

# **2014 General Election**

**Joint Report  
by the Electoral Commission  
&  
the Supervisor of Elections**

**to  
His Excellency Ratu Epeli Nailatikau  
the President of the Republic of Fiji  
&  
the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji**

**17 December 2014**

## Foreword

We present this joint report on the 2014 General Election in accordance with Section 14 (g) of the Electoral Decree 2014 [Decree].

The Electoral Commission [EC] and the Fijian Elections Office [FEO] following their establishment prepared and conducted the National Election on 17 September 2014. In doing this they followed the legal framework provided by the 2013 Fijian Constitution and the 2014 Electoral Decree. These documents provided the guidelines and timeframes for the Election.

In this Joint Report, details of activities of the EC are highlighted together with joint responsibilities of the EC and the FEO.

Operational details of the Election together with details of FEO activities were outlined by the Supervisor of Elections [SoE] in his report of 22 October 2014.

We again take this opportunity to acknowledge the Government, the International Community, local stakeholders, FEO staff and the voters for a combined effort in making this election a success.

Vinaka vakalevu.

Sgd D.G.Arms  
.....  
David George Arms  
Electoral Commissioner

for

Chen Bunn Young  
Chairperson, EC

Date: .....

Sgd Mohammed Saneem  
.....  
Mohammed Saneem  
Supervisor of Elections

Date: .....

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## **Establishment of Electoral Commission (EC)**

The EC was established on 9 January 2014. The members appointed were:

Chen B. Young- Chairperson

David G. Arms - Member

Alisi W. Daurewa - Member

Vijay Naidu- Member

Jenny Seeto – Member

James Sowane – Member

Larry Thomas - Member

At the outset the EC had only one staff (seconded to it from the FEO) in the form of a Personal Assistant. From May 19 another Personal Assistant was appointed and a third joined in July 2014.

The EC did not have a Technical Advisor. It was free to seek legal advice from the Solicitor General which it did from time to time. However, there were occasions when the EC felt that independent legal advice was warranted.

## **Work of the EC**

The EC has had 52 regular Commission meetings. However, besides these and other special meetings, the Commissioners attended to many other matters, which included meetings with the following:

- i. Attorney General and Solicitor General regarding the Electoral Decree and the appointment of the Supervisor of Elections
- ii. Commonwealth Secretariat
- iii. Forum Ministerial Contact Group
- iv. Papua New Guinea Elections Office delegation
- v. Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) and Media organisations
- vi. Diplomatic Corp and International Agencies
- vii. Indonesian, Japanese and Australian delegations
- viii. Political Parties and aspiring Independent Candidates
- ix. Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- x. Police Commissioner
- xi. Transparency International
- xii. Fiji Bus Operators Association, Fiji Taxi Union Association and Ministry of Transport
- xiii. Samabula East Methodist Church
- xiv. Fiji Law Society

- xv. Lau Provincial Council
- xvi. Multi-national Observer Group (MOG)
- xvii. New Zealand & Australian High Commissions

Besides the above meetings, the Commission also attended to other matters which included:

- a. Human Resources FEO staff interviews
- b. Developing and reviewing the 2014 Election roadmap
- c. Preparing Code of Conduct for the FEO
- d. Liaising with the Fiji Retailers Association about working hours on Election Day
- e. Engaging in Fiji Broadcasting Corporation and Fiji TV interviews on voter education and awareness
- f. Monitoring pre-poll and polling venues in all four Divisions during voting
- g. Attending to and delivering decisions on Objections and Appeals according to Sections 30 & 31 of the Electoral Decree 2014
- h. Holding public consultations in Suva and Nausori
- i. Reviewing the Result Management Information System
- j. Reviewing security arrangement for storage of electoral material including ballot papers
- k. Liaising with the University of Fiji, Fiji National University and the University of the South Pacific about possible recruitment of polling day workers
- l. Monitoring the Electoral process from the 15 September through to the allocation of seats and Return of the Writ on 22 September 2014

In addition, the Commission had to review and attend to electoral matters that could only be done in their private time.

The EC accepted the invitations of the Australian and New Zealand Electoral Commissions to observe their respective electoral operations. The costs of this were paid by the respective governments. No sitting allowances were claimed by any Commissioner for this attendance.

The allowances for the Commissioners were determined by a meeting between the Minister of Elections, the Chairperson of the EC and the Supervisor of Elections using the guidelines of sitting allowances of other Commissions. Since the Chairperson and Commissioner James Sowane were from the West, their travel cost and accommodation featured as part of the EC's expenditure.

The FEO provided secretariat services to the EC and also funded its operations from the Elections Budget. The allowances of the EC are as follows:

- i. Sitting allowance per day - \$500

- ii. Meal allowance per day - \$50 per person
- iii. Travel allowance for West-based Commissioners - \$0.60 per km
- iv. Accommodation in Suva for West-based Commissioners - \$390 per night

It should be noted that no meal allowances were claimed by the Commissioners for meetings as morning tea and lunch were provided.

The following is a summary of expenses for the EC as at 30 November 2014:

<b>Expenses (\$)</b>	
Travel Expense	11,887.25
Accommodation	10,499.72
Meeting Meals/Lunch	11,286.38
Sitting Allowance	248,875.00

Initially a budget of \$107,760.00 was allocated for travel, accommodation and meal expenses. Only 31% of that budget was used. No budget was allocated for the EC sitting allowances as it formed part of the overall FEO budget.

### **Establishment of FEO, Supervisor of Elections (SoE)**

The Electoral Decree 2014 came into force on 28 March 2014 and in accordance with Section 9 of the Decree, the FEO became an independent office. Mr. Mohammed Saneem was appointed on the same day as the Supervisor of Elections and as such is the head of the FEO.

The Fijian Government provided FEO with FJD 15 million for the General Election and a further FJD 2.8 million for operational needs.

The staffing structure was designed on the basis that certain projects for the General Election would require completion well before the date of the Election and this meant that some staff would have short term or long term contracts. There were 54 on-going positions that ranged from 2 to 4 years and there were 647 short term positions ranging from 2 to 12 months.

All persons appointed to work in the FEO for the 2014 General Election showed great commitment towards delivering the project. Each of them deserves to be commended for their efforts. Further details regarding the FEO and SoE are available in the 22 October Report by the Supervisor of Elections.

### **Election Expenditure**

The expenditure as at 13 October 2014 was \$23,553,936.00. For further details please refer to the SoE's report of 22 October.

## International Support

To successfully carry out its functions under the Constitution and the Decree, the FEO received support from Fiji's international partners. Support from countries included technical support, in-kind support and funding.

A special acknowledgment is extended to the following technical advisors who provided the much needed expertise in the field to assist the FEO. Technical advisors provided support and also quality control on the processes. Each of them ensured that careful attention was paid to detail and accuracy in every aspect of the process.

Lawrence McGrath	-	Australia
Jane Curran	-	Australia
Craig Rickards	-	Australia
Mathew De Kievith	-	Australia
Shayne Mathieson	-	New Zealand
Ross Shadbolt	-	New Zealand
Carol Stoney	-	New Zealand
Karyl Winter	-	New Zealand
Jerome Leyraud	-	European Union
Marla Morry	-	European Union
Armin Rabitsch	-	European Union
Ronan McDermot	-	British High Commission

In order to assist and support the SoE, the Deputy Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Michael Clancy, and Director Operations, Robin Boyd, were appointed. The Government of Australia provided top-up salary and additional allowances during their term. Both these gentlemen had brought with them the essential knowledge and skills required to build capacity at the FEO and at the same time ensure that critical timelines and milestones were achieved as required.

We express sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the donor partners. *Vinaka vakalevu*

- Papua New Guinea
  - Funding in the sum of FJD 18.5 million

- Australia : AUD 2.8 million
  - Biometric Voter Registration
    - Salaries for EVR clerks
    - ACC advisor : HR/ registration clerk payroll x 12 months
    - ACC advisor : Operations x 2 months
    - Cardno assistance to payroll for registration
  - FEO Personnel:
    - Salary top-up & allowances for Deputy Supervisor and Director Operations
  - Technical Advisors from ACC
    - ACC technical advisor: HR x10 months
    - ACC technical advisor: Operations x10 months
  - Australian EC secondments
    - Postal vote/ ballot paper production expert x 2 months
    - Logistics expert x 2 months
  - EC Study Tour:
    - 6 EC visit to Sydney hosted by the Australian EC (AEC)
- European Union : EURO 1.01million
  - Technical Assistance between October 2013 and April 2014: EURO 200,000
    - Technical expert on legal frameworks
    - Team leader: Operations expert
  - Training of Election Day Presiding Officers: EURO 810,000
    - Team leader plus 2 electoral trainers
    - Funding for 959 training sessions and equipment.
    - Funding for the production of training materials and DVD
- New Zealand : NZD 1.9 million
  - Technical Advisors' fees and expenses NZD 611,000
  - Procurement of election supplies – voting screens NZD 1.307 million
  - 3 EC visit to Auckland, Tauranga & Wellington hosted by the NZ Electoral Commission (NSEC)
- India
  - 10 Mahindra vehicles :FJD482,500
  - 4,400 bottles of indelible ink :FJD 229,000
- People's Republic of China
  - Funding in the sum of FJD 1.5million

- Japan
  - Funding for purchase of ballot boxes : FJD 82,500
- Turkey
  - Funding in the sum of FJD 94,000
- Korea : USD 165,000
  - 4 x fully loaded Hyundai Santa Fe vehicles
  - 20 x desktop computers
- British Government: £ 26,380
  - Technical Advisor for Result Management System

### **Inter-agency cooperation**

A special appreciation is extended to all state institutions and government departments for the cooperation and support provided to the FEO. All these institutions ensured that assistance to the FEO was provided in a timely manner.

It was also very encouraging to note that the institutions prioritized FEO requests and also ensured that contingency plans were in place to cater for FEO's needs.

The Fiji Police Force, Solicitor General's Office, MIDA, Department of Immigration, Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Provincial Development, Ministry of Lands, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, Fiji Roads Authority, Office of the Official Receiver and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acted as close partners in ensuring the delivery of the 2014 General Election. The EC and the FEO acknowledge any contributing department or organization that is not listed.

### **Political Parties**

Political Parties were registered in accordance with the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Decree 2013 [PPD]. The SoE is also the Registrar of Political Parties under the PPD.

A total of seven political parties were registered. Applications for registration by three proposed parties were rejected by the Registrar of Political Parties.

Details of each party are as follows:

<b>Name of Party</b>	<b>Date of Registration</b>	<b>Name of Registered Officer</b>
Fiji Labour Party (FLP)	May 2013	Mahendra Pal Chaudhry

National Federation Party (NFP)	May 2013	Dalip Kumar
Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA)	May 2013	Pio Tabaiwalu
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	May 2013	Adi Sivia Qoro
FijiFirst	May 2014	Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum
Fiji United Freedom Party (FUFP)	August 2014	Jagath Karunaratne
One Fiji Party (OFP)	August 2014	Sitiveni Sovaki Kalou

## **Voter Education**

The FEO implemented various modes of educating the voters including village and community visits, house-to-house voter awareness, voter awareness sessions with Turaga-ni-Koros and District Advisory Councillors, talkback shows, infomercials and the distribution of the Voter Information Guide that contained relevant electoral information such as how to vote, when to vote and where to vote. Besides this, pamphlets were also being distributed. These forms of voter education were in English, iTaukei, Hindi and Chinese.

The EC was aware that “one person one vote one value” was a new concept for Fiji. It realized that voter education was an essential part of informing the voters about the new system. Hence, it felt that it was necessary to engage more with the relevant stakeholders in the election process.

To complement the work of the FEO, members of the EC took the opportunity to talk to civil society groups, professional bodies, provincial councils and the public through radio and television talkback shows and public consultations. As the election drew closer it became apparent that the method of allocation of seats to parliament needed to be explained further and this was addressed by the EC quite extensively.

Detailed description of the entire voter awareness exercise is available in the 22 October Report by the SoE.

## **Issuance of Writ**

The Writ for the 2014 General Election was issued by the Acting President of Fiji and Chief Justice, Mr Justice Anthony Gates, to the EC at 12:00pm on 4 August 2014.

## **Nomination of Candidates**

The nomination period started on 4 August 2014 and closed at 12pm on 18 August 2014. The FEO received 262 nominations from seven registered political parties and two independent candidates.

Each candidate was required to pay a sum of FJD 1,000. The total sum received was FJD 262,000 of which FJD 51,000 was refunded to candidates who were eligible for the refund.

The refund was made on the basis of withdrawal of nomination before the close of the nomination period and being elected into parliament.

## **Withdrawal of Nominations**

The deadline for withdrawal of nominations was 12pm 19 August 2014. Only one candidate from the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) withdrew his nomination.

## **Objections**

Objections were received from the public against the nomination of a candidate. The objection period closed at 4pm on 19 August 2014 and was handled by the EC.

Eleven objections to candidate nomination were received and dealt with by the EC under Section 30 of the Electoral Decree.

The EC sought overseas independent legal opinion on some objections. This necessitated a payment of FJD 20,382.37 to ChenPalmer New Zealand Public and Employment specialist.

## **Appeals**

Appeals were received from candidates whose nominations were rejected by the SoE. The appeal period closed at 4pm on 19 August 2014 and was handled by the EC.

The EC had three days to make a decision after the close of the appeal period.

Ten appeals were received and dealt with by the EC under Section 31 of the Electoral Decree.

## **Legal Challenges**

### **1. Civil Case No. HBC 240 of 2014**

#### **EC vs Supervisor of Elections**

On 23 August 2014 the EC filed an Originating Summons seeking the following relief:

- A declaration that the SOE has erred in law and fact in concluding that the EC was bound to deliver its decision on the objections and applications for review in terms

of Section 30 and 31 of the Electoral Decree 2014 by 4pm on 22 August 2014 and not any later time on that day;

- A declaration that the SOE was bound to follow the directive of the EC by the EC letter dated 22 August 2014 in compliance with Section 76(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji;
- An order that the SOE assign numbers in the order in which names of the candidates should appear (pursuant to Section 36 of the Electoral Decree 2014) either on Sunday 24 August 2014 or such date permissible under the Electoral Decree 2014;
- An abridgement of time for the service and hearing of these proceeding; and
- That each party pay its own cost in this legal proceeding.

The Court in delivering its judgment confirmed that 3 days' time limit in Section 30(5) and Section 31(4) of the Electoral Decree expired at 4:00pm on 22 August 2014. Further, it was undisputed that the objection for Mr. Praveen Kumar's nomination as a candidate was received at 4:00pm on 19 August 2014 and notification was given by the Commission at 7:47pm on 22 August 2014. Since the notification of its decision by the EC was late even by only 3 hours 47 minutes the SoE was not bound to follow the EC's directive as the EC had breached the time limit.

Therefore, the Originating Summons filed on 23 August 2014 was dismissed and each party to bear their own cost. In relation to this case a payment of FJD 333.92 was made to Holiday Inn for the accommodation of Mr. Adish Narayan of A.K. Lawyers

The EC has subsequently appealed some sections of this decision and the matter is currently pending in the Court of Appeal.

## **2. Civil Case No. HBC 245 of 2014**

### **Steven Pradeep Singh, Fiji Labour Party vs EC, Supervisor of Elections and Attorney General of Fiji and Minister of Elections**

On 25 August 2014 Mr. Singh and the Fiji Labour Party filed a Notice of Originating Motion against EC, SoE and AG as a result of his name not being included in the Candidates List draw.

The Court heard on 18 August 2014 the Fiji Labour Party filed its candidate nomination with the FEO and on the same date the SoE informed Fiji Labour Party that Mr. Singh's nomination was rejected. On 19 August 2014 the Fiji Labour Party appealed to the EC on behalf of the rejected candidates which included Mr. Singh. On 22 August 2014 EC allowed the appeal in respect to Mr. Singh and directed SoE to include Mr. Singh's name in the Candidates List. The SoE refused to follow the directive of the EC and drew the Candidates List without Mr. Singh's name.

The Court in delivering its judgment confirmed that it does not have the jurisdiction to deal with this case as it does not determine the eligibility or ineligibility of Mr. Singh to

be a candidate in the 2014 General Election. It is not the function of the Court to do so and therefore the case was dismissed and struck out in its entirety.

Further, Mr Singh and the Fiji Labour Party were ordered to pay the sum of \$3,000.00 to the Supervisor of Elections and Attorney General of Fiji and Minister of Elections.

## **Electoral Complaints before Election Day**

### **Complaints to the FEO**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Details of Complainant</b>	<b>Nature of Complaint</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
1	31 August 2014	Fiji Labour Party	Concerns regarding printing of ballot papers, clarification on storage of extra ballot papers and security on transport of pre-poll ballot boxes	Provided written response on 5 September 2014 informing FLP that polling agents were invited to observe the printing and binding of ballot papers but FLP did not send their polling agent. Further clarified there were no extra ballot papers stored in Williams and Goslings and Fiji Police Force providing security services
2	1 September 2014	Provisional Office in Ba	Requesting that pre-poll schedules for Yasawa be held at the FEO Lautoka instead of Yasawa	Provided written response on 10 September 2014 informing complainant that FEO cannot change the pre-poll venue from Yasawa to FEO Lautoka Office as pursuant to Section 82(3) of the Electoral Decree, 2014 the schedules for pre-poll have been published in the gazette and newspaper on 24 August 2014
3	2 September 2014	Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA)	Complaint on why they should not provide transport to voters on polling day	Provided a written response on 10 September 2014 informing SODELPA that their complaint will be dealt with by the EC

4	8 September 2014	Social Democratic Liberal Party(SODELPA)	Complaint received from SODELPA on why they are not allowed to observe pre-polling at the Naval Base, Suva Corrections Centre, Nasinu Corrections Centre, Suva Women Corrections Centre and Army Base	Provided a response on 10 September 2014 to SODELPA clarifying that polling agents for SODELPA are allowed to observe at the pre-polling venues
5	8 September 2014	Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA)	Complaint on change of pre-poll date for polling station 42501 at Natadra District School in the Northern Division	Provided response on 10 September 2014 advising that the pre-poll date of 8 September 2014 was postponed to 11 September 2014 as the Chief of Natadra had visited FEO Northern Office requesting for postponement due to villagers still in Labasa attending to sugarcane cutting and some villagers in Suva attending to personal commitments
6	12 September 2014	Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA)	Complaint on conduct of pre-polling and postal voting process stating poor voter turnout and lack of ballot papers	This was clarified through update press conference informing the public on the total number of pre-poll voters that turned out. On postal voting process registered political parties and the 2 independent candidates were advised to send their polling agents on the date of verification
7	15 September 2014	Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA)	Complaint on unrealistic date for closure of postal ballot papers which was at 6:00pm on 17 September 2014	Provided a response on 15 September 2014 informing SODELPA that the requirement is as per the Electoral Decree 2014

## Complaints to the EC

No.	Date Received	Details of Complainant	Nature of Complaint	Outcome
1	24 February 2014	NFP	Regressive & Draconian Decrees	Addressed at meeting with political parties on the 26 March 2014
2	2 April 2014	SODELPA	Media Freedom and certain aspects of the Electoral Decree	Addressed at meeting with political parties on 20 May 2014
3	8 April 2014	NFP	Concerns about ballot paper for the Election of members of Parliament	Addressed at meeting with political parties on 20 May 2014
4	16 May 2014	SODELPA	Concerns about the Electoral Decree and its implementation	Addressed at meeting with political parties on 20 May 2014
5	5 May received on 20 May 2014	SODELPA	Uncertainty of certain parts of the Electoral Decree	Addressed at the meeting of 20 May 2014
6	20 May 2014	FLP	Concerns with certain provisions of Electoral Decree and voting procedures	By letter dated 18 June 2014 and addressed at the meeting of 25 June 2014
7	3 July 2014	FLP	Pre-polling arrangements/ hire of private security firm for electoral duties/ security of ballot boxes/ ballot papers etc.	Responded by a letter dated 22 July and addressed at the meeting of 30 July 2014
8	15 July 2014	FLP	National Register of Voters (NRV) Amendments made to the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Decree 2012 vide Decree 9 of 2014 gazetted on 28 March 2014	Addressed at the meeting with political parties of 30 July 2014
9	23 July 2014	SODELPA	Concerns on issues relating to the September General Election.	Addressed at the meeting with political parties of 30 July 2014
10	23 July 2014	FLP	Concerns relating to September General Election	Addressed at the meeting with political parties of 30 July 2014

11	6 August 2014	Legend FM News	Concern about statement made by Mr. L Qarase during campaign	Investigated and decided no action necessary by EC
12	8 August 2014	Proposed Activist People's Party	Appeal against SoE's decision over the Proposed Activist People's Party	Responded by a letter dated 11 August and a follow-up email sent on 11 August 2014
13	26 August 2014	NFP	Clarification sought on Pre-polling process.	Noted and referred to FEO
14	29 August 2014	NFP	Pre-polling media black-out and specimen ballot paper	Dealt with by a reply on 1 September 2014
15	5 September 2014	NFP	Complaint against FijiFirst for defamatory campaign	Referred complaint to the FijiFirst and receiving their response and forwarding it to NFP
16	15 September 2014	NFP	Breach of Section 63 of the Electoral Decree by various political parties	Wrote to various parties and forwarding the replies to the NFP

## Postal Voting

Postal Voting provided an opportunity to voters who were overseas and those who could not attend a polling station on Election Day to cast their vote. Details of the process followed and the contents of the Postal Voting packs are contained in the 22 October 2014 General Election Final Report of the SoE.

Of the 12,190 postal votes sent out, only 7,948 were received. The EC was disappointed with this outcome and is reviewing the postal vote process with the view to improving it before the next general election.

## Pre-polling

There were 549 pre-polling stations identified in accordance with section 82 of the Electoral Decree. This list was submitted to the EC and following the EC's approval, it was published in the newspapers and also gazetted.

Pre-polling commenced on 3 September. The EC visited pre-poll stations in all four Divisions, making a point of travelling to very remote pre-polling stations like Roma in the interior of Naitasiri on the border with Ra, the highlands of Ba and Ra, in Vanua Levu (Kubulau and Dogotuki), and in the Lau Group (Lakeba, Moce, Oneata, Cicia and Nayau). It found that voters, even in these remote areas, were enthusiastic about voting and on the whole had a good understanding of the new system.

However, the EC observed that some voters expressed surprise at pre-poll voting as they were under the assumption that they had to vote on 17 September. In addition, some potential voters did not vote because their names were not in the Voter List even though they had apparently registered in that particular area. The EC noted the presence of political party agents in various pre-poll stations.

### **Polling and Counting**

On 16 September the EC was informed by the Supervisor of Elections that some 300 polling day workers had withdrawn. He attributed their withdrawal to personal fear for their own safety. Fortunately the FEO was able to find replacements. Some logistical hiccups were encountered with signing of contracts and payments of salaries for Polling Day Workers and these are being addressed by the FEO.

On 17 September 2014 the members of the EC went individually to observe at various polling stations throughout Fiji, except for the Eastern division which had been largely covered by pre-poll.

It was observed that many voters took the opportunity to vote early. Some voters found themselves in the wrong queues at the polling venues, possibly due to defective signage. Furthermore some voters arrived at polling stations with voter identification cards but discovered their names were not on the Voter List in that particular station even though they were apparently assigned to that particular polling station.

The EC observed polling from its beginning at 7:30am until its completion. It also observed the count, which went on in some stations to as late as 11pm. Some of the Commissioners also observed the posting of the protocol of results at the polling stations.

There was a very high voter turnout. A total of 84.6% of Fiji's 591,101 registered voters voted in the Election.

### **Complaints after Election Day**

The EC received letters from certain political parties on 19 and 20 September 2014 which alleged corrupt and fraudulent practices. The EC carried out its own investigation and responded to the parties on 21 September. In its response, the EC invited the complainants to let the Commissioners sight the original ballot paper which formed the basis of one of their complaints. To date no formal response has been received by the EC nor ballot paper produced to the EC for inspection.

Another complaint was received that some ballot boxes contained other materials besides ballot papers. The SoE quarantined some hundred plus ballot boxes in the presence of party representatives and police. These ballot boxes were opened to reveal items like polling officer voting manuals, ballot paper books, record books and envelopes which were apparently mistakenly placed in it. These items were removed and the ballot boxes re-sealed with new seals.

During the days preceding the announcement of results, the EC was visited by a candidate who made a verbal complaint that a vote for herself and that of another were not recorded in the protocol of results. However, this complaint was not pursued after it was pointed out to her that she had erroneously examined a protocol of results for a polling station that she had not voted in, and that when the protocol of results for the polling station she had voted in was identified, the two votes she had queried was seen to be recorded there.

### **National Results Tally, Declaration of Results and Allocation of Seats**

From the night of 17 September, the FEO employed staff to count all votes including pre-poll and postal votes. The EC observed this process.

As the count progressed, the provisional results were progressively made available on the electronic results screen. However, the posting of the provisional results was terminated and the Final National Results Tally began, based on the original protocols of results from each polling station.

On Monday morning 22 September 2014, the EC received the Final National Results Tally from the SoE in accordance with Section 103 of the Electoral Decree. It proceeded to allocate the seats of Parliament in accordance with the Electoral Decree, and by 11am was able to announce the names of the 50 candidates elected to Parliament.

Below is the table of the results by party:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>No. of Seats in Parliament</b>
FijiFirst	293714	32
SODELPA	139857	15
National Federation Party	27066	3
People's Democratic Party	15864	0
Fiji Labour Party	11670	0
One Fiji Party	5839	0
Fiji United Freedom Party	1072	0

Independent - Roshika Deo	1055	0
Independent – Umesh Chand	226	0

### **Return of Writ**

The Writ for the 2014 General Election was returned by the Chairperson, Mr Chen B. Young, to the President of Fiji, H.E. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, at 12 noon on 22 September 2014.

### **Post –Election Resignation**

On 23 September 2014 the EC received a letter from Dr. Jiko Luveni stating her resignation as the President and member of FijiFirst. The EC also received a letter from FijiFirst confirming having received the resignation letter, asking the EC to exercise its powers under Section 64 (1) of the Constitution.

Pursuant to letters received from Dr. Jiko Luveni, Mr. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum in his capacity as the General-Secretary of FijiFirst and the Prime Minister regarding the vacating of Dr. Luveni’s seat in Parliament, the EC then awarded her seat to Laisenia Tuitubou in accordance to Section 64 (1) of the Constitution.

### **Conclusion**

The 2014 General Election was a significant milestone in Fiji’s electoral history. It used for the first time the open list system of proportional representation. The unprecedented voter turnout is indicative of the ground work conducted by the Fijian Electoral Commission and the Fijian Elections Office in preparing the country for election after a lapse of eight years. The extremely low rate of 0.75% invalid votes too was an encouraging result for a nation using a new electoral system

The assistance from both the international community and the cooperation from the people of Fiji enabled a successful Election.

The 2014 General Election is a testament to the collective will of the people to return the country to democracy.