

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Fax: +679 331 9513 Website: www.feo.org.fj

05/04/2017

STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

Address by the Chairman of the Electoral Commission

Mr Suresh Chandra

**THE LAUNCH OF VOTERCARD 2.0 AND THE FIJI NATIONAL POLLING VENUE
DIRECTORIES**

RAISING THE STANDARDS IN THE DELIVERY OF ELECTIONS IN FIJI

My fellow Electoral Commissioners

Members of Parliament

Members of the Diplomatic Corp.

Invited Guests and Members of the Fijian Elections Office.

Bula Vinaka and welcome to this beautiful facility in the middle of Suva.

On behalf of the Electoral Commission and the Fijian Elections Office, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to each of you for coming here today.

Today marks an important day in the electoral calendar for Fiji. We are now officially one year out from the first day the *Writ* for the 2018 General Election can be issued.

The Electoral Commission has chosen a theme for the twelve months that will follow:

Raising the Standards in the Delivery of Elections in Fiji

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The 2014 General Election set a very high benchmark in terms of election services offered to the Fijian people. The remarkable turnout enjoyed that year was testament to that fact, with over five hundred thousand voters, or 84.6 per cent of registered voters participating in Fiji's first-ever successful one day of voting.

Not to mention the historic low for invalid votes of only 0.75 per cent. So that is the high bar that was set, and looking towards 2018, we plan to do better.

There are many terms used to evaluate elections. In Korea, they use the term 'clean elections'. In some places they use the terms 'free and fair' elections. However, the majority of international electoral bodies – including the UN – now use the term 'credible' to describe well-run elections.

And by every measure, multi-national observer groups deemed the 2014 General Election 'credible' and broadly representative of the will of the Fijian people.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that is something that should make us all very proud. But we can't rest on our laurels.

As technological advancements come about, it is our duty to find ways to leverage those developments to enhance the electoral process and empower the Fijian people to make their voices heard.

As the election administrators, we will now look at more ways to continue engaging the voters. The interest in the electoral process is high and we must work together to sustain it.

The innovations being unveiled today are a significant step towards strengthening voter engagement in Fiji. Once they are fully introduced, voters will have greater access to information than ever before, and will be able to stay abreast of any and all developments leading up to the 2018 General Election.

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On behalf of the Electoral Commission, I would like to congratulate the Fijian Elections Office for its continuing hard work and enthusiasm.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for coming.

Vinaka Vakalevu.

-Ends-

*Please forward all media queries to the FEO Communications team at
communications@feo.org.fj*