted above, provide feedback and recommendations to resolve the security issues;
- Utilise the FEO Operations Plans to make necessary arrangements to properly discharge their respective duties under the Electoral Act;
- Make use of the latest technology and methodology to ensure efficient and secure conduct of elections;
- Establish an appropriate communication mechanism between all the organisations during the Election period.

ESAG Achievements

1. ESAG Standing Operating Procedures [“SOPs”]

It was agreed after the second meeting of the ESAG that SOPs are needed for the effective delivery of responsibilities defined in the ToR. A representative each from FEO, the Fiji Police Force and FICAC were identified to draft the documents before the committee requested the executive arm of ESAG for their endorsement.

The committee had identified three procedures that were needed for the effective function of ESAG. After the developments of these SOP’s and thorough vetting by the committee, the documents were then submitted to the executive arm of ESAG who then endorsed the procedures which were:

- Electoral Security Advisory Group (ESAG) Complaints Procedure;
- Electoral Security Advisory Group (ESAG) Security Procedure; and
- Electoral Security Advisory Group (ESAG) Representation and Committee Procedure.

2. Security Plan for the 2018 General Election

As per responsibilities listed on the ESAG ToR, the committee is expected to discuss and deliberate on the FEO Operations Plan in order to identify and highlight security issues that are likely to arise.

Since the Fiji Police Force was tasked with providing security for the 2018 General Election, it was only appropriate that they developed the security plan based on the FEO's Operational Plan.

Based on this, the FEO had identified the following areas from their Operational Plan as basis for the development of a Security Plan during the pre-Election, Election and post-Election periods.

- Polling Venues
- FEO HQ Office
- Warehouse
- FEO Divisional Offices/ Warehouses
- Postal Voting Venue
- Pre-Poll Voting
- National Count Centre
- National Results Centre
- Company that will be printing Ballot Papers
- Logistics - delivery and dispatch of election materials
- Hubs and Field Offices
- Destruction of Ballot Papers

The FEO had also shared its Polling Venue Provisional List with the Fiji Police Force for their security analysis and the feedback from the Fiji Police Force personnel on the ground had been positive.

The Fiji Police Force also allowed the FEO to use its Police stations and posts around the country as Hub offices. These Hubs were storage points during the dispatch and return of election materials to and from the Polling Stations.

Election Disability Access Working Group [“EDAWG”]

The EDAWG was established on 31 August 2016 to look at ways of making the electoral processes inclusive for persons with disabilities. A ToR was signed by the FEO, the 13 Disability Representative Organisations, Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons [“FNCDP”] and the Pacific Disability Forum which established the working group.

The working group was specifically tasked to strengthen work already done by Disabled Peoples Organisations, FEO’s experience on disability issues as well as identify measures such as procedural reforms and specially targeted materials that will empower persons with disabilities to participate in elections and political processes alongside their fellow citizens.

EDAWG is chaired by the FEO Director Operations and the members are representatives of all the affiliated organisations to the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons including a member from the Pacific Disability Forum. It has a total of 14 members and the working group held its first meeting on 03 October 2016.

Roles and Responsibilities of EDAWG:

The roles and responsibilities of EDAWG were designed to improve access for persons with disabilities in all aspects of the electoral process in Fiji by:

- Ensuring persons with disabilities get an opportunity to access a Voter Registration Card. Persons with disabilities may request for mobile registration to the extent possible in order to be registered and get a VoterCard.
- Selecting accessible voter registration and Polling Stations. All voter registration and Polling Station locations should be accessible to all persons with disabilities to the extent possible.
- Conducting civic and voter education in all accessible formats. All civic and voter education materials should be understandable by all persons with disabilities.
- Mechanisms shall be in place on alternative voting methods such as Postal Voting.
- Voters with disabilities should be able to the extent possible access the FEO website.
- Election results shall be provided in as many mediums as possible so as to all voters with disabilities to be informed.
- All Polling Venue and Polling Station layouts shall be designed to the extent possible in an accessible manner to cater for voters with disabilities.
- To the extent possible we shall allow voters with disabilities the opportunity to take part in voter education programs.
- The EDAWG shall recommend to procure materials suitable for voters with disabilities to the extent possible.

EDAWG Membership:

- FEO
- Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons
- Fiji Society for the Blind
- Counterstroke Fiji

- Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation
- Fiji Association of the Deaf
- Fiji Paralympics Committee
- Fiji Crippled Children's Society
- Spinal Injuries Association of Fiji
- United Blind Persons of Fiji
- Western Disabled Persons Association
- Psychiatric Survivors Association
- Fiji Vocational Technical Training Centre for Persons with Disabilities
- Pacific Disability Forum

EDAWG Achievements:

1. Voter Registration

It was agreed in the first meeting on 03 October 2016 by the working group that the FEO needed to identify and verify the number of voters living with disabilities that are currently registered in the NRV. The data needed for this verification was to be submitted to the FEO by the various Disabled Peoples Organisations. A template was designed by the FEO in order for the Disabled Peoples Organisations to submit the correct data.

It was also discussed that this template would be the basis for information compilation and in the case some of these members were found to be missing in the FEO database, the FEO would have sufficient information to try and register them. This would ensure that the committee complied with their roles and responsibilities outlined in the ToR which is to register persons living with disabilities to the extent possible.

Voter Registration teams were located in easy to reach locations. These enabled voters to easily access these teams for voter services. The teams were also sent to villages and settlements across Fiji to register new voters, including those with disabilities. There was also a special request from FNDCP to send mobile teams to various disability forums that was held around Suva to register eligible voters in their community. This was welcomed by persons with disabilities as they do not have to travel far to get registered.

2. Accessible Polling Venues

In the introductory section of the Polling Venue Assessment Manual, the second paragraph talks about the importance of site accessibility to Polling Venues.

Accessibility must be of paramount consideration. Having to travel long distances for long hours to their nearest voting site will be a deterrent for voters to attend to vote, particularly where transportation may not be readily available. Special care needs to be taken that Polling Venues are accessible to persons with disabilities, both in access and condition of the actual premises and where they are located. The *"Polling Venue Assessment Form"* has special provision for persons with disabilities. These were the following considerations in the form:

- Vehicle parking facilities
- Use of ground level facilities as Polling Venues
- Railings provided on landings, stairs and ramps
- Non-slip surfaces on Polling Venue area
- Entrance, exit and internal doorways of sufficient width to allow free access and suitable for speedy evacuation in case of emergencies
- Availability of a waiting area or a covered area outside the Polling Venue for voters to wait before they enter the station

As some of the above may not be easily obtained or carried out, alternatives discussed were:

- Portable ramps can be supplied to Polling Venues to assist disabled voter access
- Temporary coverings to be supplied in order to provide voters waiting to vote with some shelter

A Provisional List of the 2018 Polling Venues was also submitted to the FNCDP for their perusal, analysis and were requested to provide a feedback on the selected Polling Venues. This ensured the needs of voters with disabilities were addressed and met to the extent possible.

3. Voter Education & Awareness

In the FEO's Strategic Plan document, there is an activity that deals directly with accessibility issues. The activity is "Assessment of requirements for voters with disabilities and special needs". This requires the FEO to work towards ways in making the electoral processes more inclusive for persons with disabilities.

Voter education campaigns are an ideal opportunity for elections management bodies and disabled persons' organisations to engage persons with disabilities in the electoral process. Creative, inclusive and accessible voter education campaigns empower men and women with disabilities as citizens and voters, ensuring that all voters are able to participate in elections.

The FEO produced awareness materials in large print which were readable by persons with visual impairments. FEO also made presentations to the Disabled Peoples Organisations on the plans and programs for its awareness campaigns. This proved to be beneficial as the EDAWG members were able to analyse the effectiveness of these programs on persons with disabilities and gave their recommendations on how the awareness programs could be improved and enhanced to better suit the intended audience.

4. Alternative Voting Methods

The FEO made presentations to the EDAWG on alternative voting methods such as Postal Voting which was an option available for persons with disabilities. This avenue was well received by the Disabled Peoples Organisations and was promoted for persons with disabilities who wish to vote from the comfort of their homes.

5. Accessible FEO Website

One of EDAWG's main role is to ensure that people with disabilities are able to access the FEO website. On 05 April 2017, the FEO reached another milestone by launching a revamped website with provisions for people with disabilities.

Voters with low vision are now able to change features in the website to suit their need once they have accessed the website. They are able to click on the wheelchair sign which says "Accessibility helper sidebar" which will show them texts on features that they would like to change.

6. EO Recruitment

As part of the inclusive approach by the FEO, EDAWG members were encouraged to apply for the position of EOs for the 2018 General Election. It was encouraging to note that a few members of the EDAWG were successful in their applications and were offered employment during Polling Day. Persons with disabilities worked in various roles during the 2018 General Election including as Presiding Officers.

7. EO Trainings

Members of the EDAWG committee who had secured positions as EOs for the 2018 General Election were required to undergo training for the roles they had applied for.

The FEO team provided a conducive and welcoming training environment for persons with disabilities. Special training provisions were made to cater for those that required special needs.

8. Election Materials

The FEO developed an Assisted Voting chart which features the 9 voting steps. This chart was useful for voters with speech and hearing impairments. The chart explained the steps of the voting process in a Polling Station in a pictorial format which can be easily understood by voters.

Apart from the Assisted Voting chart, the FEO had a magnifying glass available in its polling kits. This magnifying glass was available for use by voters who had partial vision impairment but could still see and read.

Each Polling Station was also equipped with a light and portable voting screen which could be carried to a wheel chair user or a voter requesting assistance outside of the Polling Station. This was to ensure voters were able to cast their vote without being disfranchised by their mobility and movement.

9. Assisted Voting – Outside a Polling Station

In April 2018, the FEO developed its procedures for voting outside a Polling Station for voters who are unable to access their allocated Polling Station. This procedure gave the Presiding Officers powers to suspend polling in a Polling Station in order to take the Voter List, Ballot Paper, Ink and Ballot Box out of the Polling Station when assisting the voter who cannot come into the Polling Station.

This provision was later enhanced to allow the Presiding Officer to assist a voter within 300metres of the Polling Station premises.

10.Assisted Voting – Inside a Polling Station

With the passing of the Rights of Persons Disability Act 2018, the FEO amended its Assisted Voting Procedures to comply with the Act.

Initially, Presiding Officers were the designated persons providing assistance to the voters. However, with the enactment of the new law, the procedures of assisting voters were amended to allow for a voter to nominate a person of their choice to assist them.

With this in place, the FEO had to ensure that this new process was stringent and robust enough to deter those that would take advantage of this provision by assisting voters on multiple occasions. To safeguard the secrecy of the vote of each voter requiring assistance, the FEO made certain criteria for those that would be nominated to provide assistance to a voter inside a Polling Station.

The criteria were as follows:

- Person providing assistance has to be a registered voter
- Person providing assistance can only assist up to two voters inside a Polling Station
- Person providing assistance has to read a brochure which sets out the rules for assisting voters. Once they have agreed, the Presiding Officer will note down the voter details of the person providing the assistance in the Presiding Officer Record Book before allowing him or her to provide the assistance
- Presiding Officers will witness the assistance to ensure that the voters choice is being followed.

The Mercury App

The EMiS team needed to ensure that packages produced by the logistics system was able to be tracked in areas where the FEO network would not reach. The Mercury App was developed by our programmer Nathaniel Raju to enable Field Officers and Hub Leaders to scan the barcode on our sensitive packages when they had received or dispatched it.

This App also allowed Divisional Mangers and the Logistics team to track their packages and ensured it reached each Polling Station on time and returned to the Warehouse. The Application was loaded on to smartphones and allowed the user to select the status, scan the barcode and send the data to the FEO.

The App worked in areas where there was no connectivity and allowed the user to send data when they were in network range. Logistics staff in the Head Office were then able to access this data and update the EMS Logistics module of the packages' status.

Since this was the first time it was used, some Hub Leaders did not utilise the App and sent in reports of delivery through emails or phone calls to their Area Officers.

Number of Ballot Boxes and Temper Evident Envelopes scanned:

Status	Ballot Box	TEE
In Transit After Voting	1152	1189
In Transit Before Voting	84	14
Received After Voting	517	533
Received at Polling Station	1115	107
Received Before Voting	790	83

The Consolidated Reports Server

Though the EMS system had its own reports, the EMIS team created a Consolidated Reports Server, where each project owner and department was able to log in and generate their own reports at any time. Depending on one's log in, a person would only be allowed to access reports for their own project or department.

The team was also flexible in ensuring that ad-hoc reports were able to be generated separately on request. One of the main features of the Report was the ability for the EMIS team to design and generate the Voter List for Pre-Poll, Poll and Venue Queue Controller. This document was accessible only by a limited number of designated staff.

The Following is a breakdown of the reports generated on this platform:

- EORS – 37 Reports
- EMS – 24 Reports

EMS and Results Security Audit

As part of the project plan the EMIS Department engaged an independent cyber security evaluation of key FEO systems. The FEO engaged Price Water House Coopers New Zealand to undertake the assessment applying internationally recognised standards for security testing.

The approach taken during this testing was that the FEO would rectify any vulnerabilities found and thereafter report back to the company so as to ensure that at the end of the exercise, the vulnerabilities were properly resolved and the FEO systems were meeting industry standards. Additional testing was carried out to ensure that the work conducted had effectively addressed the issues.

The systems audited was as follows:

System	Comments	Dates
Election Management System (EMS)	EMS Application Test and Code Review	01 June 2018 – 28 September 2018
IT Network	As part of the EMS Audit: Network Architecture, External and Internet Testing; Internal Testing	01 June 2018 – 28 September 2018
Results Management Information Systems (RMIS)	RMIS Application Test and Code Review	20 August 2018 – 17 October 2018 Re-Test (26 October 2018 – 13 November 2018)
Results Website and Results API	Application Test and External and Internal Testing	20 August 2018 – 17 October 2018 Re-Test (26 October 2018 – 13 November 2018)

Statistics from the Audit of Results tools:

Results Website and FEO Results App

Result Web & API	Findings	Resolved	Pending	Notes
Critical Risk	1	1	0	Completed
High Risk	3	3	0	Completed
Medium Risk	2	2	0	One was Not Applicable as this is due to hosting services provided.
Low Risk	3	3	0	Completed

Results Management System

RMIS	Findings	Resolved	Pending	Notes
High Risk	3	3	0	Completed
Medium Risk	1	1	0	Completed
Low Risk	2	2	0	Completed

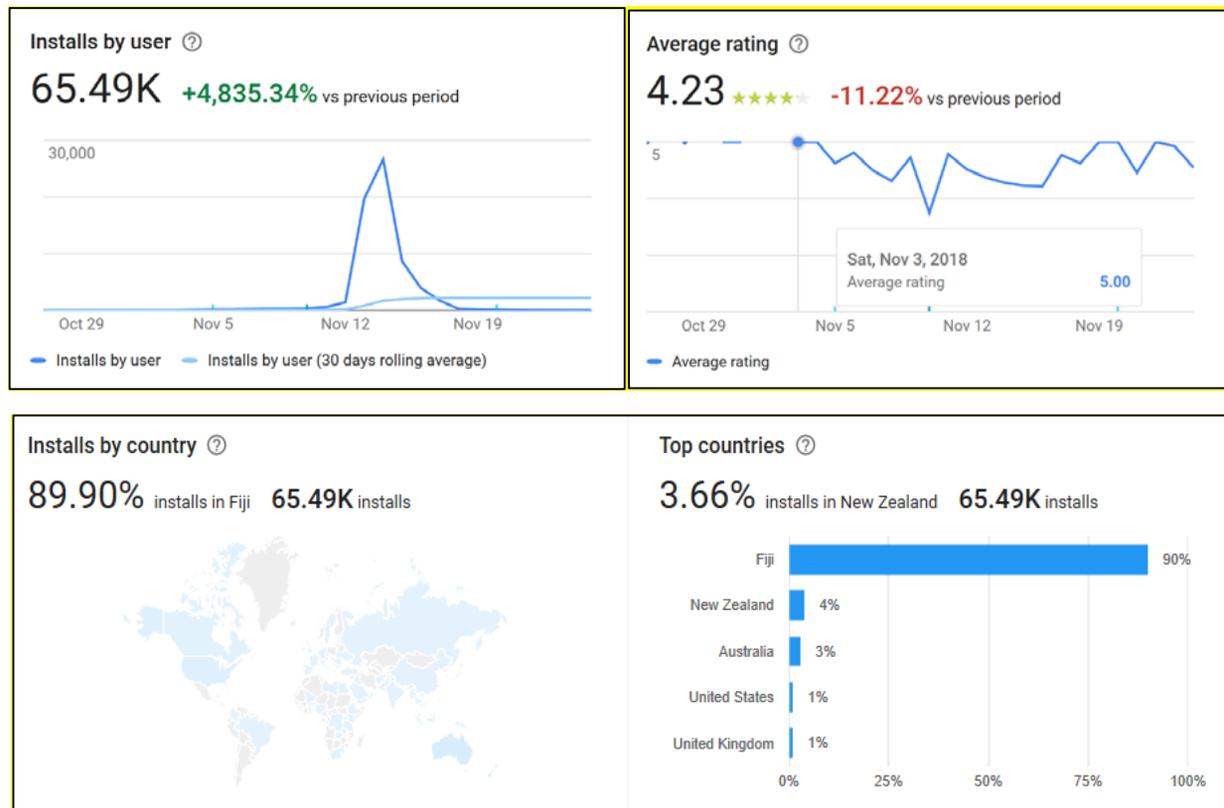
The Results systems went through a re-test of all its resolutions due to the sensitivity of its nature as the most outwards facing systems of the FEO.

FEO Results App

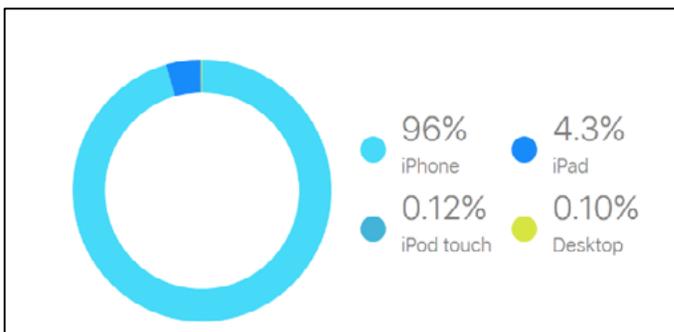
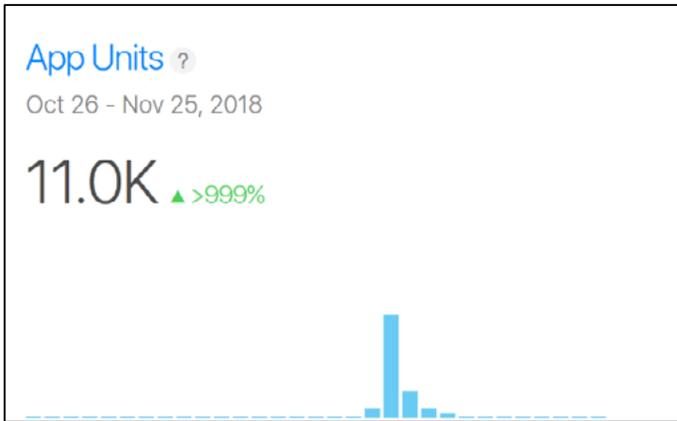
The FEO Results App was developed to provide voters and public direct access to the 2018 General Election results. The App was developed in-house without any vendor collaboration. The app enabled users to download it on their mobile devices (Android and IOS) and be able to view results in real time with notifications on when results were being updated.

The app features allowed users to view results information by Party, Candidates and Polling Venues. Users could view the breakdown of results by Candidates for each Polling Venue. The App also provided statistical information of total votes of Political Parties as a pie chart and voter turnout as a bar graph.

Android Statistics



iOS Statistics



Final National Results Tally

The Final National Results Tally was handed to the EC on 18 November 2018.

Below is the table of the results by Political Parties:

Name	Votes
FijiFirst	227,241
Social Democratic Liberal Party	181,072
National Federation Party	33,515
Unity Fiji	6,896
Humanity Opportunity Prosperity Equality	2,811
Fiji Labour Party	2,800

Conclusion

In preparations for the 2018 General Election, the FEO published its FEO Strategic Plan 2015-2019 detailing its goals, objectives and activities that were in line to the 2013 Constitution and other related electoral laws.

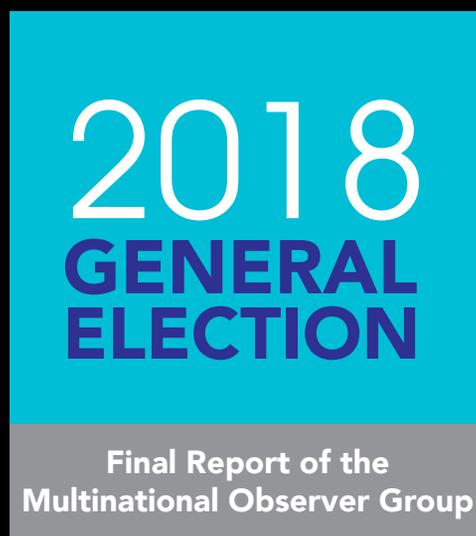
In implementing the activities in the strategic plan, the FEO being an independent body ensured that professionalism, transparency, integrity and the highest standards of conduct and international best practice were adhered to by FEO staff.

The FEO is aware of various issues highlighted by its QA team and those received from external stakeholders such as voters, general public, political parties and other institutions. These will be duly addressed in planning for the next General Election.

The 2018 General Election, being the second election conducted by a fully established election management body allowed for the development and implementation of various initiatives that not only enhanced voter services but allowed the FEO to improve its efficiency.

The FEO established an environment that allowed staff to pursue innovations in respective fields resulting in significant advancements in election management and delivery. It is proven that such attitudes and encouragements are necessary for development in Fiji and the 2019 to 2023 cycle will present even more opportunities.

The FEO looks forward to a challenging yet rewarding future.



The opinions expressed in this report reflect the views of the Multinational Observer Group of the 2018 Fijian Election and not individual participants in the mission or their sending Governments or Organisations.

Table of Contents

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
II.	ABOUT THE MULTINATIONAL OBSERVER GROUP	8
III.	POLITICAL BACKGROUND	9
IV.	LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	9
	THE CONSTITUTION	9
	INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS	9
	ELECTORAL LEGISLATION.....	9
	<i>Observations</i>	10
	Electoral Legislation	10
	Electoral Offences	11
V.	ELECTORAL SYSTEM.....	11
	<i>Observations</i>	12
	Absence of Party Identification	12
VI.	ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES.....	12
	THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION	13
	THE FEO AND THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS.....	13
	FIJI INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (FICAC).....	13
	MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR ELECTIONS	14
	<i>Observations</i>	14
	Independence and transparency.....	15
	FICAC	15
	Minister responsible for elections.....	16
VII.	VOTER REGISTRATION.....	16
	LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	16
	FEO PRACTICE.....	16
	<i>Observations</i>	17
VIII.	POLITICAL PARTIES.....	18
	LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	18
	INVESTIGATIONS.....	19
	CANDIDATE NOMINATION.....	19
	<i>Observations</i>	19
	Party Membership.....	20
IX.	THE CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT.....	20
	LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	20
	THE 2018 CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT	21
	<i>Observations</i>	21
	Concerns About the Law	21
	Caretaker Conventions.....	22
	Campaign Spending.....	22
	Auditing Campaign Manifestos	22
	Social Media	23

X. MEDIA AND ELECTIONS	23
LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	23
MEDIA ACCREDITATION.....	24
MIDA PRACTICE: APPLICATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	24
<i>Observations</i>	24
XI. VOTER INFORMATION AND EDUCATION	25
VOTER INFORMATION AND AWARENESS	25
VOTER EDUCATION INITIATIVES.....	26
<i>Observations</i>	26
Voter Education.....	26
XII. CIVIL SOCIETY AND ELECTIONS	27
LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	27
ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES’ ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs	27
CSO EXPERIENCES	28
<i>Observations</i>	28
Domestic Observers	29
XIII. INCLUSIVENESS AND PARTICIPATION.....	29
WOMEN.....	29
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY	29
OTHER MINORITY GROUPS	30
<i>Observations</i>	30
XIV. ELECTORAL PREPARATIONS.....	30
FEO OPERATIONS	30
<i>Observations</i>	31
XV. SECURITY.....	32
XVI. VOTING AND COUNTING	32
VOTING.....	33
COUNTING.....	33
<i>Observations</i>	34
Allocation of Pre-Poll Venues	34
Voter Lists.....	34
Assisted Voting.....	35
Counting.....	35
Polling Agents.....	35
XVII. TABULATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS.....	36
INVALID VOTES	36
ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS	36
VOTER TURNOUT	37
<i>Observations</i>	37
Provisional Results	37
Official Results.....	38
Seat Allocation	38

XVIII. ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION	38
LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	38
FEO AND EC PRACTICE.....	39
PETITIONS.....	39
<i>Observations</i>	40
Complaints and Objections	40
Petitions	40
XIX. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	41
XX. ANNEXES.....	44
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	44
ANNEX A – TERMS OF REFERENCE	45
ANNEX B – PRE-ELECTION STATEMENT.....	52
ANNEX C – INTERIM STATEMENT	54
ANNEX D – MOG DEPLOYMENTS.....	65
ANNEX E – MOG OBSERVATION DATA	67

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2018 General Election, the second based on principles of universal, equal and non-discriminatory suffrage, significantly advanced electoral democracy in Fiji. In summary:

- The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) prepared for the election thoroughly, implementing a long-term strategy of improvement throughout the electoral cycle. The FEO benefited from robust operational planning, staff training and new technologies to improve the electoral administration and enhance the transparency of its operations.
- Fiji's National Register of Voters is well-developed and well-maintained, allowing voters multiple opportunities to check and amend their details. Some minor issues became apparent with the voter lists especially in pre-polling but these did not significantly impact the election processes or outcome.
- In advance of the election the FEO conducted extensive voter information and awareness campaigns across Fiji, encouraging voters in remote areas as well as young people to register and to vote.
- Overall, voting proceeded smoothly and efficiently in all three polling modalities, including pre-polling and Election Day, with FEO staff demonstrating professionalism and diligence.
- The counting and tabulation processes employed by the FEO were well-thought-out and included checks and quality control measures to ensure the accuracy of the result.
- The FEO introduced initiatives to assist voters of all abilities, developed in consultation with disabled people's organisations.
- The campaign environment overall afforded parties and candidates freedom to campaign.
- Fiji media facilitated some robust debate, especially on television and radio. Parties and candidates were generally able to convey their political messages to the electorate.
- The security environment for the campaign, as well as for voting in pre-poll and on Election Day was peaceful.
- The police performed their duties professionally, in an unobtrusive and respectful manner, helping to build confidence in the electoral process.
- The outcome increased the number of women Members of Parliament to 19.6 per cent, a record for Fiji and the highest ratio in the region.
- Conditions supported Fijians exercising their right to vote freely. The 2018 process was transparent and credible overall and the outcome broadly represented the will of Fijian voters. A voter turnout of 72.5 per cent attests to voter commitment.
- Fijians overwhelmingly demonstrated a commitment to democratic institutions although trust remains an issue in some quarters.

The success of this election presents an opportunity for Fiji to strengthen its electoral system and institutions in ways that will sustain electoral democracy into the future. This report provides recommendations to this end. In summary,

- Fiji's electoral system (open list, proportional representation) is well-suited to Fiji's needs but feedback indicated that voter understanding would benefit from removing restrictions on party identification in official election material.
- An external audit of the voter Register would reassure Fijians of the efficacy of the Register and its management by the FEO.
- The structure of Fiji's independent Electoral Management Body generally aligns with international good practice but would benefit from action to strengthen the institutional standing of the Electoral Commission (EC) and the transparency of its operations.
- Clarifying the scope and operation of electoral offences would allow citizens to engage in the electoral process confident that they are not inadvertently breaching the law.
- A code or similar guidance for the conduct of the Government, Members of Parliament and the bureaucracy during the election period would increase public confidence in a level electoral playing field. A cap on campaign spending could similarly underscore public perceptions of fairness.
- Civil society organisations are keen to engage in their country's electoral process (including in voter education and training women and other candidates) and can play an essential complement to the efforts of electoral authorities. Developing a broad partnership between electoral authorities and CSOs in Fiji would help reinforce community support for and confidence in Fiji's electoral system.
- Facilitating domestic election observation in Fiji would enhance transparency and strengthen public confidence in all facets of the electoral process and bring Fiji into line with international practice.
- A review of the media regulatory framework would strengthen media and public confidence that media can play their vital role informing voters of their choices, scrutinizing the claims of parties and candidates as well as the performance of government and opposition throughout the electoral cycle.
- Greater clarity on media restrictions during the blackout period before and during polling would assist media to comply with the law.
- A review of the *Political Parties Act* in relation to party membership eligibility would help ensure citizens' rights to engage in political life while guaranteeing the apolitical nature of the public service.

The MOG congratulates the people of Fiji on the 2018 General Election and trusts that the findings and recommendations of this report are received in the constructive spirit in which they are offered.

II. ABOUT THE MULTINATIONAL OBSERVER GROUP

The Multinational Observer Group (MOG) for the 2018 Fijian General Election was constituted at the invitation of the Fijian Government. It comprised co-chairs from its three co-lead countries Australia, India and Indonesia, as well as observers from 10 countries, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Melanesian Spearhead Group. The three co-chairs were: The Hon Jane Prentice MP from Australia, Mr. Mukesh Chandra Sahu from India; HE Wajid Fauzi from Indonesia.

Before the election, the Fijian Government and the Governments of Australia, India and Indonesia agreed to Terms of Reference.¹ These guaranteed the MOG freedom of movement and consultation, and mandated it to observe and evaluate a range of electoral processes and to assess whether or not arrangements for the election assisted Fijian voters to exercise their right to vote freely and whether or not the outcome of the election broadly represented the will of Fijian voters. The Terms of Reference also invited the MOG to offer recommendations for improving the integrity and effectiveness of future electoral and related processes.

On 28 September 2018, long-term observers commenced operations in Fiji. By Election Day, the MOG had expanded to 25 long-term observers, and 52 short-term observers, from a number of professional backgrounds including parliamentarians, government officials and technical experts. Observers were from Australia, Canada, the Federated States of Micronesia, France, French Polynesia, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Tonga, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Vanuatu.

The MOG established a Secretariat in Suva and an online presence through the MOG website,² Facebook page, and Twitter and Instagram accounts to facilitate public access and awareness of the MOG's activities. It also held regular press conferences. The MOG Secretariat stayed in country for two weeks following the election.

MOG observers took a comprehensive, objective, and independent approach to assessing the electoral landscape in Fiji, taking into consideration Fiji's legal framework, including the Constitution and electoral laws, making technical observations about a wide range of electoral processes, and evaluating Fiji's electoral institutions and practice against good international practice.

Observers consulted a wide range of stakeholders, including: the FEO and Electoral Commission; all of Fiji's political parties; a number of institutions, including the High Court, the Fiji Police Force and the Republic of Fiji Military Force; media professionals and the Media Industry Development Authority; civil society and community groups across the country; the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission; international, regional and multilateral organisations; the diplomatic community in Suva; hospitals and prisons; paramount chiefs; religious leaders and organisations; academics; and local communities and members of the public.

In advance of the election, long-term observers visited more than 50 urban and rural communities across Fiji to consult communities and assess the FEO's preparations. During pre-poll voting (5 to 10 November 2018), MOG observers visited 59 polling stations in remote and maritime areas.

During polling on Election Day on 14 November, observers visited some 460 polling stations across all four divisions. As a result of local flooding on 14 November voting was, in accordance with the *Electoral Act*, cancelled and rescheduled for 25 polling stations at 22 venues; MOG observers also visited 19 of these 25 polling stations.

¹ Annex A

² www.mog.org.fj

III. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Fiji gained independence from Great Britain in 1970 and held elections in 1972, 1977, 1982 and 1987 before successive military coups interrupted its democratic development. Following coups in 1987, Fiji held elections in 1992 and 1997; following a coup in 2000, Fiji returned to elections in 2001 and 2006. Following the coup of 2006, Fiji held elections in September 2014.

The election of 2014 was based on the Constitution of 2013 adopted by the interim government. The Constitution established a new electoral system with a single national constituency in place of the multiple ethnically-based constituencies that had characterised Fiji's earlier electoral systems. The FijiFirst Party won the 2014 election securing 32 seats in the new Parliament. SODELPA (15 seats) and the National Federation Party (3) formed the opposition. The 2018 election was the second general election Fiji has held under the system set out in the 2013 Constitution.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution

The Constitution of the Republic of Fiji (2013) establishes the legal framework for the conduct of Fiji's General Elections. It provides for regular elections based on universal adult (18 years) and non-discriminatory suffrage and secret ballot. Fiji's Bill of Rights (contained within the Constitution) protects a range of civil, political and other rights including the freedom to make political choices, the right to free and fair elections for Fiji's Parliament, and the right for adult citizens to be elected to Parliament. The Constitution establishes Fiji's current electoral system based on proportional representation and a single national constituency. It also establishes the Electoral Commission (EC) and the Supervisor of Elections and sets out some of their tasks and responsibilities.

International Obligations

Fiji is party to key international human rights treaties, including *the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* – ICERD (since 1973); *the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* – CEDAW (since 1995); and *the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* – CRPD (since 2017); and, as of 16 November 2018, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR). These commit Fiji to respect, protect and fulfil human rights relevant to elections, including through appropriate legislation, procedures and other measures.

Electoral Legislation

Fiji's electoral legislation comprises three key Acts: the *Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012* (*Registration of Voters Act*); the *Electoral Act 2014* and the *Political Parties (Registration, Conduct Funding and Disclosures) Act 2013* (*Political Parties Act*).³

The *Electoral Act* sets out arrangements for the administration of Fiji's elections granting the EC the responsibility and authority to formulate policy and to oversee the conduct of elections, and the Supervisor of Elections the responsibility and authority to administer and implement elections. The Act establishes the independence and impartiality of both the Commission and Supervisor.

The *Electoral Act* also details the electoral system as well as processes and procedures for conducting elections, covering all aspects from the Writ, the nomination of candidates, preparations for and the conduct of polling, the count, and the tabulation and declaration of results, as well as

³ Available on the Fijian Elections Office website - <https://www.feo.org.fj/about-us/electoral-laws/>.

legal avenues for challenging election results. The Act sets out requirements for the conduct of the campaign, including for media, and itemises various electoral offences. Fiji's Parliament amended the Act in 2017 following lessons learned from the 2014 elections, incorporating a range of mostly interpretative and procedural changes.⁴

The *Registration of Voters Act* sets out the technical rules for registering voters while the *Political Parties Act* establishes rules relating to the operation and conduct of political parties and candidates, including for disclosing assets, liabilities and sources of funds. (Fiji has no campaign finance law per se.) The *Political Parties Act* contains a Code of Conduct for Political Parties.

All three electoral Acts make provision for the enactment of Regulations although in practice these provisions have not been exercised. The *Electoral Act* allows the EC to make "Rules and issue instructions". The EC took action under this provision for the first time in 2017 and has since issued Rules governing appeals and objections to decisions regarding the voter Register and to decisions regarding candidate nominations as well as Rules governing appeals against decisions regarding civil society applications to engage in voter education.⁵ There is limited case law on the interpretation of Fiji's electoral legislation.⁶

Observations

The MOG congratulates Fiji on its recent accession to the ICCPR – a significant step towards embedding democratic government based on the consent of the people, protecting the rights of citizens to vote and to be elected, as well as ensuring a number of key freedoms, including to seek, receive and impart information, to hold opinions without interference, to expression, to association and to assembly. The MOG commends Fiji for welcoming the domestic and international scrutiny of the implementation of the Treaty that is at the core of membership.⁷ The MOG further commends Fiji for its active engagement with the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, including by codifying the specific rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political life.

The MOG assesses that Fiji's legal framework provided an adequate basis for the conduct of a credible and transparent election in 2018. The *Constitution* and electoral legislation together align with good international practice with respect to protecting the right of citizens to vote and to make political choices on a non-discriminatory basis, defining the status and purpose of Fiji's Electoral Management Body (the EC and the FEO); and establishing independence of action, transparency and impartiality as key principles for electoral administration.

Electoral Legislation

The MOG assesses that while Fiji's electoral legislation covers all key electoral matters, some areas would benefit from review and renewal.

⁴ See Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, Hansard, 9 February 2017, at.599

⁵ These Rules are not collated on the website of the Electoral Commission but are contained within decisions of the Commission.

⁶ See, for example, *Electoral Commission v Supervisor of Elections* [2016], <https://www.feo.org.fj/media-centre/electoral-cases/>

⁷ See the May 2018 report on the ICCPR by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence.

While not unusual in electoral law, Fiji’s legislation is somewhat burdened with procedure which, coupled with its fragmentation across three Acts, makes the law difficult to navigate, especially for the lay reader.⁸ The MOG recommends that over time Fiji streamlines and clarifies the law, embedding important principles in the primary legislation, and giving effect to procedural changes in lesser instruments. The EC’s adoption since 2017 of formal Rules constitutes a good first step in this direction.

Electoral Offences

The MOG notes (and heard the view from a range of interlocutors) that penalties for electoral offences set out in legislation can appear to be disproportionate to the offence. The *Electoral Act* provides for fines of up to \$FJ50,000 and/or ten-years’ imprisonment for the offence of forging ballot papers – a serious criminal matter by any standard. However the Act provides for the same penalties to a range of significantly lesser actions such as carrying a piece of paper into a polling station or leaving campaign material displayed during the restricted period.⁹ The MOG understands that the penalties set out in legislation are maximum penalties and have not to date been imposed, not least because Fiji’s sentencing legislation provides that a maximum penalty for an offence is only one factor to which a court must have regard.¹⁰ That said, clarifying the law would mitigate concerns that citizens may inadvertently breach the law.

V. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The 2013 Constitution established a unicameral Parliament with 50 members – increased in 2017 in line with population growth to 51 - with Members elected in an open list system of proportional representation, under which each voter has one vote and the whole country serves as a single constituency. In establishing the single constituency, the 2013 Constitution abolished ethnicity-based representation and introduced a “national” (as opposed to a “communal”) method for voting, with Fijians of all ethnic groups listed in a single voter register.

Fiji’s electoral system focuses on parties, although it also allows for independent candidates. After nomination, party and independent candidates receive a randomly-drawn three-digit number which, in accordance with the *Electoral Act*, is the only feature present on the ballot paper. The Act both prohibits the electoral authorities identifying the party affiliation of candidates and prevents voters carrying their own information, including that provided by political parties, into polling stations. Voters receive instead an official “Voter Instruction Booklet” containing the National Candidates List identifying candidates by number, name and photo.

After the voting, counting and tabulation of results, seats are allocated to independent candidates and parties that secure more than 5 per cent of total votes cast. Parties are allocated seats in proportion to the votes their combined candidates receive in accordance with the “D’Hondt

⁸ The legislation also contains a range of unclear, outdated and repetitive provisions. For example (i) The *Electoral Act* appears to provide several different definitions of the word “campaign” (see s2, s115 and s118) and no clear definition of “campaign period.” (ii) The heading and chapeau language of many sections are at odds with the contents of the provisions, viz., s25 of the *Political Parties Act* is entitled “Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Expenditure in relation to elections” but its content contains no reference to campaign or election expenditure; s14(1) of the *Electoral Act* states that the FEO must conduct all activities in a transparent manner, but its subsections refer to acts and activities of the Electoral Commission, whose duties and powers are set out separately. (iii) The *Political Parties Act* contains several now outdated sunset clauses

⁹ Sections 137, 52 and 63 of the *Electoral Act*.

¹⁰ *Sentencing Act, 2009* s4(2)

formula.”¹¹ If a seat allocated to a political party becomes vacant during the Parliamentary term, the seat is allocated to the next candidate on the party’s list. A by-election would be required should a party exhaust its list of candidates, or if the vacant seat is that of an independent candidate.

Observations

The MOG notes that the removal of ethnic voting blocs and the establishment of a system with a single voter register has aligned Fiji with international good practice in these respects, conforming to the principle of one voter, one vote.

Interlocutors volunteered to the MOG analyses of other aspects of the system including that as a proportional, rather than majoritarian, system it facilitated greater cross-ethnic political representation. At the same time, some questioned the 5 per cent threshold arguing that it made the system less proportional than it might otherwise have been. Some also questioned the D’Hondt formula for allocating seats in Parliament because the formula was perceived to discourage independents (of which there were none in 2018) and favoured either large parties or coalitions.¹² The MOG also heard the view that the single national constituency discouraged accountability and that this was especially pertinent as there had been no local elections since 2005.

The MOG assesses that no system can provide exact proportionality, but that the magnitude of Fiji’s single constituency (with 51 Members) ensures reasonable proportionality. The MOG also notes that the D’Hondt formula is widely used internationally. The use of thresholds to qualify for seats is also common around the world. It is good practice periodically to review these thresholds, but no standard exists determining what is an acceptable threshold.

Absence of Party Identification

In its observations, especially of FEO voter information sessions, the MOG encountered voters querying the absence of party identification in official publications. In response the FEO told voters that voters themselves needed to investigate and remember candidates’ party affiliations. The MOG notes that this information is not generally available to voters in remote areas, but even in urban areas the absence of information identifying candidates’ party affiliations in official material appeared to create challenges for some voters.

The MOG assesses that the absence of party affiliation in official publications also runs counter to the logic of proportional representation as the prohibition effectively prioritises candidates ahead of political parties.

VI. ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

As set out in the legal framework, Fiji’s electoral authorities comprise four components: a policy-making oversight body (the Electoral Commission) and its operational arm (the Fijian Elections Office) which together constitute Fiji’s Electoral Management Body (EMB); a Minister responsible for elections; and the Fijian Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) which has special responsibilities relating to electoral offences.

¹¹ The *Electoral Act* (s.104) outlines the process for seat allocation progressively to the party with the highest total of votes. After each seat is assigned, the winning party’s total is adjusted. The original vote total is then divided by the number of seats it has won plus one. This approach reflects the D’Hondt formula.

¹² Any independent candidate can secure only one seat and thus any votes in excess of the 5 per cent threshold are essentially “wasted.”

The Electoral Commission

The legal framework establishes the Electoral Commission (EC) as an independent entity and mandates it to formulate policy and oversee the conduct of elections (in accordance with the Act and other related law), including by adjudicating electoral disputes (other than disputed returns) and by monitoring and enforcing compliance with electoral law. The Commission oversees the FEO and can adopt “Rules and instructions” necessary for the transparent and orderly conduct of elections.

The EC consists of a Chair and six Commissioners appointed by the President on the advice of the Constitutional Offices Commission for a period of three years (and are eligible for reappointment). The Chair, the Commissioners (and the Supervisor) may be removed only by the President on the advice of the Constitutional Offices Commission. During their appointment, members of the Commission are disqualified from other government appointments and are not eligible to stand for Parliament within four years. The members of current Commission were appointed in February 2017 after the terms of the previous Commission expired in January 2017.

The Electoral Commissioners exercise their functions on a part-time basis. The EC currently has a Secretary (the Supervisor of Elections) and a Secretariat of three full time staff in charge of developing internal operational guidelines and procedures. The EC receives its financial resources from the grant the government makes to the FEO.¹³ The EC established a website in 2017. It provides an annual post-election report to the Parliamentary Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights, which in turn invites public submissions on the EC report before reporting back to Parliament.

The FEO and the Supervisor of Elections

The FEO is the executive arm of Fiji’s Electoral Management Body. It is headed by the Supervisor of Elections – a constitutionally-mandated position - who reports (and is Secretary to) the EC. The *Electoral Act* sets out the independence, powers and duties of the Supervisor and the FEO to conduct the technical and operational elements of the election, including administering political party, candidate and voter registration; implementing voter education as well as the voting, counting and tabulation of results. The Supervisor also serves as Registrar of Political Parties.

All electoral officials, including the Supervisor, must conduct their duties and functions as well as exercise their powers, impartially and in a transparent manner. They are prohibited from undertaking any political or campaign activities. They are also immune from civil or criminal liability with respect to acts or omissions in the *bona fide* exercise of their powers or duties.

The FEO is headquartered in Suva with four divisional offices, and 60 core staff, including a Deputy Supervisor and three directors, and an election year budget of some FJ\$20 million. For the 2018 election, the FEO established additional area offices and hubs, and recruited some 1,600 additional short-term officials and more than 10,000 polling day workers.

Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC)

Fiji’s electoral legislation mandates the Fiji Independent Commission against Corruption (FICAC) to investigate and prosecute suspected criminal breaches of electoral law. The *Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2007* (FICAC Act) also directs FICAC to investigate and prosecute “any offence of corrupt or illegal conduct pertaining to any election.”¹⁴

¹³ The Supervisor of Elections, acting as Secretary to the EC, prepares a budget for the Commission which, once approved by the EC, is included in the FEO annual budget. The EC was allocated \$FJ545,910 for August 2017 to July 2018, and \$FJ115,047 the previous year. See Electoral Commission 2017 Annual Report.

¹⁴ Section 2A(c)

FICAC is headed by a Commissioner (although the post was vacant during the 2018 electoral period) and a Deputy Commissioner, both appointed by the President. FICAC does not have electoral specialists but relies on its existing expertise in addressing white collar crime to investigate electoral matters. FICAC can receive complaints directly from the public and from the police, EC and FEO via referrals, as well as determine its own investigations.

Minister responsible for elections

Fiji's electoral legislation makes several references to "the Minister responsible for elections." In 2018 (as in 2014), the Prime Minister assigned responsibility for implementing electoral legislation and for the FEO and the EC to the Attorney General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications, noting that these responsibilities are subject to the independence of those offices.¹⁵ The Minister also has authority to invite and approve electoral observers, to appoint non-citizens to the FEO and to make Regulations to give effect to the relevant electoral Acts (though to date, no Regulations have been issued).

Observations

Fiji's model of electoral management with two distinct but interrelated components comprising oversight and operational limbs is common around the world.¹⁶

The MOG found Fiji's Electoral Management Body (EMB), in the main, adequately resourced and structured to conduct the 2018 Election. (Later sections of this report examine the FEO's operational performance.) An amendment to the *Electoral Act* in 2017 which made the Supervisor of Elections the Secretary to the EC – a structural change that accords with international practice – ensured good communication between the two limbs and clarified the uncertainty about their relationship evident in 2014.¹⁷

During the MOG's time in Fiji, the MOG found the EC generally competent to develop policy – which it did for example in 2017, in advising the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights on electoral policy, including on the 2014 MOG recommendations. That said, the MOG notes that the EC has few staff relative to its policy responsibilities and that most Commissioners appointed in February 2017 had relatively little experience of electoral matters. Accordingly, the MOG suggests a greater allocation of the EMB's resources to the EC, including possibly the appointment of at least one full-time Commissioner so that the Commission can better initiate policy and evaluate the policy suggestions of the FEO. Going forward, staggering the appointments of new Commissioners would ensure the preservation of institutional memory, experience and independence, in line with good international practice.

Like other EMBs around the world, Fiji's EC and FEO are also mandated to monitor and enforce compliance with electoral law. The MOG found this to be an area which warranted review. At issue here is the operation of s18 of the *Electoral Act*¹⁸ which both FICAC and the Supervisor explained to the MOG requires the EC and the Supervisor to transfer to FICAC *immediately* any probable breach of electoral law – that is *before* the EC and the Supervisor can make their own inquiries to ascertain the intention of stakeholders and stakeholders' understanding of the law. This arrangement appears

¹⁵ <http://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/18ef5a1d-007f-4245-8709-5e03b50e41aa/LN-87---Ministerial-Assignment.aspx>

¹⁶ <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/electoral-management-design-2014.pdf>

¹⁷ 2014 MOG Report, p.9

¹⁸ Section 18 states that: If the Electoral Commission or the Supervisor becomes aware at any time of the probable commission of an election-related criminal offence including any criminal offence prescribed in this Act, it must immediately report the matter in writing to FICAC, and all election officials must fully cooperate in the investigation of any election-related offence.

to deprive the EC and the Supervisor of the mechanism that EMBs exercise in other countries to engage constructively with stakeholders - to educate, to encourage compliance with the law, to make proportional decisions regarding the circumstances in which electoral law may have been breached and then to seek appropriate redress. The arrangement also seems to assume that all potential breaches of the law are criminal. Accordingly, the MOG recommends a review of s18 of the *Electoral Act* (in parallel with a review of electoral offences) to consider the appropriate role of Fiji's EMB (the EC and FEO) and the Registrar of Parties in addressing alleged breaches of electoral law. The MOG recommends that the EMB and Registrar, in place of FICAC, be empowered to address alleged breaches, escalating matters to criminal investigation only as a last resort.

Independence and transparency

During its time in Fiji, the MOG had unrestricted access to the FEO and its operational preparations for the election and had a number of in-depth conversations with the EC. In that time, the MOG observed the EC and the FEO to exercise independence of action. At the same time, the MOG heard in its meetings with opposition political parties, civil society groups and others, that there remains in some quarters a lack of trust in the independence of the electoral authorities.¹⁹

The MOG notes that while elections must be delivered efficiently, their political nature requires that their management is, and is *perceived to be*, free from undue external influences, impartial and fully transparent. To that end, the MOG recommends the EC raises its profile including through the media and takes greater initiative to explain to the electorate Fiji's independent electoral management model and the EC's role in that model. This should be supported by further steps to enhance the transparency of the EC's operations. The publication of EC decisions since 2017 represents a step in the right direction.

There is also a need for the EC to respond to clearly expressed stakeholder demand for greater engagement and to undertake more regular meetings especially with political parties, including during non-election years. The MOG suggests the EC publishes a permanent calendar for such meetings and summary records of the meetings. Reaching out to the youth wings of political parties would ensure the commitment of Fiji's next generation of leaders to the electoral system and processes.

The MOG further recommends a disaggregated budget for Fiji's EMB that includes discrete budget lines for the EC and the FEO. This separation would underscore the independence of the EC, especially given its role adjudicating complaints against the Supervisor and the FEO.

FICAC

While some countries engage anti-corruption commissions to investigate and prosecute breaches of electoral law involving fraud and corruption, it is somewhat unusual from an international perspective that such commissions are responsible for investigating and prosecuting *all* electoral matters. It may be that, with its experience to date in electoral matters, FICAC remains the appropriate body to prosecute serious criminal electoral matters involving fraud and misconduct. But, as set out above, the MOG recommends the FEO and the EC be empowered to the extent possible to address alleged breaches of electoral law, with the aim of educating and changing behaviour rather than prosecuting breaches.

¹⁹ See also Savanaca Narube, "The People Must Know the Risks to Free and Fair Elections," *Fiji Sun*, 31 March, 2018; Sitiveni Rabuka, "Why We're Losing Confidence in the Supervisor of Elections, Electoral Commission" *Fiji Sun*, 25 August, 2018.

Minister responsible for elections

The MOG heard arguments that a conflict of interest was created by the fact that the Minister responsible for elections was also the Secretary General of the ruling Party. The MOG was not presented with evidence of such a conflict and notes MPs and Ministers with various responsibilities in other countries have retained senior organisational roles in their parties. The key issue here is that the autonomy and independence of the electoral authorities is maintained.

The MOG also notes that while international practice varies, many countries that have chosen the independent EMB model mandate their EMB to make regulations that translate legislation into operational procedures. To the extent that this approach aligns with Fiji's legal traditions and practice, the MOG assesses that the EC would have the competence to issue regulations that relate specifically to elections in Fiji. Allowing the EC, rather than the executive government, to perform this role could also support a shift in the legal framework towards principles-based legislation supported by delegated instruments.

VII. VOTER REGISTRATION

Legal Framework

Fiji's legal framework sets out that all Fijians over 18, including those living overseas, are eligible to register to vote.²⁰ The *Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act* of 2012 (amended in 2014) provides for an electronic voter register, including biometric information (thumbprints and a facial photograph), which the FEO created from scratch in 2013. Each voter is assigned a number and receives an ID card. The Act requires the Supervisor of Elections to update the Register, at least annually, and allows the Supervisor to remove voters from the Register, in line with set criteria. The Supervisor must also ensure that voters can verify their own registration details and that the Register is available to political parties and candidates. A provision requiring the Supervisor to grant registered voters the opportunity to view the full voter Register was repealed in 2014. In advance of each election, the Supervisor must create voter lists for each polling station, with voting possible only at the polling station to which voters are assigned.

FEO Practice

To meet the Supervisor's legal obligations under the Act, the FEO conducted five registration drives between 2015 and 2018, visiting schools and vocational colleges to enrol new voters, and deploying mobile registration teams to register voters and update details in remote areas and overseas.²¹ It also maintained registration offices across Fiji from 2016. It advertised widely where, how and when citizens could apply to register or change their existing details, allowing voters to change their polling stations up to 1 October, when the Register was finalised following the issuing of the election Writ. After this time, voters were only able to replace their voter ID cards. The registration process requires voters themselves to actively report changes of residence and other information.

In parallel, the FEO took action to ensure the integrity of the Register, cross-checking data with Fiji's Births Deaths and Marriages Register, the Police Register, Fiji National Provident Fund Register, and Probate Court records to identify deceased and ineligible voters. It also compared biometric data to

²⁰ Some disqualifications apply including for persons serving more than 12 months imprisonment and persons legally-judged mentally unsound.

²¹ The FEO conducted registration processes overseas including in 10 Pacific Island countries and 13 countries outside the region (including the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, Malaysia and Korea).

identify and remove duplicate entries.²² The FEO allowed citizens to see the full Register at FEO area offices and allowed political parties to buy copies for \$FJ1,000.

Once it had created the voter lists, the FEO provided individual voters the opportunity to check their details including through an SMS service, a call centre and at area offices. It also encouraged village spokespeople (*Turaga-ni-Koro*) and the heads of settlement communities to verify the accuracy of the voter lists during FEO visits in 2018. Voters could also object to the presence of other voters on lists - the FEO published an Election Information Booklet which contained an objection form for this purpose.

The FEO stored the Register on a stand-alone computer at its headquarters in Suva and maintained protocols to ensure its security, including restricting access to three staff and tracking changes to them. The FEO also assumed local ownership of the software it had originally bought from an overseas provider. The FEO audited the Register internally, but not externally.

Table 1: Voter Register as at 1 October

Division	Gender	Number of voters	Percentage of voters
Central	Male	131,615	20.6%
	Female	133,569	21.0%
Eastern	Male	13,950	2.2%
	Female	12,084	1.9%
Northern	Male	48,216	7.6%
	Female	45,878	7.2%
Western	Male	122,963	19.3%
	Female	121,282	19.1%
Overseas	Male	4,352	0.7%
	Female	3,618	0.6%
Total (637,527 voters)	Male	321,096	50.4%
	Female	316,431	49.6%

Observations

The MOG assesses the legal framework for voter registration adequate overall. The MOG commends the Supervisor for allowing the Fijian public to access the full Register and recommends this right be reinstated in legislation.

²² FEO advised the MOG that during the electoral cycle since the 2014 Election, it removed some 23,000 names from the Register, including the names of 20,590 deceased voters, 501 prison inmates sentenced to more than 12 months imprisonment and 2054 duplicates. FEO referred to FICAC one duplicate entry which the FEO regarded as suspicious.

The MOG observed the registration update process at seven locations in Suva and found it to be orderly, inclusive and well-communicated overall. The MOG also assessed that the FEO had efficient checks in place to detect and eliminate duplicates in the Register as well as appropriate safeguards to ensure the integrity of the data (preventing, for example, any attempt to create extra or bogus voters).

The MOG observed that the Register published in October 2018 became controversial when it appeared to contradict the results of Fiji's 2017 census. The Register reported a population of voters higher than the equivalent number of voting-age people reported in the census.

The MOG spoke to a range of Fijian agencies, including the FEO and the Bureau of Statistics, as well as academic and professional statisticians, about the two data sets and concluded the discrepancy was the result of different methodologies. The FEO collected its data continuously over four years and the census comprised data collected on a single day (and collected with a range of questions designed for multiple purposes). The Fiji Bureau of Statistics advised the MOG that, while the methodologies and data sets used by the Bureau and the FEO were different, they had confidence in the rigour and thoroughness of both the census and voter registration.

The MOG observed some issues in relation to voter lists during voting, especially during pre-poll voting.²³ While these warrant analyses, they appeared limited and did not, in the MOG's assessment, impact the election result. That said, an external audit of the voter Register and lists would help reassure Fijian voters of the efficacy of the FEO's management of the Register.

The MOG heard arguments that voters should be allowed to vote at any polling station and not just at that assigned to the voter by the FEO or that selected by the voter at the time of registration. The MOG notes that this is the practice in a minority of countries and that the practice greatly increases the cost of election management as well as the risk of multiple votes being cast by a single voter.

VIII. POLITICAL PARTIES

Fiji's *Electoral Act* grants the Electoral Commission (EC) responsibility for formulating policy and overseeing the election in relation to the registration of political parties. The Supervisor of Elections has responsibility to administer party registration in accordance with the *Political Parties Act*, under which the Supervisor is also the Registrar of Political Parties. Fiji currently has seven registered political parties, six of which contested the 2018 General Election: FijiFirst (FFP); Fiji Labour Party (FLP); Humanity, Opportunity, Prosperity, Equality (HOPE); National Federation Party (NFP); Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) and Unity Fiji.

Legal Framework

The *Political Parties Act* requires political parties to have 5000 members at registration and offices across all four of Fiji's administrative divisions – a requirement designed to ensure new parties seek support broadly across Fiji, including in less populous areas. The Act requires parties to register a name (which must be in English), a party symbol and a constitution.

The Act (Part 3) sets out funding and accounting provisions for parties and candidates, requiring the regular publication and audit of the assets and liabilities of candidates, parties and party office holders. It prohibits donations from corporations and foreign sources, and limits those from Fijian citizens to \$FJ10,000 annually.

²³ Such as voters not finding their names on the list at the polling station to which they had come to vote. See section XVI on Voting and Counting

The Act also sets out guidelines for the internal organisation and conduct of political parties. It includes a Code of Conduct for Political Parties which speaks to issues of transparency, accountability and internal democracy, and provides guidelines for party constitutions.

Fiji's Constitution prohibits certain public officers standing as candidates for election, including officers of statutory authorities, courts, the State services, including the disciplined force, and trade unions. The *Political Parties Act* contains provisions that limit these individuals joining a political party and from holding an office in a political party.

Investigations

FICAC advised the MOG that during the electoral cycle it investigated six suspected breaches of the *Political Parties Act*.²⁴ It did not proceed with four of these for lack of evidence or merit, namely two instances of individuals allegedly holding membership of two parties simultaneously, one instance of a trade union official and public servant allegedly engaging in political activities and one instance of alleged unlawful donations. FICAC took two cases to court. One case related to allegedly providing false information which at the time of FICAC writing remained pending. The other case, in which it was argued that a senior party official had failed to declare assets and liabilities, was dismissed by the High Court two days before the Election.

Candidate Nomination

The *Electoral Act* sets out procedures for the nomination of both independent and party candidates. In this election, the FEO initially received applications from 237 candidates representing six registered political parties and no independent candidates. The FEO rejected nine applications on the grounds that candidates failed to meet residential requirements or had certain criminal convictions. One applicant appealed and the EC allowed the nomination. The Parties submitted an additional six applicants, all of whom were approved, with the end result that 235 candidates contested the election.

The Act also allows registered voters to object to any candidate on the grounds that the candidate is not qualified to be nominated or the nomination does not comply with the Constitution or *Electoral Act*. The EC received seven such objections and upheld none.

Observations

The MOG commends the intention of the *Political Parties Act* to implement strong governance standards for political parties and candidates. Fiji's requirements in this regard align with international good practice. The requirements for public disclosure of party and candidate assets and liabilities, as well as the ban on corporations and foreign entities funding parties and candidates, also support Fiji's obligations under the UN *Convention Against Corruption*. Similarly, Fiji's cap of \$FJ10,000 each year for donations by an individual to a political party – and the requirement for parties to make donors' names public – align with good international practice.²⁵

The MOG examined a range of statements that parties and candidates submitted in accordance with the Act and found they provided a measure of transparency and accountability of Parties' financial details. The MOG commends the EC for providing a standard template for individuals to report their assets and liabilities. A requirement to disaggregate campaign expenditure and to report that expenditure following an election would further enhance transparency.²⁶ A policy commitment and

²⁴ Correspondence FICAC to MOG, 4 December, 2018

²⁵ <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/political-finance-regulations-around-world-database-overview>

²⁶ Section 25 of the *Political Parties Act* is entitled "Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Expenditure in relation to elections" requires reporting 30 days in advance of (but not following) an election. Its title notwithstanding, its content

support from relevant agencies to assist parties improve reporting standards in the short term would also help the process.

Party Membership

The MOG recognises that the public service must be, and be seen to be, apolitical, and that public servants must undertake their duties in a way that serves the collective rather than a partisan interest. Legal provisions supporting this principle are common internationally. Thus, many countries disbar public or civil servants standing for election, while some disbar certain categories of senior public office holders joining political parties. The MOG further notes – and international practice generally recognises – qualitative differences between party membership, holding office in a party and standing as a candidate for election.

The MOG understands that in practice the focus of Fijian electoral authorities has been on ensuring public officers do not assume office-holding positions in political parties in ways that might present a conflict of interest. That said, the MOG recommends a review of the provisions of the *Political Parties Act* to ensure that the exercise of citizens’ rights to engage in political life is not unduly constrained (especially for those outside leadership echelons in the public sector and in trade unions).

IX. THE CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

Six registered parties contested the 2018 Election: FijiFirst (FFP), Fiji Labour Party (FLP), HOPE, National Federation Party (NFP), Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) and Unity Fiji. FijiFirst, SODELPA and NFP all put forward 51 candidates to contest the 51 available seats while the others each put forward more than 20 candidates. Parties and candidates campaigned through rallies, paid advertising in traditional media, digital media and billboards, and through social media platforms. Parties also issued “manifestos” while candidates gave media interviews and debated policies on radio and television.

Legal Framework

Fiji’s Constitution grants every Fijian citizen the freedom to make political choices and to campaign for a political party, candidate or cause. The *Electoral Act* elaborates rules that relate both to campaigning at any time between elections and at specific times, including after the Writ is issued and in the 48 hours before polling. The former includes prohibitions on the use of state resources and vote-buying, restrictions on entities and organisations receiving foreign funds, as well as requirements for political advertising; the latter include rules on the publication of opinion polls and on media reporting of campaign matters, the conduct of persons in or near polling stations and a prohibition on any person communicating a political message through the telephone and social media.²⁷

The *Public Order Act 1969* is also relevant to campaigning, particularly to the broader environment enabling political discussion. A February 2017 amendment to this Act eased previous restrictions on public assembly so that organisers of public rallies no longer need to obtain a police permit in advance to hold a public meeting other than in certain public areas.²⁸

contains no reference or instruction in relation to election expenditure. Section 26 sets out requirements for the auditing of party accounts but makes no reference to election expenditure.

²⁷ Section 63(2) of the *Electoral Act*. The legislation provides for penalties of up to \$FJ50,000 in fines and/or up to 10 years’ imprisonment.

²⁸ Permits must be sought for meetings or processions in public parks or public roads (new s8(2)), which are defined to include public gardens, beaches, public bridges and wharves (s8(7)).

The 2018 campaign environment

In the weeks preceding the Election, Fiji's police as well as FICAC, the FEO, and the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) reminded voters and candidates through the media of campaign rules and restrictions, including the risk of criminal investigation and prosecution for continuing to display campaign materials into the 48 hours restriction period.

Following the Election, FICAC advised that it investigated 30 matters under the *Electoral Act* pertaining to the 2018 Election of which some 20 involved alleged breaches of rules relating to campaigning.²⁹ Some 11 of these concerned campaigning during the black-out period, including on social media. FICAC further advised that it found most of these alleged 11 breaches involved people who were ignorant of the law and who subsequently refrained from their activities once reprimanded.

FICAC prosecuted four matters in total relating to "campaigning" during the electoral cycle, including before the Writ was issued. These included charges which the court later dismissed against a government Minister for comments allegedly in breach of s140 (bribery) and s141 (undue influence) of the *Electoral Act*. At the time of writing, three other matters were still before the Court including a charge of undue influence under s141; and a breach of s116(4) (Campaign Rules) by a provisional candidate.

Following the Election, the Fiji Police Force advised the MOG that it received 15 applications for permits to hold political rallies in public places, out of which it rejected one because of its lateness.³⁰ The Police further reported that the pre-election, elections proper and post-election periods were largely incident-free, noting six election-related incidents in total, including five instances of damage to campaign billboards and one case of false representation which the police referred to FICAC.

Also, during the campaign, the FEO established a unit to monitor fraudulent social media pages and to request their hosts (principally Facebook) remove them. Fiji's Human Rights and Anti-discrimination Commission also called on Fijians to report instances on social media of hate speech and racial vilification.

Observations

The MOG observed the campaign environment overall afforded candidates and parties freedom to campaign. At the same time, the MOG observed some areas where legal and policy reforms could improve the confidence of all stakeholders in a level electoral campaign field.

Concerns About the Law

Opposition Parties told the MOG that they and their supporters felt constrained in their campaigning by what they considered a restrictive and uncertain legal framework. While the MOG was not made aware of any specific instances where the application of the law inhibited campaigning, the MOG considers a review of the offences in Fiji's electoral legislation is warranted. A review would help ensure that the law does not inadvertently inhibit citizens' engagement in Fiji's electoral processes. In this context, the MOG suggests the review include s63 of the *Electoral Act* which sets out restrictions on the conduct of persons (and not just candidates) in the 48-hour restricted period before polling. (In 2018, this blackout period was extended to cover the rescheduled voting on 17 November.)

²⁹ Correspondence FICAC to the MOG, 4 December, 2018

³⁰ Correspondence Fiji Police Force to the MOG, 12 December, 2018

The MOG observed that a perceived lack of clarity in the Act defining a time period for the campaign gave rise to allegations of unfairness when one party began advertising on billboards well in advance of the Writ. FICAC subsequently confirmed with the MOG that, except where otherwise specified, campaigning is allowed at any time between elections. The MOG considers that this is not necessarily clear on the face of the Act.³¹ Many countries define a “campaign period” in law which clarifies for stakeholders their rights and obligations during this time. The MOG suggests Fiji consider doing the same in its legislation.

Caretaker Conventions

The MOG notes that the *Electoral Act* prohibits government officials and those entitled to government benefits using government resources to their electoral advantage. The MOG further notes FICAC’s advice that no breach of these standards occurred in the 2018 Election.

At the same time, the MOG observed that Fiji appeared to lack in this election the protocols, conventions or rules common to other democracies necessary to guide the Government, Members of Parliament and the bureaucracy on appropriate conduct during the election period. The MOG noted that during the election period Ministers undertook a range of high-profile activities, including opening buildings and dispensing government grants and other funds. The MOG also noted an instance of a government department placing a paid advertisement in a national newspaper congratulating its Minister on his performance.

The MOG notes that in normal times administering projects, dispensing grants and opening buildings are the business of government but before an election these activities can bestow an “incumbency advantage” and potentially influence voters, including through the media profile they provide. Accordingly, these activities should not take place in the caretaker period. Internationally, caretaker conventions usually provide that caretaker governments avoid to the extent possible taking action that might bind an incoming government such as making major policy decisions or new appointments or entering into major contracts or undertakings.

The MOG recommends Fiji studies and develops appropriate “caretaker” guidance recognising that the Executive cannot be held accountable in the normal manner once Parliament has been dissolved and that it should act to ensure public confidence in a level electoral playing field.

Campaign Spending

In its interactions in Fiji, the MOG heard arguments that the differing resources available to parties impacted on the fairness of the campaign. As discussed earlier, Fiji has strict rules in place to ensure parties and candidates disclose their sources of funding but this reporting does not consistently account for campaign expenditure.

The MOG notes that many countries place limits on campaign spending, balancing the need to respect freedom of expression with the need to reduce the advantage of parties with greater access to resources, especially as campaigning becomes increasingly expensive. These caps provide an additional safeguard against potential loopholes in donation disclosure procedures. The MOG suggests this issue warrants consideration in Fiji.

³¹ For example, s116(2) refers to a Party’s ‘election campaign’. Other parts of this section relate to more general misconduct that could happen at any point between elections, such as preventing other parties holding meetings and rallies (s116(3)(d)).

Auditing Campaign Manifestos

The MOG heard suggestions that parties should be required to submit their campaign manifestos to audit so voters can better understand the costs of any campaign promises against their benefits.

The MOG notes it is practice in some countries for parties to voluntarily submit campaign platforms for audit, often by a large accounting firm or reputable non-partisan fiscal institution. In a few countries, parties are required to submit campaign platforms to government agencies, such as a Ministry of the Treasury or a Parliamentary Budget Office. Assuming the manifestos are submitted sufficiently early in the campaign, these audits can help predict the impact of proposed spending on government budgets, helping to inform voters. At the same time, these audits are less helpful predicting the impact of a policy on the wider economy given that economists differ significantly on these questions.

Social Media

The MOG noted with concern some instances of social media pages being created during the election period designed to resemble legitimate mainstream media outlets and intentionally used to proliferate misinformation. The MOG commends the Fijian electoral authorities for their efforts to identify these sites (mostly on Facebook) and have them removed.

X. MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

Traditional media, including print and broadcast media, reported widely and generally comprehensively on the Election, including the campaign. Radio and television in particular hosted interviews and debates with political parties and higher profile candidates. Digital media also actively covered the campaign.

Legal Framework

The *Media Industry Development Act 2010* (MIDA Act) is the key Act governing the operation of the media in relation to elections in Fiji. It establishes the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) which the *Electoral Act 2014* makes responsible for ensuring media organisations comply with restrictions during the “blackout” period before the close of polls. These restrictions are set out in section 118: s118 (1) prohibits any media publishing, printing or broadcasting any ‘campaign advertisement, debate, opinion or interview on any election issue or on any political party or candidate’ during the 48-hour period before polling day and on polling day before the close of polling; s118(2) provides that any publication or broadcast during this time that relates to the election must be pre-approved by MIDA; and s118(4) sets out penalties for non-compliance of up to 5 years’ imprisonment.

The *MIDA Act* governs the operation of the media more broadly during the electoral cycle. The Act establishes MIDA’s purpose is to promote and facilitate the development of media organisations and media services in Fiji as well as (inter alia) ensure quality, balance and fair judgment, and that “nothing is included in the content of media services which is against public interest or order, or national interest, or which offends against good taste or decency or creates communal discord.”

The *MIDA Act* includes a Media Code of Ethics and Practice which sets out requirements for accuracy, balance and fairness in media reporting, and an obligation to provide a right of reply. It also provides for a Media Tribunal to determine breaches of the Act, including the Code, with potential financial penalties of up to \$FJ100,000 for media organisations and \$FJ25,000 for editors and/or prison terms not exceeding 2 years. An amendment to the Act in 2015 removed the liability for individual journalists for breaches under the Act.

Media Accreditation

MIDA shared responsibility with the FEO for accrediting domestic and foreign media for the 2018 Election. Together MIDA and FEO accredited 19 news organisations, including eight from outside Fiji. No applications were rejected.

MIDA practice: application of the legal framework

MIDA told the MOG that it interpreted its responsibilities under s118 of the *Electoral Act* as being to ensure reporting did not stray into campaigning. MIDA advised that it imposed no restrictions on reporting provisional results that the FEO released during the restricted period. It advised media that they could report the outcome of the High Court case involving a high-profile candidate but should seek legal advice if they were concerned their reporting might stray into ‘campaigning’ or ‘advocacy’.

MIDA reported that it received a range of complaints in relation to media breaching the blackout, assessed these and found they had no merit. MIDA also reported that it approved all applications for media to publish and broadcast that MIDA received under s118(2) of the Act.

In advance of the election, MIDA, the FEO and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) held a training workshop for media on “Reporting on Elections Accurately and Impartially.”

MIDA advised the MOG that during the broader electoral cycle it took a “collegiate approach” to its responsibilities under the MIDA Act addressing complaints in relation to “balance” and “fairness” through conversations by telephone or email with media organisations. MIDA had not escalated any matter to a legal or Tribunal process, and the Tribunal had never convened.

Observations

The MOG observed media in Fiji generally allowed for parties, candidates and others to present their messages to voters during the period the MOG was in Fiji. While some media organisations appeared partisan, on balance media informed voters of their choices.

The MOG notes that many countries impose a ‘blackout’ on campaigning news before polling (balancing freedoms of speech with the freedom to vote freely). At the same time, the MOG notes that, as with other sections of the *Electoral Act*, the definition of campaign in relation to the blackout period is somewhat broad. Media practitioners relayed to the MOG that this gave rise to some confusion. Greater clarity would help media comply with the law on this point.

The MOG also notes that Fiji’s requirement for media to obtain prior approval for reporting during the blackout period appears an unnecessary constraint. The MOG recommends removing this requirement in the law or providing greater clarity through published guidelines.

In relation to the election cycle more broadly, the MOG notes international media monitors have assessed that Fiji’s media environment has steadily improved in recent years. Reporters Without Borders ranked Fiji 57 out of 180 countries evaluated for press freedom in 2018, up 10 places from 2017 and 23 places from 2016.³² At the same time, the MOG recognises ongoing concern among some media practitioners and others about *self-censorship* resulting from the penalties attached to the *MIDA Act* combined with a lack of definition of key terms including “public and national interest.” The MOG understands the preference of practitioners not to test the boundaries through legal proceedings given the penalties contained in the Act.

³² <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

The MOG recommends a review of the *MIDA Act* so as to ensure the media can confidently play their vital role throughout the electoral cycle, informing voters of their choices, including by scrutinizing the actions and claims of parties and candidates as well as the performance of government and opposition.

XI. VOTER INFORMATION AND EDUCATION³³

Fiji's Constitution gives the Electoral Commission (EC) responsibility for voter education, while the *Electoral Act* gives it responsibility for both voter information and education. The Act refers specifically to responsibilities to educate voters regarding voter registration, parties and candidates, voting procedures and the protection of electoral rights. The *Electoral Act* also prohibits any person, entity or organisation engaging in activities that are assigned to the EC or Supervisor of Elections without written authorisation from the EC or Supervisor – this prohibition includes voter information and education.

Voter Information and Awareness

The FEO took responsibility for voter information well in advance of the 2018 Election publishing – in hard copy and on its website – a series of booklets for voters, candidates, media, party polling agents and others. The FEO translated its Election Information Booklet into six languages, and distributed 200,000 hard copies in iTaukei and 120,000 in Hindi. The FEO also distributed 30,000 copies of a brochure on voting for people with disabilities and the FEO website was accessible to people with visual impairment. After the candidate ball draw, the FEO published and distributed more than 1,412,000 Voter Instruction Booklets, listing candidates and their candidate numbers. Voters also received a copy of the Voter Instruction Booklet when they entered a polling station to vote.

The FEO conducted three “Know Your Election” campaigns over the course of 2018, in both urban and remote areas, with FEO teams reaching 3,870 villages and communities, 168 schools, as well as companies, and the disciplinary forces. These sessions included information on how to vote, when to vote, where to vote and what happens inside a polling station. The FEO trained voter awareness officials to conduct this outreach and estimates some 280,000 people attended voter awareness information sessions. A separate Know Your Election campaign targeted areas where pre-polling was to take place, reaching some 68,000 people in remote communities.

After the Writ was issued, the EC published a timeline for the Election. The FEO then took out advertisements in Fiji's key media to publicise important dates, including for pre-polling and Election Day voting as well as for applications for postal voting. On 22 October, the FEO published details of its pre-poll voting schedules. The schedule was reduced from two weeks to one week and provided less advance notice than in 2014 – the function of a shorter time overall between the Writ and the close of polls than in 2014. In some limited instances, the FEO amended its initial pre-poll schedule and then publicised the change. When the FEO changed the location of polling venues and when it rescheduled Election Day polling due to bad weather it publicised new voting times and locations across radio, television, newspapers and village spokespeople.

Throughout the electoral cycle, the Supervisor of Elections and other key FEO staff held press conferences and engaged social media on all relevant technical aspects of the Election, including information on how to register, how to cast a valid vote, the results of candidate nominations, publication of candidate assets and candidate lists. The FEO ran regular demonstrations and

³³ While the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, “voter information and awareness” refers to activities that inform voters where and how to cast a valid vote and encourages them to vote. “Voter education” focusses on more complex information about elections and their link to broader governance processes.

briefings for different stakeholders, including village, community and workplace groups and the media. It also held a mock voting demonstration for party candidates.

Voter Education Initiatives

Following the 2014 Election, the FEO joined with the Fiji Department of Education to introduce an electoral education curriculum for senior school students. The curriculum included basic voter information, a mock campaign and a voting exercise as well as materials aimed at building understanding of democratic values more broadly. The curriculum has been delivered across 171 senior schools, reaching an estimated 16,000 school students.

The FEO also approved several civil society organisations conducting voter education activities during the electoral cycle, including a guide to elections for young women and a guide for prospective women candidates.

Observations

The MOG commends the FEO for its extensive voter information and awareness efforts in advance of the Election. Its campaigns were highly visible and generally well-targeted to include typically marginalised voters, including women, people with disabilities, young people and those living in remote communities. MOG observers noted that voter awareness and voter list verification sessions in remote areas tended to focus on village spokespeople who were mostly male. This may have narrowed the base for community engagement and reduced opportunities for women to participate in the process. The MOG suggests that for future elections the FEO also use the existing network of village women's committees administered by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty.

MOG observers found that the vast majority of Fijians appeared to understand the voting process and that the rate of invalid votes was low.³⁴ However, particularly during voter information sessions in remote and rural areas not reached by media or party campaigning, the MOG encountered voters who said that they were uncertain about how to choose a candidate in the absence of information identifying candidates' party affiliations in official publications. As noted previously, this absence appeared to create challenges for some voters.

The MOG notes some speculation that a lower voter turnout in 2018, relative to 2014, reflected a failure of voter information. The MOG is not persuaded by this argument and notes a 72.5 per cent voter turnout (albeit lower than in 2014) is healthy by global standards.

Voter Education

The MOG commends the shift by the FEO towards integrating more sophisticated messages about voter rights, political awareness and electoral principles into its information and awareness activities. These efforts will support a democratic culture in Fiji over the long-term.

The MOG notes that international good practice involves electoral authorities engaging a variety of partners with complementary strengths in voter education, including the media, civic organisations, community groups and other government agencies and institutions. Voter education that embraces a diversity of sources and people helps build trust in the efficacy and fairness of the electoral system and processes as well as underlying democratic values. This is especially true for efforts that support women and other disadvantaged groups to engage in elections. Accordingly, the MOG encourages

³⁴ On Election Day, MOG observers either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'Voters had an adequate understanding of the voting process' at all polling stations visited by MOG observation teams. See Annex E.

the EC and FEO to strengthen their efforts to build productive partnerships with civil society organisations and others in voter education.

XII. CIVIL SOCIETY AND ELECTIONS

Civil society in Fiji comprises diverse civil society organisations (CSOs) focused on a range of public interest matters including: promoting the rights of women and youth; supporting people with disabilities and other marginalised groups; and providing a platform for public debate on issues such as citizenship and the constitution.

Legal Framework

The *Electoral Act* (s115) governs the role of civil society in elections, prohibiting once the election date has been announced, any foreign-funded CSO from engaging in any “campaign” (as defined in s115(1) to include organising debates, public forums, meetings, interviews, panel discussions or publishing material), and requiring the EC or Supervisor to approve any activity that is otherwise legally assigned to the Commission or the Supervisor throughout the electoral cycle (including voter information and education.)³⁵

The *Electoral Act* (s119) grants the Minister responsible for elections the authority to invite and approve election observers – a prerogative the Minister exercised in respect of international observers, although not domestic observers in 2018.

Electoral authorities’ engagement with CSOs

The EC and the FEO met sections of civil society during the electoral cycle. In 2016, the FEO established the Election Disability Access Working Group (EDAWG) with disabled peoples’ organisations to discuss measures aimed at improving access to polling stations, amending procedures on assisted voting and improving the electoral participation of people with disabilities.

In 2017, the FEO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with International IDEA under which IDEA convened two workshops involving the FEO and civil society groups to discuss Fiji’s electoral system and preparations for the 2018 Election. In 2018, the FEO joined the launch of IDEA’s project (C3) aimed at expanding the space for citizen groups to engage in democratic processes, including elections.

³⁵ Section 115 (1) Following the announcement of the date of the election, it shall be unlawful for any person, entity or organisation (including any person employed or engaged by any such person, entity or organisation) that receives any funding or assistance from a foreign government, inter-governmental or non-governmental organisation or multilateral agency to engage in, participate in or conduct any campaign (including organising debates, public forums, meetings, interviews, panel discussions, or publishing any material) that is related to the election or any election issue or matter.

(2) It shall be unlawful for any person, entity or organisation (including any person employed or engaged by any such person, entity or organisation) to engage in, or to undertake any act which, under the *Constitution* or under the Act, is given to the Electoral Commission or the Supervisor, unless authorised in writing by the Electoral Commission or the Supervisor

(3) Any person who contravenes this section commits an offence and shall be liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$FJ50,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 10 years, or to both.

(4) Nothing in subsection (1) prevents any university from organising inclusive public forums or panel discussions that are related to the election.

(5) This section shall not apply to the Electoral Commission or the Supervisor.

Domestic Observers

The MOG notes that domestic observers play an important role in more than 80 countries around the world. Their presence enhances transparency and builds public confidence in electoral processes.³⁶ CSOs are an important part of such domestic observer groups. Their capacity to organise, mobilise and train observers, as well as their local knowledge, complement the knowledge and experience of international observers. The involvement of domestic observer groups in successive election processes also affords such groups opportunities to improve, incrementally and over time, the quality of their engagement with election processes.

The MOG recommends Fiji allow domestic observers to participate in future elections. Recruitment and training of observers will take time, so it is important that electoral authorities develop appropriate policies as soon as possible. Internationally, it is common practice for electoral management bodies to accredit observers, and the MOG assesses that in Fiji the EC is best placed to engage with local groups and to assess their capacity to perform the role of domestic observers. Accordingly, the MOG recommends the EC exercise the authority to approve the participation of domestic observers in future elections.

XIII. INCLUSIVENESS AND PARTICIPATION

Fiji's legal framework sets out the principle of non-discrimination and gender equality in political life – principles supported by Fiji's accession to international human rights treaties.

Women

Fiji has an improving record of female participation in politics and is a regional leader in this regard. Fifty-six women stood for election in 2018, accounting for 23.8 per cent of all candidates, up from 18 per cent in 2014. Of these, ten were elected, accounting for 19.6 per cent of all Members of Parliament, up from 16.0 per cent in 2014. For their part, the record of political parties was mixed, with only one (HOPE) fielding as many women as men.³⁷

Women were well represented in the administration of the General Election. Of FEO's permanent staff, 44 per cent are women, including 48 per cent of senior staff. Of the short-term staff employed on Election Day, 57 per cent were women.

Women-focussed CSOs were also active in advance of the Election Writ (although they limited their activities thereafter). The Fiji Women's Rights Movement conducted training for prospective women candidates and published and distributed handbooks for women candidates and for young women voters.

People with Disability

Following its ratification of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Fiji's Parliament enacted the *Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2017*, which reinforced the right of disabled people to vote and stand for election, and also mandated appropriate voting procedures, facilities and materials for persons with disabilities. This followed the FEO's consultations with disabled people's organisations from 2016. In August 2018, the EC approved measures to allow disabled people to be assisted at polling stations by a person of their choice as well as the Presiding Officer.

³⁶ See www.gndem.org (Global Network of Domestic Election Observers)

³⁷ The ratio of women to total candidates was as follows: HOPE 18 of 28; FLP 6 of 25; FijiFirst 10 of 51, NFP 10 of 51, Unity Fiji 5 of 29 and SODELPA 7 of 51.

Other Minority Groups

The FEO ran a coordinated public information and awareness campaign, including materials intended to reach young people and ethnic and linguistic minorities as well as voters in correctional centres.

Observations

The MOG commends the FEO for its merit-based recruitment policies which ensured women played key roles at all levels of the electoral administration.

The MOG congratulates Fiji on the relative success of women candidates in the 2018 Election and urges ongoing efforts in this regard. In particular, the MOG urges all political parties to intensify efforts to recruit women party members and actively identify and foster future women office holders and candidates. The MOG also recommends the EC develop a working partnership with women's advocacy organisations to support voter education and training for women candidates, including following the Election Writ. The MOG further suggests the FEO looks to make use of village women's committees in voter information outreach activities.

The MOG commends the FEO on its ongoing efforts to engage and assist disabled voters. MOG teams observed polling day workers were diligent and compassionate in their assistance for disabled voters. A very small number appeared not to follow set procedures (see below). Some polling venues were not accessible to disabled voters.

The MOG observed (and relayed to the FEO) some instances when prison authorities did not facilitate voting for eligible prisoners.

XIV. ELECTORAL PREPARATIONS

FEO Operations

The FEO produced a five-year strategic plan in 2015 setting out annual milestones for the preparation of the 2018 Election. The plan included institutional and staff capacity building through training and the introduction of a performance management system. It also established operational plans for voter registration, voter outreach, the recruitment and training of temporary staff, the creation of 18 additional temporary area offices and improved information and communications technology.

In the year before the Election, FEO focussed efforts on updating and auditing its Results Management Information System (RMIS), developing a smart phone results application, intensifying staff training, hosting workshops for stakeholders (including the media and party polling agents), producing, printing and storing sensitive materials, as well as preparing and setting up the National Count Centre and the National Results Centre.

During this period, the FEO also introduced a computer-based Election Management System (EMS) that, inter alia, supported election logistics and human resource management. The FEO also assumed local ownership of the technology for the biometric voter register and updated and audited its Results Management Information System (RMIS).

The final stages of preparations involved the printing of ballot papers and other sensitive materials under strict security supervision. The FEO printed a total of 20,000 postal ballot papers, 92,400 ballot papers for pre-poll and 661,350 ballots for Election Day (including 8,900 additional ballots

printed for adjourned polling on 17 November). Ballot papers were bundled into booklets of 50, with the booklets identified by serial numbers.

The FEO publicised its operational preparations, inviting media to attend key events. Its website featured a range of innovations including polling deployment schedules in 3D interactive maps, featuring the pre-polling routes, exchange sites, voter numbers, polling times and transportation modes. It also included features that improved accessibility for people with disability.

Observations

The MOG had unobstructed access to all parts of the FEO's operational preparations and found the FEO open and available to answer any question about its work.

MOG teams observed Presiding Officer refresher training across Fiji, as well as training of data entry clerks for the tabulation of results. The MOG found these courses consistent, professionally-delivered and effective. Training materials were well developed, comprehensive and user-friendly, and trainers competent overall, utilising advanced training techniques which featured extensive role playing. The MOG assesses the FEO's training program a major asset in ensuring the overall consistency in the later application of procedures.

The MOG reviewed and found credible the FEO's measures to ensure the efficiency and integrity of its IT systems, including the results of the FEO's external audit of RMIS. The MOG notes a number of innovations the FEO introduced to improve the operation of RMIS following its 2014 experience, including various triggers that would result in an audit of data entered and the doubling of the number of supervisors at the Results Centre.

The MOG received a briefing on the security features associated with the ballot paper and assessed these to be well-thought-out. The MOG notes Fiji's practice of not including serial numbers on individual ballot papers but on the ballot paper books (from which the individual ballot papers are taken) aligns with good international practice, ensuring the secrecy of the ballot while providing a mechanism to prevent fraud. The MOG observed the ballot printing process, both for the general printing of ballots for postal voting, pre-polling and Election Day, as well as a second process for the printing of ballots for the adjourned polling. The MOG found these processes transparent and security arrangements appropriate.

The MOG was also present during the packing process, the despatch of postal voting materials and the checking of materials for pre-polling by the Presiding Officers, both at the central warehouse and different area offices. The MOG also observed the shredding of damaged and excess ballot papers. The MOG was able to verify that these processes were highly efficient and transparent and that security was adequate.

During its observations, the MOG found the FEO competent overall and that it completed the vast majority of technical and operational preparations on time, despite the challenges of Fiji's geography and weather.

The MOG was impressed by the robust culture of strategic and operational planning evident in the FEO's preparations for the 2018 General Election as well as the innovation of quality assurance teams monitoring progress. The MOG also commends the FEO on the effectiveness of the FEO's recruitment and training strategies and the transparency of its operations. The FEO's capabilities bode well for the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of future elections.

XV. SECURITY

Under the *Electoral Act*, the Fiji Police Force must provide “appropriate resources as required by the Supervisor to assist the FEO in the conduct of elections.” For its part, the Fiji Police Force provided more than 2,000 officers to election operations for polling day (700 more than in 2014). The FEO also coordinated with the Fijian Police to ensure the escort and safekeeping of sensitive materials.

Fiji’s electoral legal framework does not provide a role for the Republic of Fiji Military Force (RFMF), although the Constitution sets out that it has “overall responsibility” to ensure “the security, defence and well-being of Fiji and all Fijians.” Prior to the election, RFMF senior officers made several statements to the media that the RFMF would remain apolitical and support the legitimately-elected government. The RFMF conducted some training exercises in the week preceding pre-polling.

The MOG discussed electoral preparations with the leadership of the Fiji Police Force and found that it had a good understanding of its role. The MOG also met senior officers of the RFMF who reiterated the RFMF’s commitment to not engage in politics. The MOG reported to the RFMF concerns that had been expressed to the MOG by residents in Savusavu on Vanua Levu about military exercises in late October in advance of pre-polling. The RFMF responded that planning for these exercises had predated the 1 October Writ.

The MOG observed the provision of security by the Fiji Police Force (FPF) for voting at polling stations and also escorting and securing sensitive materials, including ballot boxes. The MOG assessed that the FPF provided adequate resources to carry out their electoral tasks and that the police performed their role well, in an unobtrusive and respectful manner, helping to build confidence in the electoral process.

XVI. VOTING AND COUNTING

As in 2014, Fiji employed three voting modalities during the 2018 General Election: postal voting, pre-polling and Election Day polling. As a result of localised flooding on Election Day (14 November), the Supervisor cancelled operations at 25 polling stations on Viti Levu and rescheduled voting for 17 November.

To accommodate these modalities, and to conform with an EC decision to limit each polling station to 500 registered voters for ease of management and counting, the FEO established 2,173 polling stations at 1,436 different venues:

Table 2: Polling Stations

	Polling stations	Polling venues	% of registered voters
Pre-polling	587	582	11.1
Election Day	1567	854	87.7
(rescheduled to 17 November)	(25)	(22)	(1.4)
Postal voting*	19	1	1.8
	2173	1436	

*established at the National Count Centre for the purpose of counting only

Voting

Postal voting

Applications for postal voting opened following the announcement of the election date on 1 October and closed at 6pm on 24 October. Applications as at 24 October totalled 10,816, of which 1,187 were overseas applications. This figure was later adjusted to 11,227 when the FEO's quality assurance program identified 411 applications that were not processed earlier by the postal team.

Verification of the returned postal ballot papers started on 7 November and continued until 15 November. The verification process involved matching the information of every postal applicant to its return package; those which matched were admitted for counting.

Postal votes were required to be received by the FEO by 6pm on Election Day. A total of 9,180 postal ballots were approved for counting.

Pre-polling

Pre-polling services voters who reside in remote areas, in venues where the number of voters does not justify opening a polling station for a full day, and for residents of nursing homes, health facilities, prisons, as well as members of the disciplined forces. Pre-polling took place from 5 to 10 November and involved 92 FEO teams deployed across Fiji's four divisions.

The FEO made tentative plans for the venues and schedules for pre-polling months ahead of the election but could give official notice only on 22 October seven days after the close of nominations, in accordance with the law. In two locations, incorrect voter lists were delivered to pre-polling stations, and the Supervisor of Elections exercised his powers under Section 7(3) of the *Electoral Act* to allow those registered voters who arrived at these polling stations to vote.

Election Day polling

Fiji's scheduled Election Day (14 November) was declared a public holiday. Polling started at 7.30am and closed at 6pm. Following the decision to adjourn polling at 22 polling venues, the FEO conducted extensive outreach to advise voters of new arrangements and provided free buses.

Counting

Following the close of polling on 14 and 17 November, polling staff counted votes cast at their polling stations *in situ* before the resealed ballot boxes were transferred to the FEO's secure warehouses; counting for pre-poll and postal voting also began at this time at the National Count Centre in Suva. The counting process was organised in two phases: reconciliation of ballots and counting of votes. Reconciliation (of numbers of ballot papers issued, spoiled, cast and remaining) happened before opening the ballot box. Counting was done by sorting votes by candidate number range and then by individual candidates. The instructions were that if the counting officers could tell the intention of the voter, the ballots were considered valid. Party agents could object to an invalid vote, with the Presiding Officer making a final decision. Counting was continuous: once it had commenced, it could not be interrupted.

Once the counting process was complete at individual polling stations, Presiding Officers posted the Protocol of Results (pink copy) outside the polling station and sent the original (white copy) to the National Results Centre in a tamper evident envelope. Staff at the National Count Centre followed similar procedures. Polling stations with phone connections to Suva also telephoned their results to the Results Centre to create provisional results. Counting concluded on 18 November.

Observations

The MOG observed voting at more than 575 polling stations (or around a quarter of the total), across Fiji's four divisions, visiting venues unannounced to the extent possible. MOG teams visited 59 polling stations in remote and maritime areas during pre-polling, and 460 during Election Day on 14 November and 19 of the 25 polling stations where adjourned polling took place on 17 November. The MOG noted voter turn-out on 17 November was lower than on 14 November. The cancellation of the votes cast on Election Day was unfortunate, but in accordance with the law.

Observed polling stations were generally set up correctly and ensured privacy for voters. Most pre-polling stations respected the published schedules for opening, despite some complications due to bad weather. On Election Day most stations that the MOG observed opened on time. All ballot boxes arrived at polling stations sealed, and all voting materials (including all necessary sensitive materials) were available. MOG observers reported that polling stations were well managed, with competent and courteous polling staff. Voting procedures were widely followed, with only minor irregularities that had no significant bearing on the integrity of the overall process. Closing processes were also generally carried out to a high standard. MOG observers gave 74 per cent of visited stations a "very good" rating for the conduct of polling, while 24 per cent were rated as "good".

The MOG observed voting was peaceful and orderly. Long queues were evident at some venues but these moved relatively quickly. Most voting on Election Day took place in the morning and was largely finished by around 2pm. Voters demonstrated considerable commitment queuing in some instances in driving wind and rain. The MOG observed no active political campaigning around polling venues although a few posters remained in public places. It observed one incident (which it reported to the FEO) of possibly intimidating behaviour by a village spokesperson.

Allocation of Pre-Poll Venues

The MOG heard concerns that the number of voters assigned to pre-poll venues (at 11 per cent) was too high and that the FEO should have made arrangements for same day voting. The MOG observed that the pre-poll venues its observers attended met the necessary criteria: they were mostly inaccessible by bitumen road and without internet and phone connectivity so that servicing them required additional resources that were otherwise deployed on Election Day. The MOG assesses that Fiji's diverse and often challenging geography will mean pre-polling remains essential for the foreseeable future but is assured that the FEO is keeping the number of pre-poll stations under review as connectivity improves.

Voter Lists

MOG observers reported some issues with the voter lists, with some voters (not in significant numbers) having voter ID cards but not appearing on the voter list of the polling station at which they came to vote. Observers recorded that polling station workers found voters on the voter list easily in 88 per cent of the pre-poll stations the MOG visited and 94 per cent of those for Election Day/s. While the MOG was not able to systematically analyse possible causes for voters not appearing on voter lists, MOG observers reported that most instances appeared to be the result of voters not updating their registration information or voters presenting at the wrong polling station (sometimes in situations where there were multiple stations at one polling venue). The FEO reported that it received a total of 290 queries on Election Day related to incorrect assignment of voters to polling stations. The MOG judges these instances did not impact on the overall outcome of the Election.

MOG observers reported that in most cases the Presiding Officer sought to help voters locate their assigned station, although this was not possible in remote areas due to poor mobile phone coverage. When redirecting a voter was not possible, a small number of Presiding Officers allowed voters to cast a “tendered ballot” – a process otherwise reserved for voters who had not voted but whose name had been crossed off the Voter List. The MOG understands the FEO is examining these issues with the aim of providing guidance before future elections.

Assisted Voting

The MOG observed many instances of assisted voting in polling stations, including for the elderly and people with disability. In almost all cases, this assistance was provided in accordance with procedure, with Presiding Officers making appropriate judgments about when and where assistance was warranted (usually for elderly voters unable to see the ballot paper clearly or requiring physical support). Almost all assistance was provided by the Presiding Officers. Inconsistency in the application of procedures for assisted voting was reported in a few cases mostly during pre-polling, leading in some instances to reduced privacy of the ballot. Overall, the MOG reported that 72 per cent of polling stations the MOG visited were accessible to people with a disability (60 per cent during pre-polling and 73 per cent during Election Day).

Counting

MOG teams observed counting at 39 polling stations on 14 and 17 November as well as counting for pre-polling and postal voting at The National Count Centre in Suva. MOG teams were also present at the National Count Centre on 17 November when the Supervisor re-counted a limited number of boxes which had recorded unduly high numbers of invalid votes or when discrepancies had been recorded in the Protocols of Results.

MOG teams observed scrupulous application of counting procedures at polling stations as well as in the National Count Centre. Counting procedures were thorough, with iterative elements that allowed FEO staff and party agents opportunities to identify, and FEO staff to address, any errors. The MOG assesses that the counting process, with its iterative steps, supported the accuracy and transparency of the vote count.

MOG observers found processes related to rulings by Presiding Officers on the validity or invalidity of ballots transparent and well-communicated to polling agents and observers. The validation of votes was based on good faith efforts by Presiding Officers to determine the intention of the voter, in line with instructions provided and with international good practice; that is, all ballot papers that show the clear intention of the voter are considered valid. Observers at the National Count Centre found the Supervisor’s re-count transparent and well-communicated to the polling agents and observers present.

Observers reported that Presiding Officers complied with the instruction to display the “pink” copy of the Protocol of Results in a publicly-accessible area at the polling station. All protocols for postal and pre-poll results were displayed publicly at the Count Centre. The display of a copy of these protocols at a public place outside all polling stations immediately after the counting also aligns with good international practice.

Polling Agents

MOG observers noted the presence of polling (party) agents in most stations, including at 75 per cent of polling stations the MOG visited on Election Day. With very few exceptions, agents were conscientious and complied with the instructions of Presiding Officers and Polling Day Workers. Polling agents reported no significant concerns with the voting or counting processes to MOG observers. MOG teams observed a small number of polling agents turned away from polling stations,

in most cases because an agent from that party was already in attendance or because the polling agent was not able to present a letter of authorisation from their party.

In some instances, MOG observers noted that polling agents were unsure what to look for, especially during counting, and would have benefitted from more training. The MOG also notes the challenge for political parties, especially smaller parties, in fielding polling agents at every polling station. One solution put to the MOG would be to increase from 500 to possibly 1000 the number of voters assigned to each polling station, thus reducing the number of polling stations overall. The MOG assesses such a solution would place an unsustainable burden on Polling Day Workers who already spend up to four hours to count 500 votes, after some 10 hours overseeing voting.

XVII. TABULATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

The *Electoral Act* sets out procedures for the tabulation of results – to form the National Results Tally – based on the Protocols of Results from individual polling stations and to include results by polling station for each political party and candidate. This process – the “official results process” – began on 15 November and concluded on 18 November after the last of the Protocols had arrived at the National Results Centre.

FEO publications in advance of the Election also referenced “provisional results” which the FEO explained would be based on information Presiding Officers telephoned into the Result Centre following the conclusion of their counting in advance of the finalisation of the National Result Tally. The FEO duly published these “provisional results” both online and on a newly-developed smart phone application from late on 14 November, including provisional party and candidate cumulative tallies but not by polling station. The FEO stopped updating the provisional results on 15 November at 7 am, when it began tabulating “official results” (National Tally Results) based on the paper copies of results physically delivered to the Results Centre. The Supervisor had anticipated updating the official results at 12-hour intervals but in the event did so hourly.

The tabulation of the National Result Tally employed a blind double entry methodology of the data of the original copy of the “Protocol of Results” (that is, data was entered by two people operating independently, with discrepancies automatically flagged for review by the results management system). The FEO provided political parties with paper copies of the original Protocols of Results as well as print-outs of the information entered in the system per polling station. Following concerns from agents that they were not receiving documents with sufficient time to verify them, the Supervisor paused data entry for approximately eight hours on 17 November to allow copies to be provided to party agents. The FEO completed the tabulation in the early afternoon of 18 November.

Invalid Votes

The total number of invalid votes cast was 4,197, or 0.92 per cent of ballots cast, compared to 0.75 per cent recorded in 2014. On 17 November, the FEO cross-checked a number of ballot boxes where the rate of invalid votes seemed unduly high.³⁸ This cross-check led to some ballots that were originally found to be invalid ruled valid and counted in the final results.

Announcement of Results

In the early afternoon of 18 November, the Supervisor of Elections signed the “Final National Results Tally”, and presented it to the Electoral Commission (EC), which in turn calculated and then announced the allocation of seats. The EC Chair returned the electoral Writ to the President on the

³⁸ The relevant power to order a re-count is granted to the Supervisor under s92(8) of the *Electoral Act*.

same day, formally ending the 2018 General Election. Only three parties reached the five per cent threshold required by law to secure seats in Parliament.

Table 3: Results by Party

	Votes	Percentage	Seats
FijiFirst	227,241	50.02	27
SODELPA	181,072	39.85	21
National Federation Party	33,515	7.38	3
Unity Fiji	6,896	1.52	0
HOPE	2,811	0.62	0
Fiji Labour Party	2,800	0.62	0

Voter Turnout

Table 4: Voter turnout (as a percentage of registered voters):

Pre-poll voting	65.6%
Election Day voting 14 November	73.3%
(Rescheduled voting 17 November*)	(64.7%)
Postal voting	81.8%
Total	72.5%

* voters who had voted on 14 November were required to vote again

Observations

Provisional Results

Opposition Parties expressed concern to the MOG and publicly that the FEO's collation and announcement of provisional results were not provided for in the law and that polling agents at the National Count Centre had not seen the paper copies on which the provisional results were based. Opposition Parties further called on the Supervisor to recall all provisional results.

The MOG notes that provisional results serve to inform the public of general trends and providing them is common international practice, used to minimise uncertainty in the period before official results can be finalised. At the same time, the MOG noted media did not always distinguish between the two data sets, leading to some confusion. A more detailed explanation from the FEO could remedy this issue in future elections.

The MOG also noted some speculation that the provisional trend created an opportunity for the FEO to "re-tabulate" official results. The MOG assesses this speculation unfounded since the pink slips containing the Protocol of Results – against which official results can be compared – were also publicly available from the conclusion of counting of each ballot box.

Official Results

Opposition Parties expressed concern to the MOG and publicly that, during the tabulation of the official results, party agents did not always have access to copies of the Protocols of Results against which they could check the official results. MOG teams noted a period (in advance of the Supervisor's pause) when data entry proceeded more rapidly than the provision of copies to agents. The MOG agrees that in order to enhance confidence, this process should occur only at a pace at which the agents can reasonably manage. Apart from the issue of pace, the MOG assesses that the provision to polling agents of paper copies of the original Protocols of Results, accompanied by the print-outs of the data entered in the system, provides a good mechanism of transparency.

The MOG found the data entry elements of the tabulation process generally well-organised and operational arrangements for the implementation of the Results Management Information System (RMIS) to be efficient, with sufficient checks and quality control measures to ensure accuracy. The MOG was also confident that the FEO had taken the necessary measures to ensure RMIS security, ensuring the integrity of the system and the tabulation of results.

Seat Allocation

The MOG notes some considerable differences between the number of votes that individual successful candidates received, with some receiving fewer than 600 votes. Some stakeholders complained to the MOG about a lack of fairness in these results as other candidates who received many more votes did not secure a seat. The MOG notes that while voters vote for candidates, the logic of a Proportional Representation system is that the number of seats a party receives is a product of the overall performance of a party and not of individual candidates.

XVIII. ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Legal Framework

The Fijian legal electoral framework sets out different processes to adjudicate electoral-related disputes, complaints, objections and appeals against decisions by the electoral authorities as well as alleged violations of electoral laws throughout the electoral cycle. Fijian law allows pre- and post-election remedies and provides penalties for prohibited acts and conduct relating to elections.

The *Electoral Act* allows political parties and candidates to submit to the Electoral Commission (EC) written complaints against any decision of the Supervisor or any electoral official or employee of the Fijian Elections Office (FEO).³⁹ The EC must respond within three days, respecting the fundamental principles of due process, including the right to a fair hearing. The Act also allows voters to object to candidates and for appeals when the Supervisor has rejected a candidate nomination (although the law appears silent on the question of due process). Polling agents can also object to decisions by Presiding Officers, for example during vote counting. The Act allows the EC to reverse the decisions of FEO officials. It does not allow for complaints and appeals beyond the EC. The Act requires the EC to maintain a database of complaints and appeals.

The *Political Parties Act* allows for appeals against decisions of the Registrar of Parties in the High Court, where decisions are final and binding on all parties.

The Constitution establishes Fiji's High Court as the Court of Disputed Returns and allows for petitions to challenge the validity of the election of a Member of Parliament within 21 days of a poll. The *Electoral Act* (Part 5) sets out procedures in relation to petitions and broadly allows for the Court

³⁹ Section 17 of the *Electoral Act*.

to void a result if it finds a candidate has committed a corrupt practice or if improper conduct by the Supervisor materially affected the election result.

FEO and EC practice

FEO publications and the FEO and EC websites provide forms and guidelines for stakeholders to lodge appeals, objections and complaints in accordance with electoral law. In 2018, the EC published Rules setting out its processes for addressing appeals and complaints against decisions by the Supervisor and FEO in relation to voter registration, candidate nominations and CSOs' engagement in voter education and other activities. The EC maintained a database of complaints, appeals and correspondence.

In advance of the Election, the EC received and subsequently upheld one appeal against a decision by the Supervisor to reject an individual's application to stand as a candidate. The EC also received seven objections from voters to the nominations of various candidates. The EC Chair responded to these objections, noting that the Commission had considered and dismissed the objection and that its decisions were final. During the electoral cycle, there was one appeal against a decision by the Party Registrar, which the High Court considered and subsequently dismissed.

The EC received a number of letters from parties, candidates and voters seeking clarification and rulings on certain questions and claiming breaches of procedure (including, for example, on the issue of provisional results, access by party agents to Protocols of Results and RMIS data). The EC Chair responded to these letters. The EC also advised the MOG that it did not receive any specific formal complaints from parties and candidates against decisions of the Supervisor (or other election officials) during this electoral cycle that the EC would have been required to hear and adjudicate in accordance with s17 of the *Electoral Act*.

During the electoral cycle, both the FEO and the EC received correspondence from a range of stakeholders alleging third parties had breached electoral law: the FEO received 16 of these and the EC received 32. Except where the issues raised concerned MIDA, or in a few instances where the allegation was unclear, the FEO and the EC passed the correspondence directly to FICAC (in accordance with s18 of the *Electoral Act*.) (FICAC also received complaints directly.)

Following the close of polling, both the EC and the FEO received a number of inquiries from voters asking to confirm that their votes had been counted. The FEO responded explaining that results were still being finalised. The EC also received inquiries, including from political parties, about voters whose names had not appeared on the voter list at the polling station they attended. The EC responded that these matters were being investigated (at the time of the EC's response).

Petitions

On 10 December, the Court of Disputed Returns received three petitions seeking the Court's ruling on whether certain candidates had breached provisions of the *Electoral Act* (including bribery, undue influence and campaigning during the poll), whether the Supervisor had breached his responsibilities (including in relation to the right to vote and counting procedures), and whether the EC had failed in its responsibilities, including in relation to hearing complaints against the Supervisor. On 20 December, after a number of directions hearings, the petitioners withdrew their petitions, and the matters were not tested in court. Following these proceedings, several petitioners spoke publicly that they believed Rules pertaining to petitions were unclear.

Observations⁴⁰

Complaints and Objections

The MOG discussed electoral dispute procedures and practice with the FEO and EC and viewed the EC's database of complaints and appeals. The MOG also received copies of a range of correspondence to the FEO and EC from stakeholders, including from political parties and voters.

The MOG notes that the FEO and EC generally responded promptly to inquiries and correspondence and, in relation to appeals and objections, within advertised timeframes. The MOG notes that the EC also provided timely responses to inquiries from political parties and candidates. These responses were generally comprehensive except in some limited instances where the MOG assesses that the EC could have been more forthcoming or where the EC promised further information which it did not subsequently provide. The MOG reiterates its recommendation that the EC receive more resources to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities. The MOG further recommends the EC publish official responses to substantive issues raised with it by stakeholders, including political parties and candidates, so as to build transparency in the EC's operations in line with good international practice.

The MOG notes that under s17 of Fiji's *Electoral Act* the EC is required to respect due process (including the right to a fair hearing) in addressing the complaints of parties and candidates against the Supervisor or an FEO official or employee. The MOG notes that the EC does not appear to have any established procedures for providing this due process, including hearings. The MOG recommends, therefore, that the EC establish and publicise such procedures so that it can adjudicate complaints from political parties and candidates, if and when they arise, most likely within the tight deadlines imposed by the electoral cycle. The MOG also suggests the EC consider whether all stakeholders (and not just parties and candidates) are to be afforded due process in respect of complaints against decisions by the Supervisor or an FEO official, in line with good international practice.

In relation to allegations conveyed to the EC and FEO that third parties had breached the *Electoral Act*, the MOG reiterates its recommendation for a review of the administration of alleged breaches of electoral law, with an emphasis on seeking corrective rather than punitive outcomes. The MOG notes that electoral management bodies in other countries generally follow graduated response processes, escalating matters to criminal proceedings only as a last resort. The MOG assesses this approach would work well in Fiji where the MOG observed candidates and voters were overwhelmingly law-abiding and where the FEO has appropriate expertise and resources to work constructively with stakeholders.

Petitions

Because it departed Fiji on 30 November, the MOG was not able to observe the December proceedings of the Court of Disputed Returns. The MOG notes that the legislation providing for disputed returns broadly follows legislation in other countries. It also notes from the public record the efforts of the Court to ensure that the Fijian public could observe proceedings. The MOG further notes that the Fiji High Court has published Rules, amended as recently as November, and that these cover a range of matters, although not specifically electoral matters.

⁴⁰ During the electoral cycle, Fiji's courts heard a number of cases engaging electoral law – see www.feo.org.fj/media-centre/electoral-cases/ and <http://www.paclii.org/countries/fj.html>. The MOG did not itself observe these processes and cannot substantively comment on them.

XIX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2018 General Election significantly advanced electoral democracy in Fiji. The process was transparent and credible overall, and the results broadly represented the will of the Fijian voters. The FEO performed its role expertly and is now a well-consolidated and sustainable electoral administration. The electoral process took place in a more open political space than in the past. Overall, conditions were in place for Fijians to exercise their right to vote freely.

At the same time, the MOG observed there remains a lack of trust in Fiji's electoral processes in some quarters. The MOG considers that this remains an ongoing challenge that Fiji's electoral authorities must work actively to address, in partnership with Fiji's democratic institutions, political parties, civil society and citizens.

The success of this election presents an opportunity for Fiji to strengthen its electoral system and institutions in ways that will sustain Fiji's electoral democracy into the future. The MOG offers the following recommendations for Fiji's consideration to enhance the operations of the FEO and the EC in future elections and more generally, to continue improving the integrity and effectiveness of all electoral and related processes. These recommendations are aimed at raising the confidence of all stakeholders to engage in greater political dialogue, as well as supporting an increasingly informed electorate.

CONCERNING THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND OPERATIONS

1. Remove restrictions on party identification in official election material.
2. Submit the voter Register to external audit.
3. Legislation should incorporate the principle (which the Supervisor respected in practice in 2018) that the Fijian public can inspect the full Register.

CONCERNING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4. Review s18 of the *Electoral Act* to ensure the Supervisor of Elections, the Registrar of Parties and the Electoral Commission can administer the law constructively, seeking compliance before redress and with criminal investigation as a last resort.
5. Review electoral offences to ensure penalties are proportionate and generally civil in nature rather than criminal.
6. Work towards consolidating and clarifying electoral legislation and, where possible, move to a principles-based legislative framework.

CONCERNING THE ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

7. Take steps to enhance the institutional standing and capacity of the EC. The Commission should receive its own funding in the government budget and sufficient resources to achieve its mandate. At least one full-time Commissioner would also benefit the EC. Future appointments should be staggered to ensure the preservation of institutional memory and experience.
8. The EC should increase its public profile and the transparency of its operations. It should establish and publish a permanent timetable of regular meetings with political parties throughout the electoral cycle and look to publish an agreed outcome of these meetings.

9. The EC should develop and publicise procedures to ensure it can provide due process in considering complaints against the Supervisor of Elections and the FEO in line with s17 of the *Electoral Act*. It should publish responses to substantive issues that stakeholders raise with it.
10. The EC should conduct a review of voter education activities with the aim of expanding partnerships, including with civil society organisations. A standing working group with civil society organisations would be an important next step.

CONCERNING THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD

11. Develop guidelines for the conduct of Ministers, Members of Parliament and the bureaucracy when the government is in caretaker mode to reinforce public confidence in a level electoral playing field.
12. Require parties to report campaign expenditure following an election and consider setting campaign expenditure limits.
13. Clarify the start and finish of the campaign period so that stakeholders understand their rights and obligations during this time.

CONCERNING POLITICAL PARTIES

14. Review the provisions in the *Political Parties Act* regarding restrictions on public officers joining political parties.

CONCERNING CIVIL SOCIETY AND VOTER EDUCATION

15. The EC and FEO should strengthen efforts to build productive partnerships with civil society organisations throughout the electoral cycle and actively work with CSOs in voter awareness and education activities.
16. Review the appropriateness of s115 of the *Electoral Act*.

CONCERNING ELECTORAL OBSERVATION

17. The EC should clarify processes for the accreditation of domestic observers and support the participation of civil society organisations in future observation efforts.
18. Transfer the authority to approve domestic observers to the EC, in line with international good practice.

CONCERNING WOMEN, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER MARGINALISED GROUPS

19. All stakeholders should continue their efforts to promote women, including as candidates; the FEO should broaden its voter outreach to include village women's committees and the EC should work with women's advocacy groups (and other CSOs) in voter education.

CONCERNING THE MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

20. Clarify the restrictions on media reporting during the restricted (blackout) period before and during polling.
21. The media regulatory framework needs to be reviewed including with respect to penalties and with respect to reporting against the public and national interest.

XX. ANNEXES

List of Abbreviations

CCF – Citizens Constitutional Forum
CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO – Civil Society Organisation
EC – Electoral Commission
EDAWG – Election Disability Access Working Questions
EMB – Electoral Management Body
EMS – Electoral Management System
FEO – Fijian Elections Office
FFP – FijiFirst Party
FICAC – Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption
FLP – Fiji Labour Party
FPF – Fiji Police Force
HOPE – Humanity, Opportunity, Prosperity and Equality
ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
International IDEA – International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
MIDA – Media Industry Development Authority
MOG – Multinational Observer Group
NFP – National Federation Party
PDW – Polling Day Worker
PWD – Person with a Disability
RFMF – Republic of Fiji Military Force
RMIS – Results Management Information System
SODELPA – Social Democratic Liberal Party of Fiji
SOE – Supervisor of Elections

Annex A – Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

MULTINATIONAL OBSERVER GROUP FOR 2018 FIJIAN GENERAL ELECTION

INTRODUCTION

This Terms of Reference sets out the framework and scope within which the Multinational Observer Group (**'MOG'**), on the invitation of the Fijian Government must work and conduct itself and which it must adhere to, as it observes the 2018 Fijian General Election.

Paragraph 1: Scope of Multinational Observation

The MOG will:

- (a) Observe and evaluate the functions and operations of the Fijian Elections Office (**'FEO'**) with respect to the 2018 Fijian General Election;
- (b) Observe and evaluate the voter registration process and the establishment of the National Register of Voters and Polling Station Voter Lists;
- (c) Observe and evaluate the voter awareness campaign including voter information provided or authorised by FEO;
- (d) Observe and evaluate the nomination and registration of candidates and conduct of political parties as prescribed in the Fijian Electoral Act 2014 (**'Act'**);
- (e) Observe and evaluate Pre-Poll, postal voting and election day operations and events that facilitate voting operations in compliance with the procedures established in the Act;
- (f) Observe and evaluate the vote counting process, the determination of election results and the dissemination thereof;
- (g) Observe and evaluate the resolution of disputes throughout the electoral cycle, including any mechanism established to hear and adjudicate election related disputes; and
- (h) Assess whether the voter processes of the FEO facilitated and assisted Fijian voters to exercise their right to freely vote and whether the outcome of the 2018 Fijian General Election broadly represented the will of all Fijian voters.

Paragraph 2: Duration of Multinational Observation

- (a) The MOG will be made up of both long term observers, who will arrive in Fiji prior to the election date, and short term observers, who will arrive prior to polling and stay until polling and counting have been finalised, with the final number of observers and dates of arrival and departure to be mutually decided by the Fijian Government and relevant international partners.
- (b) The MOG will commence its tasks once it has been given an induction of the Electoral laws by the FEO, and has received the accreditation documents from the FEO, and will conclude once the MOG has submitted its report in accordance to Paragraph 3.

Paragraph 3: Reporting

- (a) Based on the scope of the MOG as outlined in Paragraph 1, the co-leads will:
 - (i) Issue an interim media statement at the conclusion of the election detailing the MOG's observations, which will reflect the views of all members of the delegation and will not be attributable to any individual country or organisation; and
 - (ii) Issue to the Fijian Government, Electoral Commission ('EC') and the FEO an observation report as soon as practical after the conclusion of the election process, which will contain a determination on all the matters provided in the scope of the MOG under Paragraph 1, and where appropriate the observation report will also offer recommendations for improving the integrity and effectiveness of future electoral and related processes.
- (b) Before issuing the media statement and the observation report under this Paragraph the MOG must comply with Paragraph 7(k), and seek a response from the EC and the FEO accordingly.

Paragraph 4: Composition of the Multinational Observer Group

- (a) The MOG will include a team of observers to form a single coordinated group, from countries and organisations which are approved by the Fijian Government.
- (b) The Fijian Government has invited Australia, India and Indonesia to co-chair and coordinate the MOG, and work with other accredited election observers to establish a single consolidated international observation mission. The co-chairs will be the primary contact point between the MOG and the Fijian Government.
- (c) The co-chairs will manage and coordinate the MOG overall, including the allocation of specific delegation members to observe the various aspects of the process as set out above.
- (d) The MOG will establish a Secretariat to coordinate logistical support and briefing to the delegation, for the duration of the observation mission.

Paragraph 5: Commitment to Co-operate

The Fijian Government:

- (a) Will seek the approval of the FEO, to provide unimpeded access to the MOG to all stages of the election process and all election technologies and the certification processes for voting and other technologies, without requiring the MOG to enter into confidentiality agreements concerning technologies or election processes;
- (b) Will facilitate unimpeded access to the MOG to all persons concerned with election processes, including:
 - (i) Electoral officials at all levels subject to the approval of the FEO; and
 - (ii) Members of the Fijian Government whose functions are relevant to organising genuine democratic elections;
- (c) Ensures freedom of movement around the country for all members of the MOG;
- (d) Ensures full, country-wide accreditation (that is, the issuing of any identification or document required to conduct election observation) for all observers who are part of the MOG as long as the MOG complies with the requirements for accreditation; and
- (e) Ensures that no Governmental authority will interfere in the activities of the MOG, or individuals or organisations that provide information to, or support for, the MOG, in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Fiji.

Paragraph 6: Accreditation and Identification of the Multinational Observer Group

- (a) All countries/organisations who are part of the MOG must submit an application to the Fijian Government for approval which will specify:
 - (i) The name of the country/organisation;
 - (ii) The photograph, name and nationality of each observer designated by the country/organisation;
 - (iii) The intended time of stay in Fiji; and
 - (iv) A statement, duly executed by each observer, that they will abide by the laws, regulations, guidelines, this Terms of Reference and the Code of Conduct governing observation by the MOG, which is annexed to this Terms of Reference.
- (b) Upon receipt of the application for approval, along with its accompanying documentation, the Fijian Government will make a decision on the approval of each observer, and, if approved, will request the FEO to issue an official accreditation to the observer.

- (c) The FEO may (following reasonable consultation with co-leads) revoke the accreditation of any accredited member of the MOG if the organisation or accredited member:
- (i) Has failed to adhere to the laws of the Republic of Fiji;
 - (ii) Has failed to adhere to the lawful instruction, direction or order issued by the FEO;
 - (iii) Has shown a bias in the observation of the electoral process;
 - (iv) Has obstructed election officials in the conduct of their official duties; or
 - (v) Has not adhered to this Terms of Reference or the Code of Conduct for the MOG.

Paragraph 7: Rights and Privileges of the Multinational Observer Group

All accredited observers who are part of the MOG will have the following rights and privileges:

- (a) To receive a visa to enter Fiji if this is required;
- (b) To enjoy freedom of movement throughout Fiji, without prior permission or notification;
- (c) To communicate freely with the Government, political parties, coalitions of parties, independent candidates, non-government organisations, civil societies and other social and political organisations in Fiji;
- (d) To seek clarifications from all the organisations involved in the electoral process on matters connected with the activity of the observation of the elections, and to obtain answers in a useful and timely manner;
- (e) To observe voter registration activities, voter awareness activities, the vote, the count and the dissemination of election results;
- (f) To have access to information transmitted by the EC and FEO and its officers in relation to any complaints regarding the electoral process that may have been registered;
- (g) To open offices in Fiji, if so required, to ensure the successful accomplishment of this Terms of Reference;
- (h) To observe the participation, as authorised by law, of the political parties or coalitions of parties connected with the electoral process;
- (i) To have freedom of access to all polling stations and counting centres at all times, subject to the laws of the Republic of Fiji and any reasonable instruction or directions issued by the FEO;
- (j) To have freedom to examine all electoral materials including ballot boxes, ballot papers and indelible ink, which are to be used; and
- (k) To communicate according to the provisions of this Terms of Reference and based on the scope of MOG as outlined in Paragraph 1, the findings of the observation to the EC and the FEO and seek a response from the EC and the FEO before making these views public.

Paragraph 8: Commitments

Individual members of the MOG will make the following commitments:

- (a) To respect the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji;
- (b) To exercise their role with impartiality, independence and objectivity;
- (c) To identify themselves immediately, whenever necessary, and at all times to wear or otherwise prominently display the prescribed identification cards issued by the Supervisor of Elections;
- (d) To notify election officials of any action or conduct which they believe to be serious infringements of the electoral process;
- (e) Not to interfere with, or impede, the normal course of the electoral process;
- (f) Not to issue individual statements (including by or on behalf of any person or country) about the electoral process to the media; and
- (g) To abide by the annexed Code of Conduct for the MOG.

Paragraph 9: Status of Diplomats

Any Diplomat, who makes an application for approval and accreditation under Paragraph 6 shall perform the functions as set out in this Terms of Reference without prejudice to the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961.

Paragraph 10: Funding

All countries/organisations, duly approved and accredited under this Terms of Reference, will be wholly responsible for all costs in their observing duties. The Fijian Government, EC and the FEO will not be responsible for any such costs.

This Terms of Reference does not create any legally binding rights or obligations under international law.

ANNEXURE
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE MULTINATIONAL OBSERVER GROUP
FOR 2018 FIJIAN GENERAL ELECTION

Introduction

All observers in the Multinational Observer Group ('**MOG**') observing the 2018 Fijian General Election must be familiar with and abide by this Code of Conduct.

1. Respect for Sovereignty, Constitution and the Law

The observer must perform his or her functions with:

- (a) Respect for the sovereignty of the Republic of Fiji;
- (b) Respect for and compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji; and
- (c) Respect for and compliance with the laws of the Republic of Fiji, including the Electoral Act 2014, and any direction or instructions issued by the Electoral Commission and the Fijian Elections Office ('**FEO**').

2. Neutrality

The Observer must:

- (a) Act in a strictly neutral and unbiased manner in relation to national authorities, including the electoral officials, political parties, candidates, voters and the media;
- (b) Avoid any conflict of interest during observation and assessment, and must immediately report to the Fijian Government of any conflict of interest;
- (c) Refrain from accepting any gifts from individuals or organisations;
- (d) Refrain from any action likely to be interpreted as indicating partisan support for any candidate, political party or organisation;
- (e) Refrain from expressing partisan views;
- (f) Exercise the highest level of personal discretion, at all times; and
- (g) Refrain from wearing or carrying party or independent candidate symbols.

3. Accuracy and Transparency

The Observer must:

- (a) Obtain a valid view of all aspects of the electoral process relevant to its legitimacy;
- (b) Obtain a valid view of the way the electoral process has progressed in all parts of the country;

- (c) Consult widely with relevant political organisations and members of the Fijian public;
- (d) Take all necessary steps to assure that all information gathered by them and conveyed to others as part of the observation process has a sound factual basis;
- (e) Ensure that all information is collected in a way that is systematic, clear and unambiguous;
and
- (f) In respect of any allegations which reflect adversely on the FEO or on a participant in the electoral process, obtain the response of the concerned party before treating such an allegation as valid.

Annex B – Pre-election Statement

On 11 November, the Hon Jane Prentice MP and Mr Mukesh Chandra Sahu delivered a pre-election statement on behalf of the three MOG co-chairs. The statement is as follows:

The MOG has been in country and undertaking an extensive program of work since late September. We, the co-chairs, are confident that the MOG's work to date has been thorough, and we are honoured to lead the Mission through these important last stages of the election process.

The MOG has been impressed by the professionalism of Fijian Elections Office (FEO) staff and the efficiency and transparency of their preparations for election day. We assess their election preparations have proceeded smoothly in large part because the FEO has had more time to plan and prepare its electoral operations compared to the 2014 General Election.

To date, the MOG has observed all of the key electoral processes, and has encountered no evidence of any wrong-doing. Pre-polling went ahead with only minor glitches and preparations for election day seem on track.

The MOG is aware of reports of some voters not finding themselves on the voter list at the polling station they attended during pre-polling. MOG observers also encountered some instances of this in the field. At the same time, MOG teams observed election officials assisting these individuals how they could, and we acknowledge that the FEO has acted in line with electoral laws. We can assure you that our observers will continue to monitor this issue on Election Day and detail our observations following the election. This issue also highlights the need for voters to ensure they check the polling station where they are registered to vote on Election Day.

The next stages of the election process are extremely important - the polling and counting during Election Day as well as the counting and tabulation activities at the National Count Centre and the National Results Centre. The MOG will be closely observing these crucial processes. We will also be closely following post-electoral developments, including the allocation of seats and any electoral disputes that might arise.

We are confident that the MOG is fully prepared to perform its role on Election Day. We are diverse team, with observers from around the region, as well as further abroad, and a range of professional backgrounds, including technical experts, public servants and parliamentarians. This diversity will bring strength and credibility to our observations.

Our short-term observers have now arrived in country and tomorrow we will be briefing and training them. Observers will then be deployed on Tuesday across the country to observe both voting and counting, in all four divisions, and in urban and rural areas.

We, the co-chairs, will release an interim statement on 16 November outlining the MOG's initial observations. This will be followed by a detailed final report containing recommendations for the Fijian Government as soon as possible following the election. Both of these will be made available to the Fijian public and the international community.

To inform these reports, we, the co-chairs, will collate and consider the reports of all observers to make an impartial and independent assessment of whether Fijians are able to exercise their right to vote freely and whether the outcome of the election reflects the will of Fijian voters. We will be looking at electoral processes based on both Fiji's national legal framework as well as good international practices. And our assessment will be comprehensive, accurate and objective.

As Fiji prepares for election day on 14 November, we call on all political leaders to work together to ensure full respect for the electoral process, in which every voter, and in particular women, disabled people and youth, will be able to cast their ballot.

While the political debate has been animated and spirited, the campaign period has been calm and peaceful. We encourage all parties to continue to conduct themselves in this way during and after the announcement of the results. It is imperative that all candidates seek to address any complaints related to the electoral process through established legal and constitutional channels.

Finally, the MOG wants to encourage all eligible Fijian voters to exercise your right to vote on election day. Voting is an important civic duty, and contributes to the consolidation of sustainable democratic institutions.

We, the co-chairs, look forward to meeting Fijians in the days ahead. And we wish Fiji a peaceful election period.

Annex C – Interim Statement

MOG – FIJI GENERAL ELECTIONS 2018**INTERIM STATEMENT****Suva, November 16, 2018**

The Co-Chairs of the Multinational Observer Group (MOG) provide the following interim statement in accordance with the MOG's terms of reference. The MOG will issue a final report, with a determination of its observations, following the conclusion of the electoral process. The final report will also offer recommendations for improving the integrity and effectiveness of future electoral and related processes in Fiji.

At the time of this interim statement, Fiji had rescheduled voting for around 7500 (approximately 1 per cent) of registered voters in areas affected by flooding on Election Day.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The 2018 general election is ongoing, with rescheduled voting for 25 polling stations yet to take place, and the tabulation of results, their declaration and the allocation of seats still to occur.**
- **In the pre-polling, postal voting and the Election Day voting that has so far taken place, the MOG is confident that Fijian voters were able to exercise their right to vote freely.**
- **The MOG further assesses that electoral processes to date have been transparent and credible, and that outcomes are on track to reflect the will of Fijian voters.**
- **The Fijian Elections Office prepared for the election thoroughly, implementing a long-term strategy of improvement throughout the electoral cycle.**
- **Fiji's voter registration system is well developed and well-maintained. Some minor issues became apparent during voting operations, which the FEO acknowledges.**
- **Voting to date has taken place in a calm and peaceful environment and Fiji's police performed their duties diligently.**

ABOUT THE MOG

The Multinational Observer Group was constituted at the invitation of the Fijian Government, comprising three co-lead countries (Australia, India and Indonesia) with 10 participating countries as well as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Melanesian Spearhead Group. The three co-chairs were: The Hon Jane Prentice MP, representing Australia; Mr. Mukesh Chandra Sahu, representing India; and HE Wajid Fauzi, representing Indonesia.

Before the election, the Government of Fiji and the Governments of Australia, India and Indonesia agreed to Terms of Reference⁴¹. These guaranteed the MOG freedom of movement and consultation. They also instructed the MOG to observe and evaluate a range of electoral processes and to assess (i) whether or not arrangements for the election assisted Fijian voters to exercise their right to vote freely, and (ii) whether or not the outcome of the election broadly represented the will of all Fijian voters

Long term observers arrived in Fiji on 28 September; by Election Day, the MOG comprised 77 observers who were deployed to all of Fiji's electoral divisions. In advance of the election, long term observers visited more than 50 urban and rural communities across Fiji; during pre-polling and MOG observers visited 59 polling stations. On Election Day, MOG teams visited more than 460 polling stations. Some MOG teams will remain in country for the rescheduled elections.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

BACKGROUND

Fiji gained independence from Great Britain in 1970 and held elections in 1972, 1977, 1982 and 1987 before successive military coups interrupted Fiji's democratic development. Following coups in 1987, Fiji held elections in 1992 and 1997; following a coup in 2000, Fiji returned to elections in 2001 and 2006. Following the coup of 2006, Fiji held elections in September 2014.

The election of 2014 was based on the Constitution of 2013 adopted by the interim government. The Constitution established a new electoral system with a single national constituency in place of the multiple ethnically-based constituencies that had characterized Fiji's earlier electoral systems. This, the 2018 election was the second general election Fiji has held under the system set out in the 2013 Constitution.

⁴¹ Available at www.mog.org.fj

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Fiji's *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji (2013)* establishes the legal framework for the conduct of Fiji's elections, including regular elections based on universal adult (18 years) and non-discriminatory suffrage and secret ballot. In these respects, the 2013 Constitution provides a good basis for a General Election that complies with fundamental international standards.

The *Electoral Act (2014)* sets out election processes, the roles and responsibilities of relevant institutions and rules governing the behavior of political parties, candidates, voters, the media and other organizations. The *Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act, 2012* sets out the technical rules for registering voters, while the *Political Parties (Registration, Conduct Funding and Disclosures) Act 2013* establishes rules relating to the operation and behavior of political parties and candidates.

The MOG notes and welcomes Fiji's public commitment (expressed by Fiji's Parliament in May 2018) to become a state party to the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* to complement Fiji's existing status as a state party to the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The legal framework establishes proportional representation as Fiji's electoral system with a single national constituency of 51 seats. Each registered voter can vote for only one candidate who is identified by name on an "open list". Independent candidates (of whom there were none in this election) and political parties secure seats by obtaining a minimum of 5% of votes cast. Seats are then allocated to parties in proportion to the votes they receive.

Fiji's open list proportional representation systems differs from other similar systems internationally in that electoral authorities do not provide information that allows voters to identify the party affiliation of candidates; at the same time the law prevents voters carrying their own information, including that provided by political parties, into the polling station. The official Voter Instruction Booklet presents candidates with a specific number (randomly drawn), name and photo, while the ballot paper (as prescribed by law) features only the candidate numbers.

ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

The legislative framework establishes an independent electoral management body headed by an oversight, policy-making, regulatory body - the Electoral Commission (EC) - and an executive, operational arm, the Fijian Elections Office (FEO). The EC has overall responsibility for the preparation and conduct of the election, but depends on the technical and operational functions of the FEO for the implementation of the election. Amendments to the Electoral Act in 2017 that made the Supervisor secretary to the EC guarantees greater

coordination between the two components of Fiji's Election Management Body and aligns Fiji's model with international good practice.

During its time in Fiji, the MOG had unrestricted access to the FEO and its operations and had a number of in-depth conversations with the EC. During this time, the MOG observed the EC and the FEO to exercise independence of action and impartiality. The MOG observed the FEO maintained good levels of transparency – a key complement to independence. However, opposition parties expressed to MOG their view that the FEO and EC were not independent.

THE FIJIAN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (FICAC)

The ensemble of electoral institutions also includes the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC), in charge of investigating and prosecuting criminal electoral offences, under *the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Act (2007)*. Both the Supervisor of Elections and the Electoral Commission are required by law, upon becoming 'aware at any time of the probable commission of an election-related criminal offence'⁴², to report the matter immediately to FICAC.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Complete, accurate and up-to-date voter registers are critical to ensure universal suffrage and allow orderly voting. The *Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012* established that all Fijian citizens aged 18 or over, including those living overseas, can register to vote⁴³. The Act mandates electoral authorities to establish and maintain an electronic National Register of Voters, including biometric identification (thumbprints and a facial photograph). The 2018 election was the second election that employed the biometric register.

After the 2014 election, the FEO continuously updated the register until closing it on 1 October 2018, the day the election writ was issued, as required by law. The final register comprised 637,527 voters. Of these, 49.6 % were women; 7970 voters were registered overseas.

Before closing the register, the FEO sought to ensure the integrity of the register by cross-checking entries with other Fijian agencies to identify and remove deceased and ineligible voters. The law prohibits the FEO updating the register after the issuance of the election writ. The Supervisor also afforded a range of stakeholders the opportunity to check the register. Individual voters were able to access a free text message service and a phone application to check at which polling station they were registered to vote. The Supervisor has the power⁴⁴ to correct any error in the voter register – which he exercised in relation to pre-polling.

⁴² Section 18 of the *Electoral Act*

⁴³ The Act disqualifies those who are serving a term of imprisonment for a term of 12 months or more, and those declared to have a 'mental disorder'.

⁴⁴ Section 7(3) of the *Electoral Act*

The voter register the FEO published in October 2018 appeared to contradict the results of Fiji 2017 census, with the register suggesting a higher population than the census reported. The MOG spoke to a range of Fijian agencies, including the FEO and the Bureau of Statistics, as well as academic and professional statisticians, about the two data sets and concluded the discrepancy was the result of different methodologies. The FEO collected its data continuously over four years and the census comprised data collected on a single day (and collected with a range of questions designed for multiple purposes). The MOG assesses that for the purpose of maintaining the voter register the FEO methodology was robust, as a result of the continuous updating and biometric technology.

VOTER EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

The legal framework gives Fiji's electoral authorities responsibility for voter education, that is, educating the broader citizenry about the electoral system; and for voter information, that is where and how to cast a valid vote. During the electoral cycle, FEO worked with the Ministry of Education to include voter education in civic curriculum – focusing on the conduct of elections - for senior high school students. The FEO also worked during the electoral cycle with two civil society organizations on voter education programs, including for women. In advance of the election, particularly in 2018, the FEO conducted extensive voter information and awareness campaigns across Fiji, encouraging voters in remote areas as well as young people to vote. In the weeks preceding the election, the FEO also distributed Voter Instruction Booklets widely. FEO publications and websites focused on the process of elections; there exists no equivalent outreach explaining Fiji's broader electoral system.

The MOG commends the FEO for its extensive voter information outreach efforts in advance of the election. At the same time, the MOG observed many people seeking information from the FEO about the party affiliation of candidates which the FEO is unable by law to provide.

POLITICAL PARTIES REGISTRATION

The *Political Parties (Registration, Conduct Funding and Disclosures) Act 2013* governs the registration and conduct of Fiji's political parties, requiring them to have offices in all four of Fiji's electoral divisions, 5000 financial members and periodically report their assets and liabilities as well as those of the officials. The Act also limits donations from Fijian citizens and, consistent with international good practice, it prohibits donations from corporations and foreign sources. The Act also established the Supervisor of Elections as Registrar of Political Parties – a dual responsibility that is common in many jurisdictions.

The Act requires political parties and their office holders, as well as candidates for election, to submit annual statements of assets and liabilities, and disclose sources of funding, with potential fines and prison sentences for breaches of the act. The MOG also heard that in determining penalties for offences, the Courts apply Fiji's sentencing legislation, under

which the maximum penalty for an offence is only one factor to which a court must have regard.

The MOG observes that Fiji's legislative requirements for parties, their office holder and candidates to provide statements of assets and liabilities are generally consistent with good international practice. The MOG found that these statements provided a measure of transparency and accountability of the parties' financial details but they were not of uniform standard and did not, for example, necessarily allow oversight of party campaign expenditure. At the time of this interim report, the MOG is confirming with Fijian authorities the number and nature of matters under investigation in relation to the Act during the electoral cycle and campaign.

CANDIDATE NOMINATION

The MOG observed the process of candidate nomination to be transparent. The FEO received applications from 243 candidates representing six registered political parties and no independent candidates. The FEO rejected eight applications from four political parties on the grounds that candidates failed to meet the residential requirements or had criminal convictions. The EC upheld one application on appeal. The Electoral Act allows registered voters to object to any candidate on the grounds that the candidate is not qualified to be nominated or the nomination does not comply with the Constitution or Electoral Act. The EC received nine such objections and upheld none.

Candidate eligibility was an issue in the election campaign, in particular the possible consequences were a candidate ruled ineligible after the EC had confirmed eligibility. Under Fijian law, candidates who lose their eligibility to stand for Parliament after nomination are disqualified and cannot be replaced. Under the *Electoral Act*, any votes a disqualified candidate may have received, for example in pre-polling or postal voting, are deemed invalid and do not flow to that candidate's Party.

THE CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

Six registered parties contested the 2018 election: Fijifirst, Fiji Labour Party (FLP), Hope, National Federation Party (NFP), Social Democratic Liberal Party (SOLDELPA) and Unity Fiji. Fijifirst, SOLDEPA and NFP all put forward 51 candidates to contest the 51 seats available, while the others each put forward more than 20 candidates.

The official campaign period began on 1 October 2018. Parties and candidates held rallies, gave media interviews and debated policies on radio and television. All parties launched "party manifestos" covering a range of issues including the cost of living, unemployment and health. Parties also maintained a range of social media platforms Use of paid advertising in traditional media, digital media and billboards, varied significantly. Campaigning stopped when the legislated 48-hour prohibition period on campaigning began.

The campaign took place against a backdrop of an improved legal framework, following the amendment, in February 2017, of the Public Order Act 1969 easing previous restrictions on public assembly. The Act no longer requires organizers to obtain a police permit seven days

in advance to hold a public meeting other than in certain public areas – a measure which is consistent with international practice. At the time of this interim statement, the MOG was still confirming police responses to such requests during the campaign.

The MOG notes that trust in social and political institutions is vital to the consolidation of democracy and, once lost, can take time to rebuild. Opposition parties told the MOG that they felt intimidated by possible prosecution. The MOG was not made aware of any specific instance of intimidation on the part of Fijian authorities towards parties or candidates during the campaign.

USE OF GOVERNMENT RESOURCES DURING THE CAMPAIGN

The MOG notes that s113 of the *Electoral Act* places certain restrictions on the use of public resources to campaign. At the same time, Fiji appears to have few protocols in place to guide the government and the bureaucracy on appropriate conduct during the official campaign to ensure public confidence in a level electoral playing field. The MOG noted government Ministers and senior officials conducted a range of high-profile government activities, such as concluding commercial contracts, opening buildings and dispensing government grants and funds, during the campaign. FICAC advised that these actions were not in breach of existing law. The MOG is aware that FICAC received some formal complaints in this regard.

MEDIA

Fiji traditional media – including print and broadcast media – reported widely and generally comprehensively on the election campaign, and for the most part allowed all parties the coverage to present their messages to voters. Radio and television in particular hosted interviews and debates with all political parties and higher profile candidates. Digital media also actively covered the campaign.

The *Media Industry Development Act 2010* establishes the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) to “encourage, promote and facilitate the development of media organizations and media services in Fiji”. The Act also established a Media Tribunal to hear breaches of the Act, including of the Media Code of Ethics and Practice scheduled to the Act. The MIDA Act was amended in 2015 to remove the liability of individual journalists for breaches of the Act; media editors and owners are still subject to financial and in some cases criminal penalties. MIDA advised the MOG that these penalties were important to ensure compliance especially with standards in relation to hate speech and racial vilification. The *Electoral Act 2014* also requires MIDA to ensure compliance with the 48-hour campaign blackout. At the time of this report, the MOG was still confirming the nature of its investigations in the 2018 election campaign

The MOG spoke to a range of media organizations that said they were committed to report the news as they saw it. Some supported the concept of MIDA, but wanted to see it take a more consultative approach with a view to increasing education within the sector. In particular, they sought further clarity as to how the law might be enforced. The MOG heard from a range of interlocutors including media organizations that uncertainty and confusion

about the application of the legal framework impacted on media outlets' willingness to report on issues from time to time.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society in Fiji comprises a dynamic and diverse range of organizations focused on: promoting the rights of women and youth; support for disabled people and other marginalized groups; advocacy for the environment; and citizens and constitutional issues. They receive support and funding from international donors, including the United Nations, other international organizations, and individual donor countries.

Before the election campaign began, several organizations delivered a range of election-related activities. These included: training and the publication of a guide for aspiring women candidates; and an electoral guide for young women; public seminars on civic and election-related issues and newspaper articles on aspects of the electoral system. International IDEA convened two workshops that brought together the Supervisor of Elections and CSOs in workshops on governance and elections.

After the campaign began, two organizations applied for (and received) permission from the Supervisor of Elections to continue election-related activities, in keeping with s115 of the Electoral Act, which requires CSOs to seek approval for all voter education and other election-related activities undertaken during the campaign period.

The Minister for Elections did not exercise his prerogative under s119 of the Electoral Act to appoint or invite domestic observers to this election. CSOs told the MOG that they would like to see a clear process to make known their willingness to act as observers.

INCLUSIVENESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Women participated actively in the election as voters and candidates. Of the 235 candidates, 56 or 23% were women, a marginal increase over 2014. It is too early to know how many women candidates were successful. The MOG was impressed to see women prominently represented in the administration of the election, both at Headquarters in Suva and across Fiji.

In line with recent legislative amendments, the FEO introduced new provisions in this election for voters with disabilities and the MOG observed FEO staff assisted voting, including more accessible polling stations. The MOG commends the FEO's active engagement with people with disability and disabled people's organizations in the lead-up to the 2018 elections.

ELECTORAL PREPARATIONS

The FEO began preparing for the 2018 general elections in late 2014, undertaking institutional and staff capacity building through training and the introduction of a performance management system. The FEO also introduced a robust practice of operational planning which ensured the efficiency and appropriateness of its preparations, starting with a 2015 five-year strategic plan from which annual operational plans followed. With the legal

and regulatory framework for the elections now well established, this planning allowed the FEO to prepare its operational responsibilities in a timely manner.

The MOG notes that the FEO made particular efforts to introduce new technology to improve the management of its electoral operations, including by introducing the “electoral management system” and assuming local ownership of the technology used for the biometric voter register.

The MOG observed all the key elements of the final stages of preparations, including the printing, storage and transport of sensitive election material as well as the dispatch of postal voting material. The MOG found the FEO competent and that it completed the vast majority of technical and operational preparations on time, despite the challenges of Fiji’s geography and weather. MOG teams observed Presiding Officer training across Fiji and found these courses consistent, professionally-delivered and effective.

The FEO made significant efforts to enhance transparency of its operations. It introduced a Facebook live feed, a four-day visitor program “to see the election from the inside”, almost daily press briefings, and a mobile phone application for provisional results. It also conducted outreach activities with stakeholders in the process, including political parties.

FEO also coordinated with the Fijian Police for security preparations for the election, including producing standard operating procedures for all stages of the electoral process. The FEO also facilitated training with the police.

VOTING: PRE-POLLING, POSTAL VOTING AND ELECTION DAY

On Election Day, as a result of flooding, the Supervisor of Elections was forced to cancel operations at 22 polling venues. The FEO has rescheduled polling in those stations for 17 November and has reassured the voters that they will be given equal opportunity to vote. MOG will be observing polling in these locations.

From 5 to 11 November, MOG observed pre-polling in all four divisions in 59 pre-polling stations, 36 of which were in remote maritime locations, as well as the transfer of ballots to secure storage sites. During Election Day, MOG followed voting in more than 450 polling stations, across all four divisions, including 39% in rural venues and 61% in urban venues. MOG observers visited polling stations unannounced and encountered no obstacles conducting their observations.

Voting during pre-polling and Election Day took place in a calm and peaceful environment in which Fiji’s police performed their duties diligently, with voters demonstrated commitment, often queuing in wind and rain. Polling staff were overwhelmingly competent and courteous.

Most pre-polling stations respected the published schedules for opening, despite some complications due to bad weather. On Election Day most stations opened on time, with all polling staff present and all necessary materials in place. More than 99% of MOG observers reported a “good” or “very good” overall rating for the conduct of the polling stations. The

vast majority of polling stations were set up correctly, ensuring privacy for voters. Opening and closing processes were generally carried out to a high standard.

Polling procedures were widely followed, with only minor irregularities that had no bearing on the integrity of the overall process. Observers reported some voters (not in significant numbers) had voter cards but did not appear on the polling station voter register and Presiding Officers managed these cases inconsistently. The Supervisor of Elections acknowledged some errors in some voter lists and used his prerogative under the Electoral Act to resolve some cases. The MOG also noted instances where voters did not present at their assigned polling station, possibly because they had not updated their registration information.

The Fiji Police Force (FPF) provided security for voting at polling stations and also escorting and securing sensitive materials, including ballot boxes – processes which the MOG observed. They performed their role well, helping to build confidence in the electoral process. The Republic of Fiji Military Force (RFMF) had no direct role in the election and interpreted their constitutional security mandate to mean that the RFMF could assist the police if required and/or requested – which has not been necessary.

COUNTING AND TABULATION OF RESULTS

Counting for Election Day took place at the polling stations, immediately following their close. MOG teams observed counting at more than 35 polling stations on Election night, as well as counting for pre-polling and postal voting at The National Count Center in Suva at on Election night – which has concluded. The MOG found counting procedures thorough, with iterative elements that allowed FEO staff and party agents opportunities to address any errors. The determination of valid votes aligns with international good practice, that is, all ballot papers that show the clear intention of the voter are considered valid. The display of a copy of “the protocol of results” at a public place outside all polling stations immediately after the counting also aligns with good international good practice.

Tabulation of results was conducted at the Results Center in Suva. The FEO recruited and trained 300 data entry clerks to integrate these results into the FEO’s Results Management Information System (RMIS) working in eight-hour shifts. The FEO organized tabulation of results in two distinct modes of operation: “provisional” and “official”.

The “provisional” mode of tabulation is not spelled out in the Electoral Act. It is a system introduced by the electoral authorities to provide to the public, speedy information about the trends of the election results, which has no legal standing. Presiding officers relayed results by telephone to the Results Centre and provided the basis for the FEO’s provisional results – which were made available publicly on-line in real time. This data generated a “national results tally” results from all polling stations that were able to call into the Results Center (75% of total polling stations), and included information regarding all candidates and all parties. Provisional tabulation was finalized by 7am on 15 November. MOG teams observed this process and found them well-organized. Opposition parties raised their

concerns with the MOG that the provision of these results was not provided for in legislation.

Once the Results Center received the originals of each polling station's protocol of results, it began tabulating final or "official" results. This is the tabulation process outlined in the Act which collates the results of all polling stations, including pre-poll and postal votes results – a process which is yet to be finalized. This "official" tabulation employs a blind double entry methodology of the data of the original copy of the "protocol of results". The RMIS has integrated a number of checks and balances throughout the process, including various "triggers" that would result in an audit of the information entered in the database. As was the case for other electoral operations, the FEO introduced a number of measures to enhance the accuracy and security of the process, including reducing the size of data teams and doubling the number of supervisors, making technical choices to increase correctness and integrity of the information entered, as well as supplying clerks with a separate keyboard to minimize data entry errors. The FEO also provides political parties with paper copies of the original protocol of results.

Once the "Final National Results Tally" is finalized, it becomes a legal document and must be sent immediately to the Electoral Commission for the official declaration of results and allocation of seats. This is yet to occur.

The 2018 general elections are not yet finished. MOG will continue to observe all ongoing electoral operations for the 2018 Fijian Elections, including the rescheduled voting, the tabulation and declaration of final official results, as well as the allocation of seats. The MOG will also be attentive to any resolution of electoral disputes and challenges to the results should they occur.

The MOG's observation is that the process to date has been transparent and credible. Our members witnessed electoral preparations, pre-polling, Election Day polling, counting and tabulation of results. MOG believes that Fijians were able to exercise their right to vote freely and that the outcome is on track to reflect the will of Fijian voters. The people of Fiji should have confidence in the conduct of FEO electoral procedures.

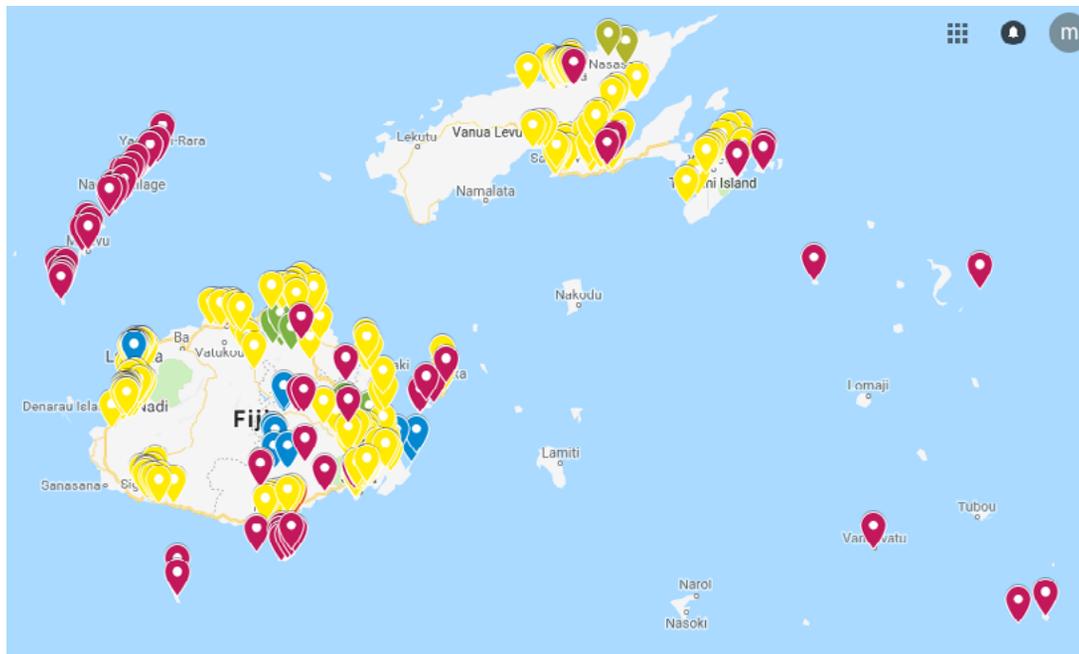
We congratulate the Fijian Elections Office, in particular the polling day workers, for their professionalism under sometimes challenging conditions.

We also congratulate the people of Fiji for taking this significant step towards embedding their democracy.

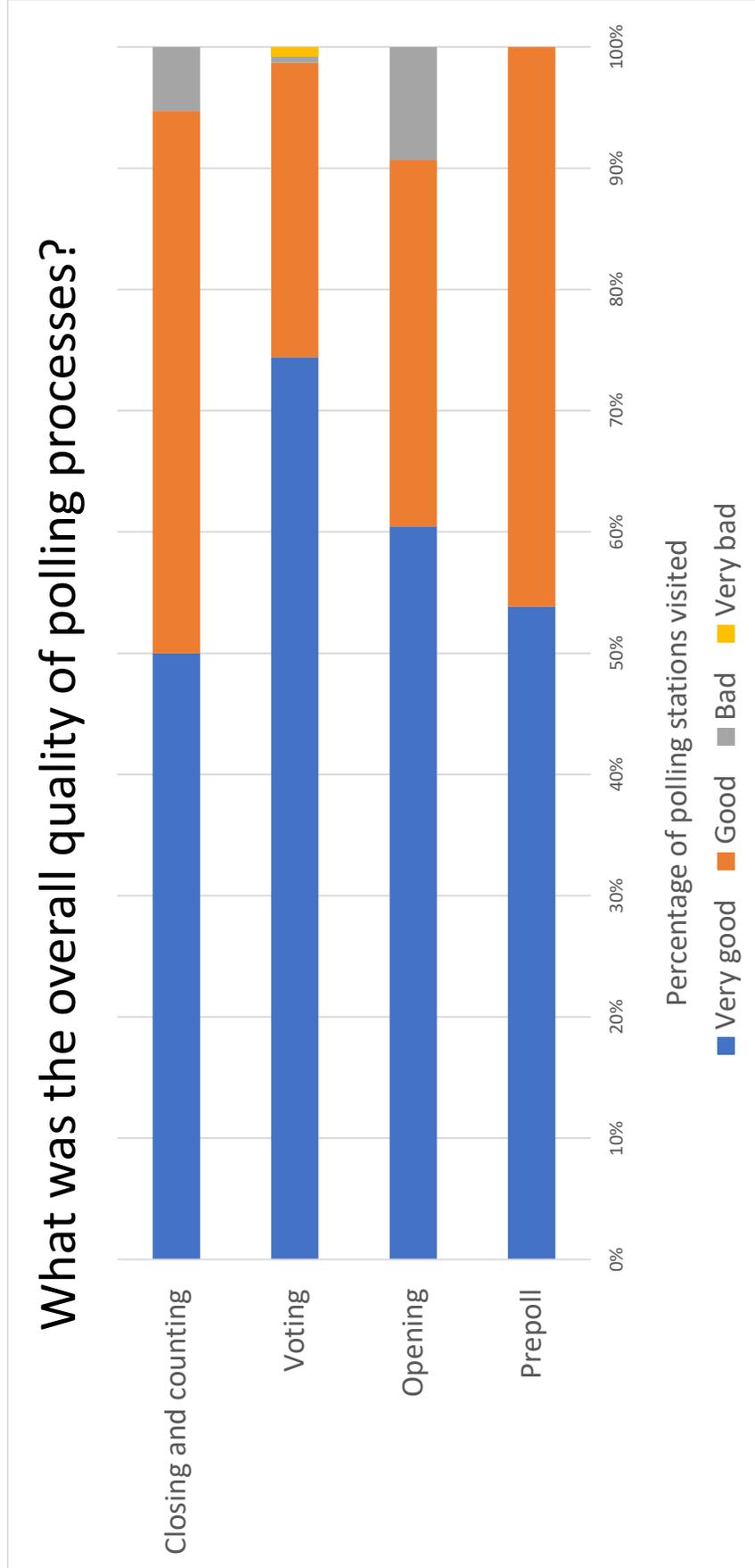
Annex D – MOG deployments

Legend

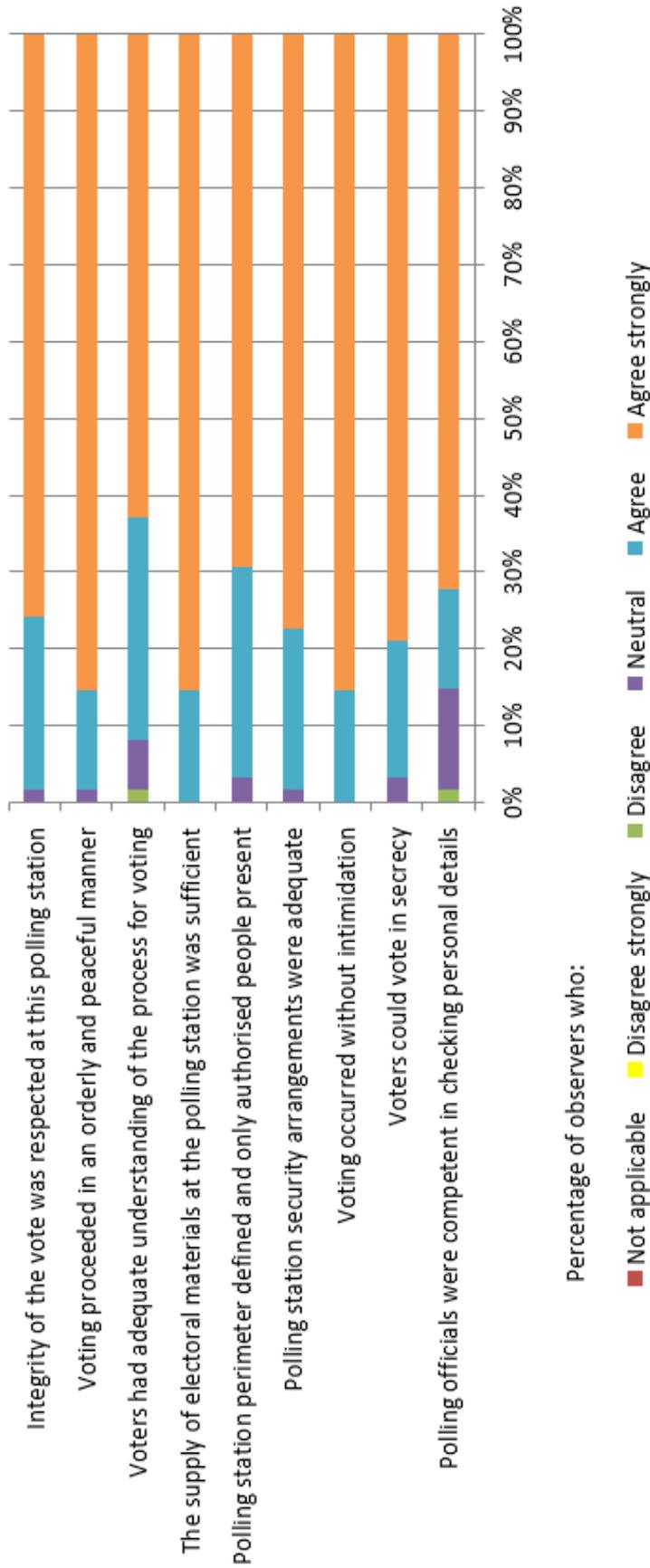
-  Election day observation (Wednesday 14 November and Saturday 17 November)
-  Pre-polling (Monday 5 November to Saturday 10 November)
-  Display of voter lists in pre-poll areas
-  Voter information drives



Annex E – MOG Observation Data



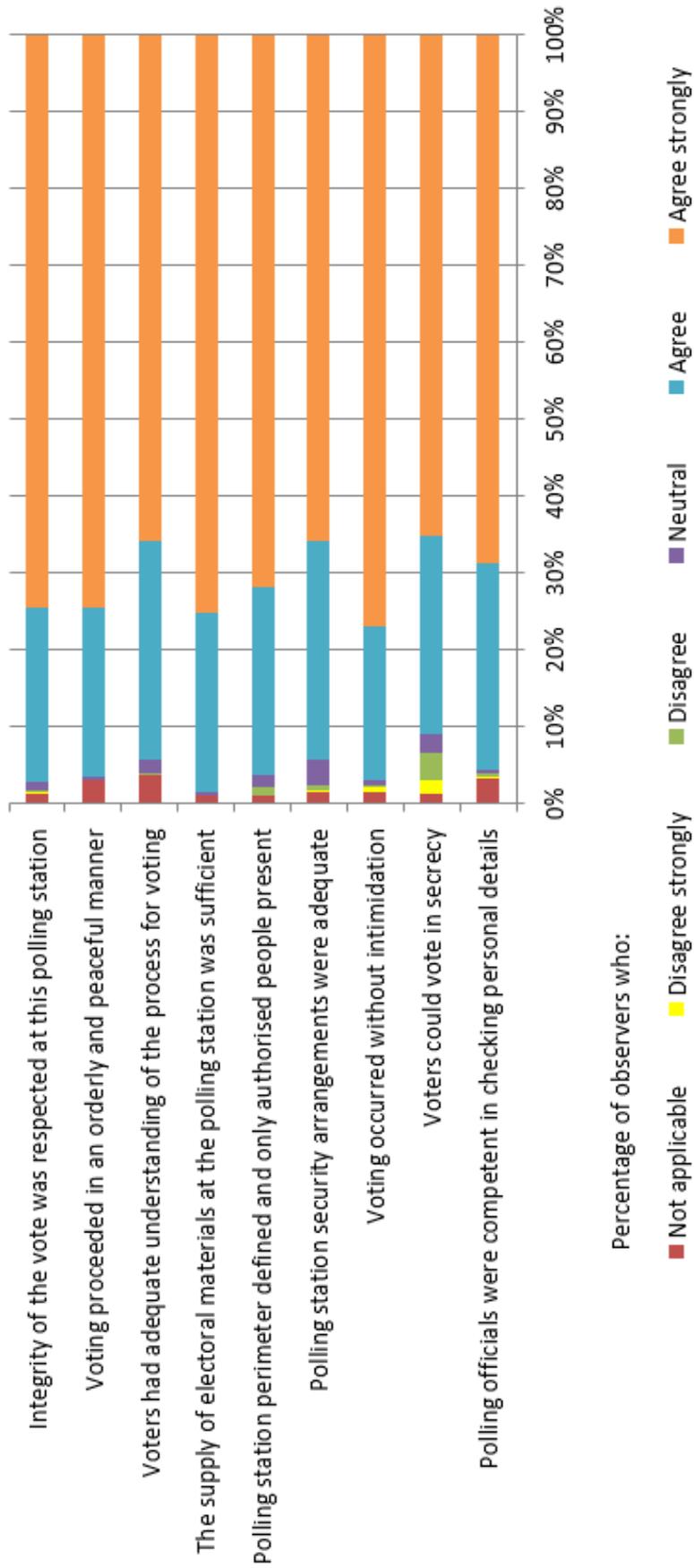
Assessment of pre-polling voting

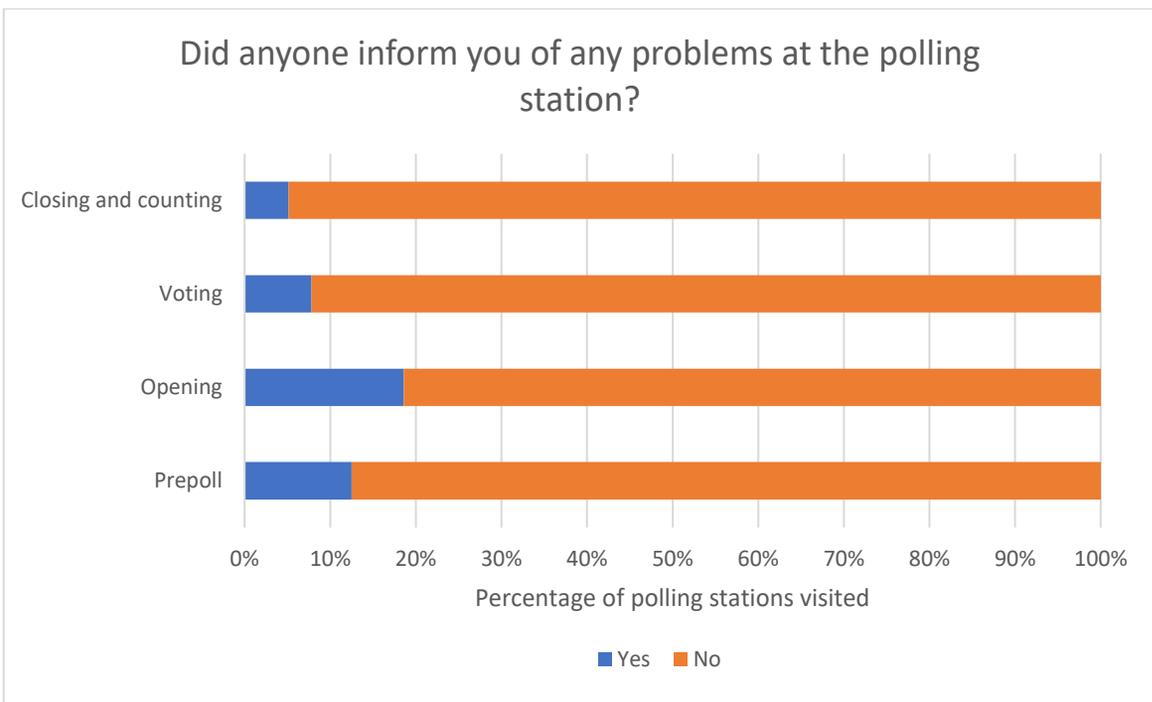
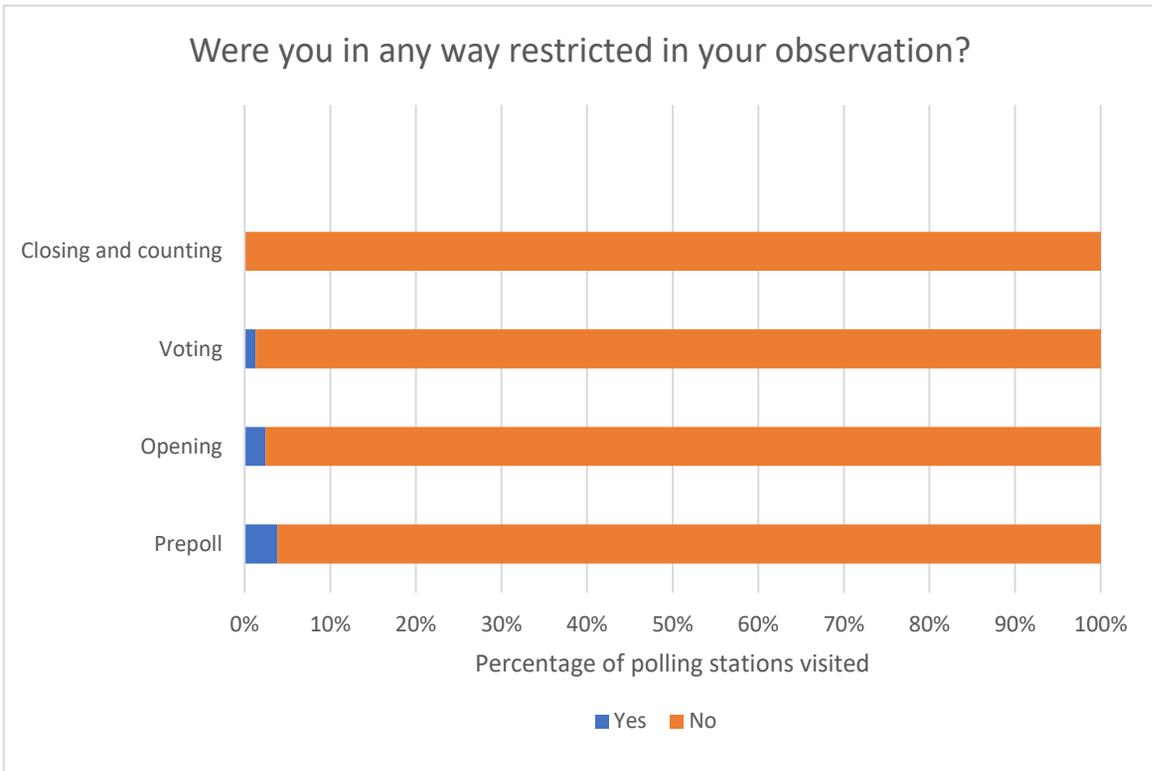


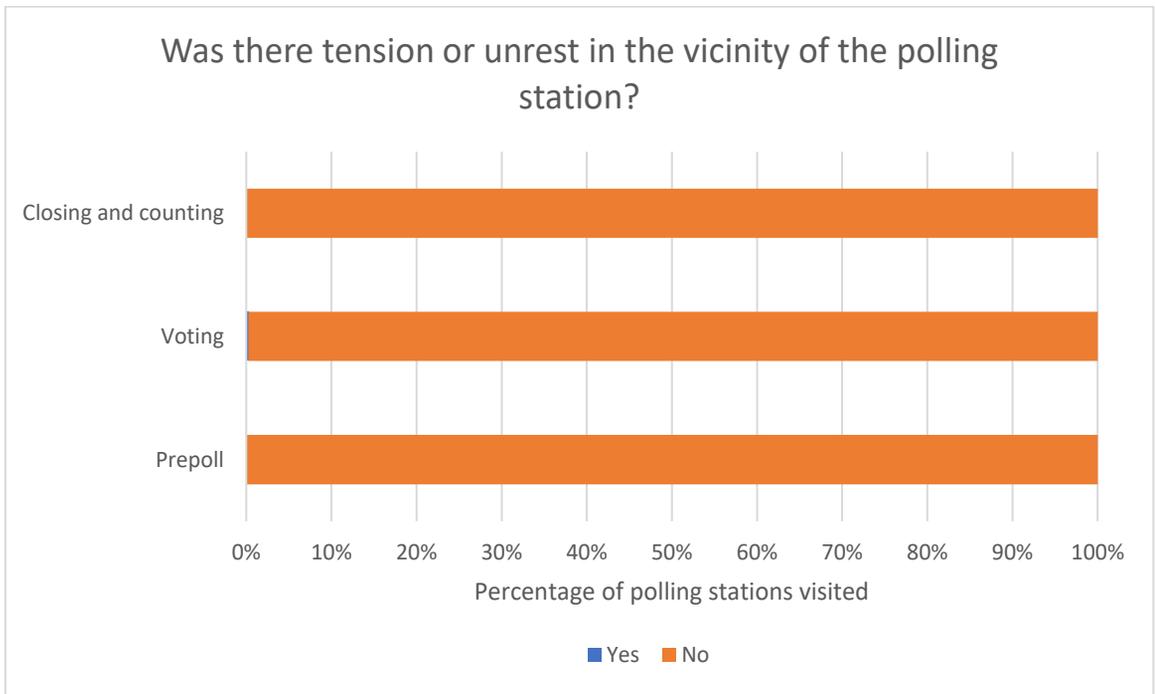
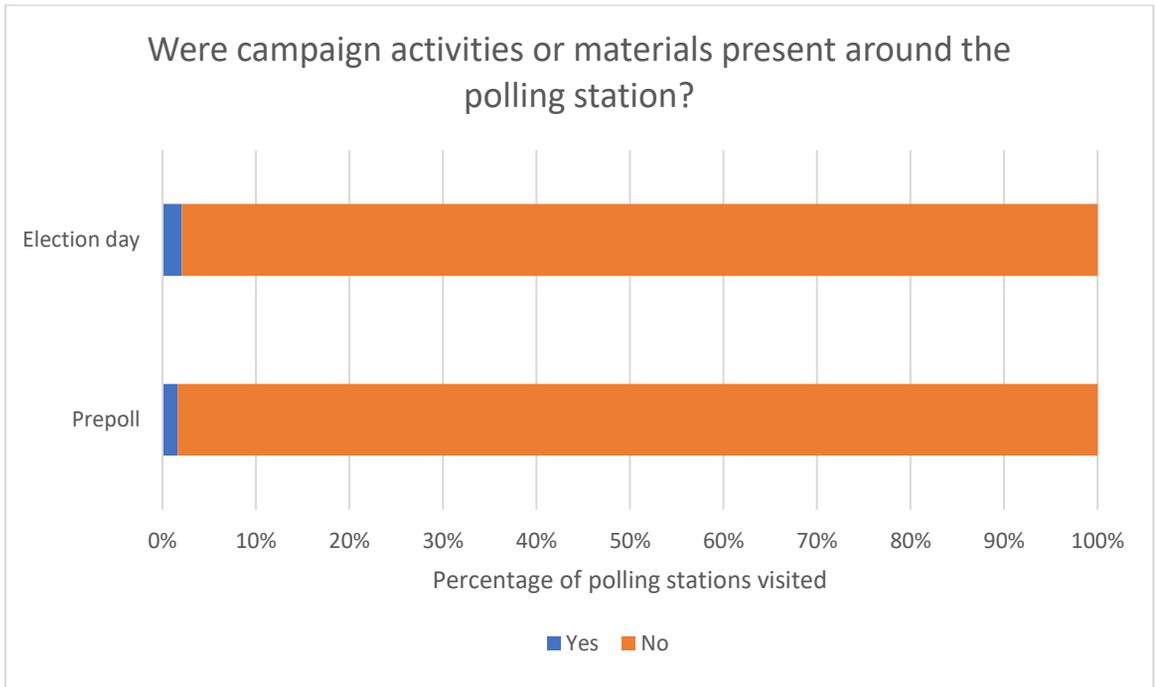
Percentage of observers who:

- Not applicable
- Disagree strongly
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Agree strongly

Assessment of election day voting







2018
**GENERAL
ELECTION**

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