

Statement by the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

Mr Suresh Chandra

Voter Service Centre

River Road, Nausori

3rd August, 2017

2:00pm

Bula Vinaka ladies and gentlemen and thank you for accepting our invitation to join us as we expand the presence of the Fijian Elections Office around the country. The opening of the Nausori branch of the FEO is a significant milestone as we approach the 2018 General Election.

Ladies and gentlemen, this time around the Fijian Elections Office has divided the country into administration areas to allow for more effective management of logistics surrounding elections as well as all the other processes which are involved.

The Nausori branch of the Fijian Elections Office will be looking after the entire Eastern Division as well as areas such as Tavua and Rakiraki.

The Divisional Coordinator for Nausori is Mr. Atish Chand and he will be looking after a total of 411 polling venues which will be somewhere around 900 polling stations.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Eastern office will also be covering Rotuma and since we have the airport just next door, it will be easy for Atish to liaise with the Rotuma base which is available through the airlines.

I'm also excited to reveal that the pre-poll times for next General Election will soon be calculated and released by the Fijian Elections Office. It is our highest endeavor that we will try and ensure that the pre-poll schedules are known amongst all the areas affected well in advance so that they can make adequate preparations.

This afternoon, we will be witnessing the opening of the Voter Services Centre in Nausori as well and the Voter Services Coordinator for the country Mr. Aisake Saukawa is also present here today.

The Voter Services Centre will be providing the usual services to all Fijians and since we are based next to the Land Transport

Authority and other necessary government services such as the Births, Deaths and Marriage Office, I believe that the positioning of our Voter Services Centre is ideal and will be handy to all Fijians who are affected in this area.

Let me also clarify ladies and gentlemen, that it is not only people from the Eastern Division who can access these services but Fijians from anywhere in the country – if they are in this area and they want to access voter services, they can go to this office.

The Electoral Commission has noted that preparations for the 2018 General Elections are on track and with the opening of this office, we will be looking forward to the opening of offices in Labasa and Nadi in due course.

I'd like to thank the Supervisor of Elections and his team for working very hard to ensure that the timelines are met and that the offices are opened on time.

I'm informed, and we will soon find out that the office has been developed to provide a professional and welcoming environment to all our customers as we aspire to provide the best customer service in every election process that we conduct.

I'm hoping that the Nausori office is as customer conducive and friendly so that Fijians enjoy the best office that is on offer.

Ladies and gentlemen before I conclude, I would like to say that the Electoral Commission has selected a theme from March 2017 to March 2018 and that is *Raising the standards in the Delivery of Elections in Fiji*. I am confident that the office we will be unveiling today will live up to the theme overall.

Thank you very much for coming and I wish you the very best in the services that you will receive from this office.

Vinaka vaka levu.