

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

**Mr Suresh Chandra**

**2018 General Election – Election Officials Training**

**Suva**

**29<sup>th</sup> August, 2017**

**10:00am**

Bula Vinaka ladies and gentlemen and thank you very much for attending this training.

I am extremely pleased to be present here this morning along with my fellow commissioners as we commence the Election Officials training for the 2018 General Election.

This is a milestone event in terms of the Electoral Calendar as we anticipate that the Election could be between April and November in 2018.

The Fijian Elections Office has completed recruitment in some parts of the country and is still continuing with the Recruitment Drive in other parts, but based on the plans that the Fijian Elections Office had, people who attend the Recruitment Drive on the first week have been processed and are now at the stage of training.

So all of you in front of me have been processed from the first week of recruitment and are now attending this first training session.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we commence the training of Election Officials, I wanted to sound a few reminders to all persons who may be interested to work in the 2018 General Elections:

To work in the 2018 General Election, we need people with the highest level of integrity, who can come and carry out the responsibilities of the Election Officials without fear or favour and in a very apolitical manner.

Election Officials must remain honest at all times and ensure that all the procedures prescribed the Fijian Elections Office and the Electoral Commission are followed to the letter.

The Election Officials determine the credibility of each election and it is very important that when you are handling the task of Election Officials, you must do so as per the procedures that have been prescribed for these positions.

Ladies and gentlemen, being an Election Official does not only mean that you are looking forward to the salary at the end of the day but this is a great service to the country and when one is called upon to serve their country, they must do so with utmost faith and honesty.

It is important that you ensure that you carry out your roles diligently and in a manner that is not only done - but is seen by the members of the public to have been done right.

Following the 2014 General Election, the Multi-National Observer Group gave high marks to the Election Officials. Ladies and gentlemen, we have to aim higher for the next election.

The Electoral Commission has chosen the theme *'Raising the Standards in the Delivery of Elections in Fiji'* for the next General Election and it is our responsibility, both yours and mine, to ensure that the tenets of this theme are obtained.

Having said all of that ladies and gentlemen, I would like to congratulate you for completing the recruitment process and now attending this training and I wish you all the very best for this workshop and I now declare the training for the 2018 General Election – Election Officials training program officially open.

Thank you, Vinaka vakalevu and Dhanyavad.