

## **Voting Screen Handover – Statement by EC Chair, Mr Suresh Chandra**

### **Statement by the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission**

**Mr Suresh Chandra**

**Voting Screen Handover**

**Suva – 09/03/2018**

The CEO of New Zealand Electoral Commission,

The New Zealand High Commissioner,

My fellow Electoral Commissioners

Distinguished invited guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ni sa Bula Vinaka and a very warm welcome to you all.

Thank you very much for accepting our invitation. May I also take this opportunity to warmly welcome our guest from New Zealand.

Alicia – Welcome to Suva.

Ladies and gentlemen, this morning we have the pleasure to host the Chief Electoral Officer from New Zealand. It is very humbling to see Alicia take time out from her very busy schedule and visit us to officially hand over the Cardboard Voting Screens to the Fijian Elections Office.

We have already received 15,015 voting screens properly packed in boxes and protective plastic. Each polling station will receive 1 box which is made up of 4 'pizza boxes' and 1 disability friendly voting screen.

There have been a few tweaks to the cardboard screens to prepare for wet environment. We have a proper sustainability plan for them as well so we can use the same for future elections.

Since the polling station setup in the 2018 General Election will be the same as the 2014 General Election, we are sure voters will find greater comfort in exercising their right.

As we prepare to conduct the second General Election under the 2013 Constitution, the Electoral Commission and the Fijian Elections Office are thankful for all the support from our partner agencies.

Support, through donations – either monetary terms, in kind, technical expertise or any form of assistance, will not only contribute towards our operations but towards the development of our country as a whole.

Ladies and gentlemen, we want the 2018 General Election to be a platform for Fijians to express their will with confidence, security and freedom. In fact, the Electoral Commission has adopted this as our theme heading into the polls – and we are committed to ensuring that it is translated into action.

We are confident that the support we have received from New Zealand will greatly contribute towards realizing our goals.

Last year ladies and gentlemen, the Electoral Commission and the FEO participated in the New Zealand Electoral Commission 2017 Election Visitor Program for the 2017 New Zealand Elections.

That was a good learning experience for the Commission and a great opportunity to observe first-hand the conduct of an election in New Zealand.

It allowed us to see the processes involved, the organization and landscape of conducting events during an election from a different perspective. We are thankful to the New Zealand Electoral Commission for facilitating our visit last year.

With those few words ladies and gentlemen, I thank you all for your attendance.

Vinaka Vakalevu.

