

Statement by the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

Mr Suresh Chandra

Issuance of Writ for Election

Suva - 01/10/18 - 10am

Fellow Electoral Commissioners,

The Supervisor of Elections,

Members of the media,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Bula Vinaka and a very warm welcome to you all.

It is my pleasure to announce that following the issuance of the Writ for the 2018 General Election by His Excellency, President Major General (Ret'd) Jioji Konrote, under section 59 of the Constitution, we are now officially in Election mode.

The Writ for the Election contains the following details:

1. The election is for 51 members of Parliament to be returned at the Election;
2. The date for the General Election is 14 November 2018 and postal and Pre-poll voting will take place prior to this date.
3. Voter Registration closes at 6pm today.
4. Nominations commence from 8am on 02 October 2018 and close at 12 noon on 15 October 2018. Nominations will be received at the Fijian Elections Office, 59, 63 High Street, Suva; and
5. The Writ is to be returned on or before 28 November 2018.

Now that the Writ has been issued, Political Party Registration has closed and Postal Vote Applications are now open.

The total number of registered voters as of **17th September, 2018** stands at **634,120** out of which **314,686** are females and **319,434** are males. Registration will close at 6pm.

As at today, there are eight (8) registered Political Parties eligible to contest the General Election. They are:

- FijiFirst
- Social Democratic Liberal Party
- National Federation Party
- Peoples Democratic Party
- Fiji Labour Party
- Freedom Alliance
- Unity Fiji; and,
- HOPE

At this juncture, I would like to elaborate on some of the key dates for this Election:

- 2nd October – Candidate Nominations Open at 8am;
- 15th October – Candidate Nominations Close at 12noon;
- 16th October – Candidate Nomination Withdrawals by 12noon;
- 16th October – Candidate Nomination Objections and Appeals close by 4pm;
- 19th October – National Candidates Ball Draw [or earlier as determined by the Fijian Elections Office];
- 24th October – Postal Voting Applications Close at 5pm
- 5th November – Pre-Poll Voting Begins;
- 10th November – Pre-Poll Voting Ends;
- 12th November – Media Blackout on Campaigning commences at 7.30am

- 14th November – Election Day – Voting will be from 7.30am to 6pm
- 14th November – Election Night – Provisional Results will be progressively released from 6pm

I would like to congratulate Fiji and all Fijians for the successful completion of the term of Parliament.

The Writ has been issued and it is now time for Fijians to vote again for the next Parliament.

Ladies and gentlemen, the 2014 General Election achieved some milestones with 84% voter turnout and 0.75% invalid votes.

We are optimistic that this year's Election will set new benchmarks. This can only be possible if voters exercise their democratic right and come out to vote.

The Fijian Elections Office has conducted a comprehensive voter education and awareness exercise to ensure that voters know what to expect at their Polling Venue and how to mark their Ballot Paper.

We have great belief that the 2018 General Election will be a Platform for Fijians to express their will with confidence, security and freedom.

Thank you and vinaka vakalevu.