

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

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Statement by the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

Mr Suresh Chandra

Press Conference Pertaining to Decisions

Made at the Fourth Meeting of the Electoral Commission [04.17]

3:00pm, 13 June, 2017

FEO Headquarters, Suva

Bula Vinaka Ladies and Gentlemen

The Electoral Commission at its 4th Meeting yesterday has approved the Rules governing Objections and Appeals to a Registration as a Voter in the National Register of voters. If you had the opportunity to peruse today's newspapers, you will find these rules are published in them.

The Commission had noted that the current number of registered voters stands at over 605997 which from our estimates is over 90% of the total eligible voter population. The Commission has noted that it is vital to maintain the integrity of the Voters Register. There were no legal provisions that allowed for an objection to registration to be made.

We firmly believe that this responsibility can be shared with our Voters who can all become custodians of the Voter Roll. Individual Voters are the best people to identify persons who should not be on the Voters Register. We, the Electoral Commission and Fijian Elections Office will act on the information we receive.

These rules reflect the Commission's theme of choice until March next year – Raising the Standards in the Delivery of Elections in Fiji.

We believe it is important to explain how these rules will operate.

1. Only registered voters can object to the registration of another voter. This should always be an apolitical exercise.
2. The grounds for objection are very limited. The possible grounds are as follows:
 - a) Has not reached 18 years of Age, or
 - b) Is not a citizen of Fiji, or
 - c) Serving a sentence of imprisonment of 12 months or longer imposed by a Court in Fiji or by a Court of another country, or
 - d) Under a law in force in Fiji, declared to have mental disorder.
3. To ensure authenticity of the objection as well as the objector, we require the voter to declare in a statutory declaration that the voter has 'made a conscientious effort to determine that those factors alleged by the voter are true in best knowledge and belief of the voter

The Commission also wishes to remind that it is an offence to provide false statutory declarations.

Objections will initially be made directly to the Registrar of Voters, which is the Supervisor of Elections. We have required that the Supervisor of Elections conducts an enquiry and deals with the objections within fourteen [14] days. The affected party must be made aware by the Supervisor during the enquiry.

If an objection is proven correct, then the affected voter will be removed from the voters list. The Supervisor of Elections can also reject an objection.

The affected voter or the original objector can appeal to the Electoral Commission if they are not satisfied with the decision of the Supervisor of Elections.

To make this process more user friendly, we have approved the forms that can be used. The forms are available on the Electoral Commission and FEO websites. The FEO will shortly be sending out copies of these forms around the country to its offices.

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