

Statement by the Electoral Commission Chairperson

Mr Suresh Chandra

Media Briefing - Pre-Poll Announcement

FEO HQ - 02/11/18, 2018 - 3pm

Bula Vinaka ladies and gentlemen and thank you for attending this media briefing.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Pre-poll for the 2018 General Election will begin from Monday, **5th November**, 2018 from **8.00am**.

The Fijian Elections Office will be operating **587** Pre-Poll Stations around the country at **582** Pre-Poll Polling Venues where **69,466** Voters are expected to cast their ballot.

Under Section 82 of the Electoral Act, the Fijian Elections Office will conduct pre-polling for voters in remote areas or locations where the number of voters suffice for the establishment of a Polling station.

Voters in outer islands, hard to reach locations, residents of nursing homes or healthcare facilities, members of disciplined forces and those under pre-trial detention are eligible to vote via pre-poll.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Pre-poll Venue with the **most** number of voters is the **Queen Elizabeth Barracks** in the Central Division in Suva where **1,438** voters will cast their vote at **three** stations.

The venue with the **second highest** number of voters is **Tabwewa Community Hall** located on **Rabi Island** in the Northern Division. At this venue **651** voters will cast their vote at **two** stations.

Sabata Community Hall in Navua, which falls under the Central Division, has the least number of voters with only **14** voters registered to cast their ballot.

At this point, may I mention that all the areas that are under pre-polling have been made aware of the schedule as well as the fact that they will voting via Pre-poll.

Ladies and Gentlemen, while the 2014 pre-poll schedule was for two weeks, the schedule for the 2018 General Election has now been reduced to five days.

We hope that voters are able to take advantage of this weekend to familiarize themselves with the manner in which they have to vote as well as to organize themselves to adhere to the pre-poll schedules advertised in newspapers and our website and Facebook pages.

Ladies and gentlemen, FEO teams will not return to any venue where pre-poll has already been conducted.

This means that if you do not vote at the polling place on the time allocated, we will not be allowing you to vote.

We would like to encourage everyone who hears this notices to advice their friends, families, relatives in their respective places of the times of pre-polling to allow every voter to vote.

The FEO ensured that the National Candidates List, in terms of the Voter Instruction Booklet, was delivered to all pre-polling areas to allow voters in these areas to familiarize themselves with the National Candidates List and to know the number of the candidate they wish to vote for.

Voters are encouraged to go to their respective pre-polling venues, cast their ballot, and get their fingers marked and place their ballot paper inside the secret envelope which they will place inside the ballot box.

Ballot boxes will be under police guard at all times and every afternoon, after pre-polling has ended, these ballot boxes will be sealed and placed in a secure location.

If polling is conducted in the morning, the boxes will be sealed at the same venue and placed immediately under Police security.

These boxes once secured will then be transported to the secured facility in which we will store it until counting begins on the night of Elections.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the event someone is still not sure where to cast their vote, please send your voter number to 1500 to find out the location of their pre-poll venue and station.

We have offices around the country in case somebody needs assistance or you can dial 1500 – our call center line.

Thank You and Vinaka Vakalevu.