

Statement by the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

Mr Suresh Chandra

Know Your Election 2 Awareness Drive Launch

Suva - 17/09/18

Bula Vinaka and a very warm welcome to you all.

Under Section 75 of the Constitution of Fiji, the Electoral Commission is responsible for Voter Education. This afternoon, I have great pleasure in launching the second phase of voter education for the 2018 General Election.

The second round of the ***Know Your Election Program*** is aimed at equipping voters with basic knowledge of election and how to cast a valid vote. It will act as a refresher for those that have already received the information.

The nationwide drive will start from September 18th and will conclude once the Writ for the General Election is issued.

The ballot paper is one of the most important components of the election process and the ballot paper that a voter holds on Election Day or during pre-poll will determine who our elected representatives will be.

This is something that every voter needs to know before he or she enters the polling venue – that the ballot paper they hold in their hands will decide the outcome of the 2018 General Election.

Every tick, circle or cross on ballot papers in the election is another step for our country towards electoral democracy.

Every vote is important in determining the governance of the country therefore, we want every eligible voter to cast a valid vote.

So, if our Awareness teams come to your village or community, please register or update or verify your details with them. You can also find out where your polling venue is for Election Day or during pre-poll.

Read the Election Information Booklet that was distributed earlier this year. If you need more books, ask the Awareness teams or visit any of the Voter Services Centres around the country to obtain a copy.

If you have any question, this would be the best time to ask as the Voter Awareness Assistants are well trained and equipped to help voters with any form of voter service and provide information.

The Electoral Commission envisions the 2018 General Election to be a platform for Fijians to express their will with Confidence, Security and Freedom, and the awareness drive which begins tomorrow will be another step towards making it a reality.

Extensive voter awareness efforts four years earlier resulted in Fiji's lowest count of invalid votes in its history of elections – 0.75 percent ladies and gentlemen.

We expect to lower that percentage at the conclusion of the 2018 General Election and it is an achievable target considering the amount of awareness we are conducting through various means.

Thank you very much and Vinaka Vakalevu.