

ANNUAL REPORT

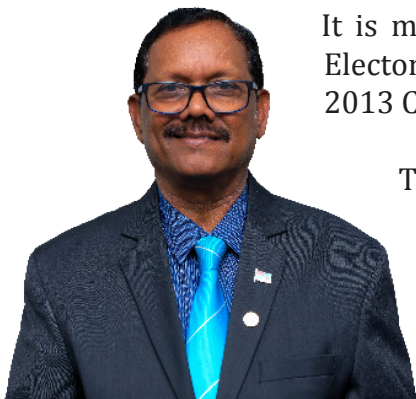
2021

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI



FOREWORD BY FORMER CHAIRPERSON



Suresh Chandra

It is my great privilege to deliver the 2021 Annual Report of the Electoral Commission [“**EC**”] in accordance with Section 75 (4) of the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji [“**Constitution**”].

The year 2021 was a year of real progress for the EC towards creating more transparency and voter ownership in the system of the Fijian Elections.

Despite being faced with challenges due to COVID-19, we have managed to successfully complete major activities planned out for the year.

Key highlights for the year included the appointment of a Member of Parliament, the seat that was left vacant by their predecessor (details of this is listed in the report) as well as the successful hosting of the ball draw for the first three (3) digits of the Ballot Paper for the 2022 General Election.

One of the most important highlights of this year was the increase in the number of parliamentary seats by the EC from 51 to 55.

In October, the EC extended its Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand Electoral Commission [“**NZEC**”], to further strengthen its partnership and collaboration towards the enhancement of elections. The EC also received 2,000 boxes of Cardboard Voting Booths from NZEC for use in the 2022 General Election.

The EC intends to build on from the last General Election and remains committed to ensuring that the 2022 General Election is a platform for Fijians to express their will with confidence, security and freedom.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my EC members, the Supervisor of Elections [“**SoE**”] who is also the Secretary to the EC and the Fijian Elections Office [“**FEO**”] staff for the tremendous work put in throughout this year. As we are approaching the 2022 General Election, the EC will be working closely with its stakeholders for the successful delivery of a credible, free and fair 2022 General Election.

While I have opted to step down as Chairperson of the EC on 20 November 2021, my personal support will always be there for the EC and the SoE.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suresh Chandra'.

Suresh Chandra
Former Chairperson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. As per Section 75 (4) of the Constitution, the EC is required to submit its Annual Report to the President of the Republic of Fiji and the Secretary General to Parliament.
- ii. The Annual Report is for the Calendar Year, January 2021 - December 2021.
- iii. Key activities of the EC for 2021 included the following:
 - a. EC meetings which were inclusive of Face-to-Face, Virtual and Electronic Medium.
 - b. Meeting with Political Parties.
 - c. Parliamentary Seat Review.
 - d. Publishing of Provisional Polling Venue List.
 - e. Ball Draw for First three (3) digits of Ballot Paper.
 - f. Filling of vacant seats.
 - g. EC Workshop between Australian Electoral Commission [**"AEC"**], NZEC and Fiji EC.
- iv. The EC was sufficiently funded to ensure it was able to meet its responsibilities as per the legal framework.

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INTRODUCTION

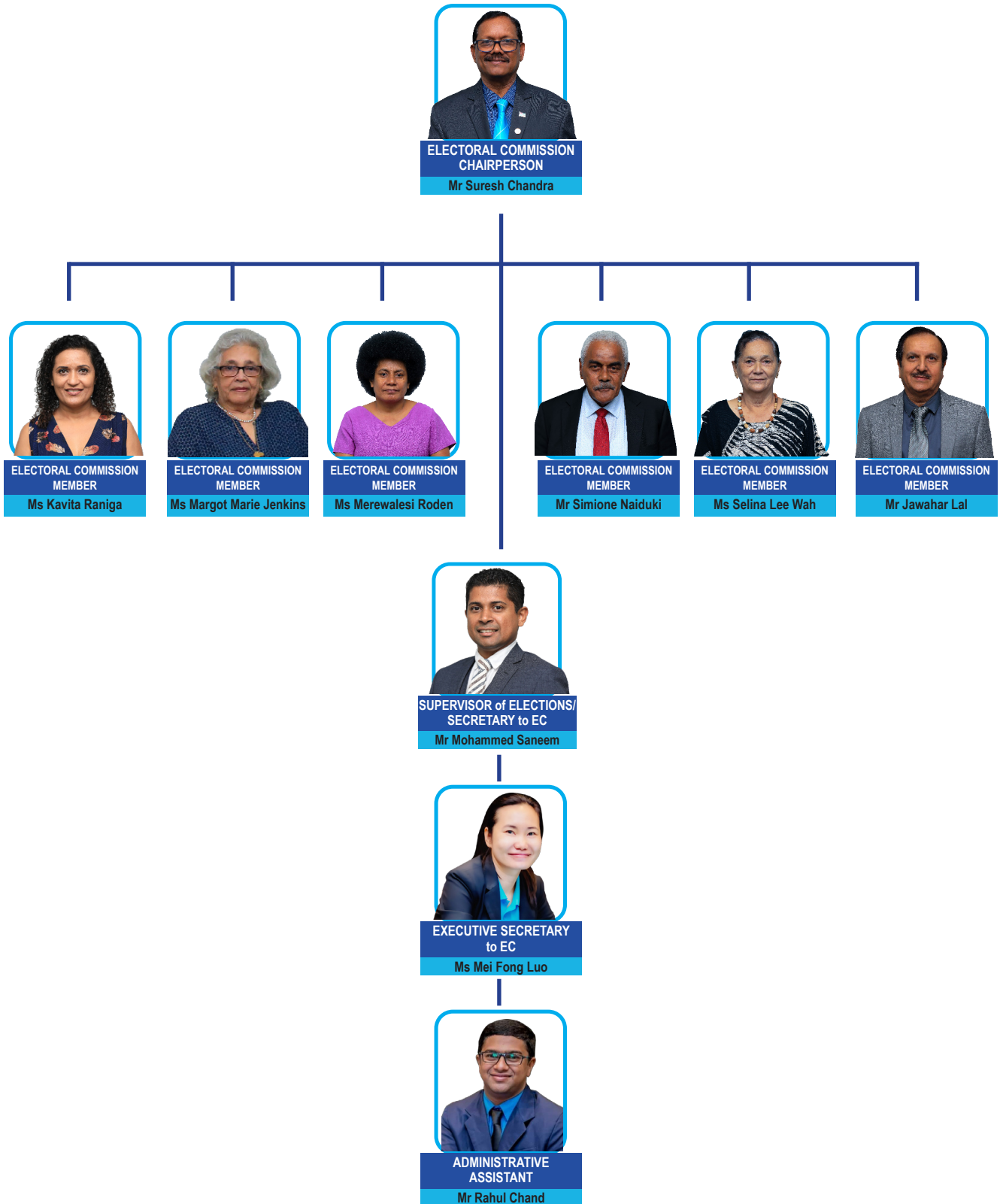
Pursuant to section 75(4) of the Constitution, the EC must deliver its Annual Report to his Excellency the President, Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere [CF, MSD] and the Secretary-General to Parliament.

Since the year 2021 saw the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the planned activities of the EC had to be reconsidered and revised. The direct Face-to-Face meetings of the EC had to be cancelled and meetings took place through electronic medium only.

Despite the disruptions brought about by the pandemic, the EC was able to successfully execute its Constitutional responsibilities and also continue its monitoring of election preparation activities of the FEO.

Copies of this report will also be delivered to the Minister Responsible for Elections and the SoE respectively.

REPORTING STRUCTURE



INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

EC Operations Budget 2021-2022

| Description | Approved Budget |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| EC Allowance | 35,000.00 |
| Legal Fees | 10,000.00 |
| Publication | 2,500.00 |
| FNPF Contribution | 17,370.00 |
| Salaries | 62,000.00 |
| FNU Levy | 620.00 |
| Freight | 100.00 |
| Printing - Stationery | 1,500.00 |
| Hire of Venue | 3,000.00 |
| Purchase of Office Supplies | 1,500.00 |
| Accommodation - Local | 5,000.00 |
| Travelling Meals | 1,500.00 |
| Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance | 2,000.00 |
| Vehicle Fuel | 2,000.00 |
| Vehicle Registration / Road Tax | 500.00 |
| Travelling - Airfare & Boat fare | 3,000.00 |
| VAT Input | 2,934.00 |
| Operating Budget - Total | 150,524.00 |

The actual break down of the EC Budget and Expenditure Report from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021 is reflected on “**Appendix 1**” of this Report.

EC ALLOWANCE

The Chairperson and EC members are employed on a part time basis. They are required to meet (either Face-to-Face, virtual or via electronic mediums) to discuss issues pertaining to their responsibilities as set out in Section 75 of the Constitution.

They are allowed a sitting allowance of \$500FJD per day when a meeting is held. This is inclusive of meetings with Fiji's political parties, NGO's, Civil Society Organisations, Media, Fiji Police Force and other important stakeholders. The Commissioners are also entitled to meal allowance of \$50 per day which is not paid directly to them. Rather, it was agreed that the EC Secretariat will arrange for their meals accordingly and within the allocated budget.

SECRETARIAT

The EC secretariat is currently staffed with two (2) individuals (the Executive Secretary and Administrative Assistant). They both work alongside the Secretary to the EC.

The EC Secretariat mainly arranges the meetings and looks after the administration works of the EC. These include facilitating all the administrative activities for the EC members such as printing and delivering of meeting documents, arrangement of transportation, sitting allowance, advertising of Expression of Interest for the audit of National Register of Voters, roles and responsibilities and so forth.

Furthermore, the Secretariat also facilitated the appointment of a new Member of Parliament by the EC and provided overall support for the administration of the EC's calendar of events for 2021.

In addition, the EC secretariat collaborated with the NZEC and AEC in organizing the EC's Workshop in November 2021.

EC MEETINGS IN 2021

The EC held a number of meetings in 2021. They were:

- a. Filling of vacant seat in Parliament - Honorable Sachida Nand was awarded the vacant seat in Parliament after Honorable Mereseini Vuniwaqa's resignation;
- b. Meeting on increase in number of voters per polling station from 500 to 650;
- c. Meeting with political parties;
- d. Establishing a governance, operational and procedural framework in accordance with its roles and responsibilities under the Constitution and Electoral Act 2014;
- e. Presenting the submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights on the MOG Report 2018;
- f. Parliamentary Seat Review;
- g. Publishing of Provisional Polling Venue List;
- h. Ball Draw for the First Three (3) Digits of the Ballot Paper for the 2022 General Election. The first three (3) digits are 173;
- i. Endorsement of SoE's proposed amendment to Section 4 of the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012; and
- j. Approved the Format, Publication and Verification of the Provisional Voter List for the 2022 General Election.

Other Meetings:

- i. Meeting with UNDP on De-briefing session for Fiji Elections 2022/2023; and
- ii. Chairperson meeting with the India High Commissioner, Mr. Shri P.S. Karthigeyan.

The snippets of the EC meetings is reflected on "**Appendix 2**" of this Report.

ACTIVITIES

| DATE | ACTIVITIES |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 18 /02/2021 | Consultations with political parties regarding the development of Audit Guidelines for political parties. |
| 01/03/2021 | Submissions made on the Electoral Amendment Bills 2020 to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights. |
| 20/09/2021 | Briefing with the International Stakeholders Community on preparations towards the 2022 Fiji General Election. |
| 28/09/2021 | Approved the amendments to various forms. |
| 21/10/2021 | Signing of the MOU between NZEC and FEO and Handing over of Cardboard Voting Booths. |
| 02/11/2021 | Advertised the Expression of Interest for Audit of National Register of Voters as per MOG recommendations in 2018. |
| 10/11/2021 | The Chairperson attended the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Day Celebrations at Holiday Inn, Suva. |
| 11/11/2021 | The Chairperson attended The Farewell Ceremony for the President of the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency Major-General (Ret'd) Jioji Konusi Konrote at the State House, Suva. |
| 12/11/2021 | The Chairperson attended the Inauguration of the President of the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu William Maivalili Katonivere [CF, MSD] at the State House, Suva. |
| 20/11/2021 | The Chairperson attended as Chief Guest at the EDAWG Terms of Reference (TOR) Signing Ceremony at GPH, Suva. |
| 23/11/2021 to 25/11/2021 | All EC members attended the Workshop in collaboration with AEC and NZEC. The Workshop was for three (3) days. |

KEY ACTIVITIES

1. BALL DRAW FOR FIRST THREE (3) DIGIT FOR THE 2022 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT PAPER

The EC conducted a ball draw to determine the first three (3) digit number that will appear on the ballot paper for the next General Election. The number draw is pursuant to Section 36(2) (c) of the Electoral Act 2014. The Act outlines that the EC is required to approve the first three (3) digit number of the Ballot paper for the 2022 General Election.

The event was attended by members of the political parties including the Party Leader for Social Democratic Liberal Party as well as the Acting President of the Fiji Labour Party with other stakeholders tuning in to the live event. The event was also witnessed by a Police Officer from the Fiji Police Force.

The EC had approved that the ballot paper for the next election will start with the series 100, so the first number in the three (3) digit number would be one (1) followed by two (2) digits that were drawn randomly from the barrel by the Chairperson.

The EC members all attended the draw virtually and witnessed the event. They authorized that at the end of the draw the Chairperson would announce the three (3) digits as approved by the EC for the next General Election.

As announced by the Chairperson of the EC, the first three (3) digit number to appear on the ballot paper for the 2022 General Election will be **173**. Lastly, after the draw, a sample of the ballot paper with about 200 candidates for the next General Election was shown to political parties representatives that had attended either in person or on the live platforms.

2. NUMBER OF SEATS IN PARLIAMENT INCREASED FROM 51 TO 55

The EC reviewed the composition of members of Parliament of the Republic of Fiji pursuant to Section 54 of the Constitution in June this year. This important exercise is required to be conducted at least one (1) year before the General Election can be held.

Upon review of the composition of members of Parliament and having considered the population of the Republic of Fiji and the National Register Voters, the EC has determined that the composition of members of Parliament, for the purpose of conducting the next General Election, be altered by increasing the number of seats in Parliament from **51** to **55**.

In announcing the decision, Chairperson, Mr. Suresh Chandra explained that the EC is required under the Constitution to determine the number of seats in a General Election at least one (1) year before the General Election can be held. Mr. Chandra further explained that following this decision, the maximum number of seats that will be contested in the next General Election will be **55**.

3. EDAWG TERMS OF REFERENCE SIGNING FOR THE 2022 GENERAL ELECTION

The signing of the Terms of Reference [“**ToR**”] of the Elections Disability Access Working Group [“**EDAWG**”] between the FEO, the Pacific Disability Forum, and the National Council of Persons with Disabilities [“**NCPD**”] was held on 20 November 2021, at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva.

The EC sees the ToR as an opportunity to create more engagement between the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities [“**OPDs**”] and the FEO in promoting accessibility and inclusivity of the electoral processes with persons with disabilities. This will ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate and vote in the 2022 General Election.

It is the view of the EC that a person with disability should be able to work in elections, participate in the polling processes, contest the elections and participate in observation of the elections.

In 2018 the EC had approved the proposal by the SoE to allow an amendment to the voting procedure to allow persons with disabilities to be assisted by a person of their own choice inside the polling station due to the country rectifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This voting procedure was well received by political parties and persons with disabilities.

The EC Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra was invited as the Chief Guest to officiate the signing. With the signing of the ToR, the FEO renewed its commitment to building inclusive and accessible election processes in Fiji to ensure persons with disabilities were able to exercise their right to vote in the coming 2022 General Election.

Mr. Suresh Chandra said he looked forward to seeing the outcomes of the ToR in the next General Election and on behalf of the EC, he wished all the OPDs and the FEO the very best of success in implementing the ToR.

Attendees to the event included various OPDs, Non-Profit Organisations, Diplomatic Corps, FEO staff, the media and invited guests. The public was also able to watch the event live through social media platforms.

4. APPROVAL ON LIST OF PROVISIONAL POLLING VENUE LIST AS PER SECTION 41 (7) (8) OF THE ELECTORAL ACT 2014

The EC invited the views and comments for each of the venues from members of the public and the political parties so that EC can appropriately determine and approve the venues for the next General Election.

The EC noted from the FEO that all the polling venues provided in the list were the same as the ones used in the 2018 General Election, except for the addition of one (1) extra polling venue, being a new polling venue at Marou village, Naviti, Yasawa.

The EC has approved the publication of the Provisional Polling Venue List in accordance with Section 41 (7) (8) of the Electoral Act 2014.

5. DECISION TO INCREASE NUMBER OF VOTERS TO 650 FOR EACH POLLING STATION

The EC in its meeting on 18 February has approved the increase in the number of voters per polling station from **500** to **650** in accordance with section 39 (2) of the Electoral Act 2014. In approving the recommendation of the FEO, the EC noted that the FEO had carried out a consultation with political parties as well as provided substantive information in relation to the conduct of polling at polling stations.

The EC Chairperson stated that in Fiji each polling venue could have several polling stations. Hence, EC has increased the number of voters who will vote at a polling station.

This does not change a person's polling venue. If someone had voted at a particular school in the last General Election and if that school is still functional and the buildings are intact, they will be voting at the very same school. The only change would be the reduction of polling station by one (1) due to increased number of voters inside the polling station from 500 to 650.

The EC also finds that the recommendation to increase the number of voters by 30% is reasonable and will not largely impact the time taken to conduct the count nor affect the normal operations of voting on Election Day.

6. EC COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

The EC Communications Workshop was a three (3) days event in collaboration with the AEC and the NZEC. The workshop was held at the Marriott Resort, Nadi between 23 November 2021 to 25 November 2021. Both Australia and New Zealand counterparts had attended the workshop virtually.

The workshop featured presentations from both the AEC and NZEC followed by discussions on a variety of topics with the participants. The EC members in attendance were Mr. Lal, Ms. Raniga, Mr. Naiduki, Ms. Jenkins and Ms. Lee Wah.

The presentations were led by AEC Chairperson Hon. Justice Susan Kenny, Mr. Tom Rogers the AEC Commissioner, the NZEC Chair Ms. Marie Shroff and NZEC Chief Electoral Officer Ms. Alicia Wright. The speakers presented on the role of their respective commissions, best election practices in the delivery of elections and maintaining independence and impartiality as election management bodies.

Communications was a key focus of the workshop and the discussions were enhanced with presentations on proactive communications, messaging and addressing misinformation. AEC and NZEC representatives Mr. Jeff Pope and Mr. Mark Lawson specifically presented on the risks of misinformation and cyber security which was followed by discussions with the EC members on managing the risks of misinformation and engineered disinformation in the lead up to the 2022 General Election.

Furthermore, the SoE took the EC through a detailed presentation on the plans for the Know Your Election campaign ["**KYE**"] while FEO Manager Public Relations Ms. Neelam Prasad spoke on the FEO's Communications Strategy for the 2022 General Election. The EC endorsed the establishment of the Centre for Credible Election Information. The Centre serves as an online hub for all election related

information in Fiji and would be a tool to counter misinformation, fake news and disinformation in elections.

On the last day of the workshop, the SoE facilitated discussions on the EC's Monitoring Plan. After his session, Mr. Andrew Johnson, AEC Chief Legal Officer and Sir Hugh Williams QC, Chief Justice of the Cook Islands and former Chair of the NZEC presented on dispute resolution.

The three (3) days' workshop provided a platform to enrich the knowledge for all the participants. There is a mutual understanding and appreciation on the similarities and differences in the mandates as well as the roles and responsibilities of the EC, NZEC and AEC. The presentations on communication were informative and practical to tackle communication misinformation. The EC also learned about dispute resolution in other pacific countries. The workshop ended on a good note with valuable input from all the Commissions that the knowledge gained would help provide a better service to the people we serve. The EC also approved the KYE Communication Strategic Plan and Communications Strategy for the 2022 General Election. The EC was pleased and commended the hardworking staff members of the FEO.

7. Reports pursuant to section 75(5) of the Constitution - 2021 Annual Report of the FEO

The EC has annexed the 2021 FEO Annual Report to this Parliamentary Report.

The FEO has been providing the EC with its ongoing reports on the election operations at the EC meetings and the FEO Annual Report is designed to report on the ongoing progress of the operational activities in preparation for the 2022 General Election.

The presentation of the FEO Annual Report also commensurate with the EC activities to enhance the transparency in election operations and conduct free and fair elections for the country.

The EC noted the ongoing preparations by the FEO for the 2022 General Election and is satisfied that the progress is on par with its expectations. The EC also noted various innovative activities undertaken by the FEO to continue the capacity building for its staff. The EC notes that the FEO continued providing voter services to Fijians despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

The 2021 FEO Annual Report is reflected on "**Appendix 4**" of this Report.

DECISIONS

The EC made 10 Decisions during their meetings from February 2021 to December 2021 and these are as follows:

1. Increase in number of voters per polling station - Decision No. 01/2021 - Meeting No. 03/2021.
2. Publication of the Provisional Polling Venue List, Schedule of Fees and List of Forms - Decision No. 02 & 4/2021 - Virtual Meeting No. 01/2021.
3. Composition of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Fiji - Decision No. 03/2021 - Virtual Meeting No. 01/2021.
4. Approval for the first number on the ballot paper - Decision No. 05/2021 - Virtual Meeting No. 02/2021.
5. Award of Seat in Parliament - Decision No. 07/2021 - Meeting No. 09/2021.
6. Approved the publication and the details of the Provisional Voter List for each polling station. Also approved the Provisional Voter List for Polling Stations to be given in Electronic copies for free, to every registered Political Party in Fiji for the first issue Decision No. 08/2021- Virtual Meeting No. 03/2021.
7. The EC had approved the forms- Decision No. 09/2021 - Electronic Medium Meeting No. 03/2021.
8. The EC had approved fees and KYE materials - Decision No. 06 & 10/2021 - Virtual Meeting No. 04/2021.

The EC meetings were held inclusive of Face-to-Face, virtually through ZOOM and Google Meet as well as meetings via electronic mediums. This was due to the COVID-19 breakout from mid-April 2021 as the country went on lock down till late August 2021.

The actual EC Decisions are reflected on “**Appendix 3**” of this Report.

CONCLUSION

Since 2021 falls in the pre-electoral cycle, it was mostly regarded as time to consolidate key election data and thoroughly prepare for the upcoming 2022 General Election.

Ideally 2021 has been a year for vigorous activities despite the impact of COVID-19. Despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the EC continued to have meetings virtually and made 10 decisions this year. Not only that, the EC continued to have other activities such as filling in the vacant parliament seat, ball draw for the first three (3) numbers in the ballot paper, increase in number of voters per polling station from 500 to 650 and conducting the parliamentary seat review.

With the 2022 General Election drawing closer, the EC members attended the EC Communication Workshop for capacity building which was in collaboration with AEC and NZEC. The workshop provided a great platform for discussions with two (2) other Election Management Bodies as we head into another General Election. The New Zealand Government also handed over the Cardboard Voting Booths and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between FEO and NZEC.

In addition, the signing of the ToR of the EDAWG between the FEO, the Pacific Disability Forum, and the NCPD took place in November. The EC Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra was invited as the Chief Guest to officiate the signing. The importance of the event was that FEO had renewed its commitment to building inclusive and accessible election processes in Fiji to ensure persons with disabilities are able to exercise their right to vote in the 2022 General Election.

Lastly, despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the EC will continue to work with relevant stakeholders in their preparation for the 2022 General Election. Furthermore, the EC intends to build on from the last General Election and hopes that the 2022 General Election will see the standards of election delivery being further enhanced.



APPENDIX 1

Electoral Commission Budget and Expenditure Report From January 2021 to 31 December 2021

| | Total Budget January 2021-December 2021 | Expenditure January 2021-December 2021 |
|--|--|---|
| Information Technology Expenses | | |
| Computer Consumables | 291.67 | 252.29 |
| Software Lic & Maint Contract | 4,325.00 | 3,356.88 |
| Information Technology Expenses - Total | 4,616.67 | 3,609.17 |
| Electoral Commission Allowance | | |
| Electoral Commission Allowance | 33,541.67 | 51,840.00 |
| Electoral Commission Allowance - Total | 33,541.67 | 51,840.00 |
| Management Expenses | | |
| Management cost | - | 44.92 |
| Staff welfare expenses | - | - |
| Management Expense - Total | | 44.92 |
| Legal Fees | | |
| Legal fees - | 7,083.33 | - |
| Legal Fees - Total | 7,083.33 | - |
| Election Awareness Costs | | |
| Publication | 2,419.69 | 3,733.10 |
| Advertising Expense | 1,458.33 | - |
| Marketing Costs | 3,878.02 | 3,733.10 |
| Personnel Emoluments Expense | | |
| FNPF Contribution | 7,733.33 | 2,938.42 |
| Salaries | 35,749.01 | 45,446.00 |
| FNU Levy | 358.49 | 436.98 |
| OHS Expense | - | 50.00 |
| Personnel Emoluments Expense - Total | 43,840.83 | 48,871.40 |
| Postage and Courier Expense | | |
| Postage | - | - |
| Freight | 111.67 | 45.42 |
| Postage and Courier Expense | 111.67 | 45.42 |

| | Total Budget January 2021-December 2021 | Expenditure January 2021-December 2021 |
|--|--|---|
| Office Administration Expense | | |
| Rent - Premises | 291.67 | - |
| Electricity | 1,458.33 | - |
| Stationery Expenses | 1,007.58 | 514.00 |
| Sundry Expenses | 175.00 | 71.00 |
| Printing - Stationery | 2,666.67 | 4,137.02 |
| Repair & Maint - F/Fittings | 2,916.67 | - |
| Hire of Venue | 4,788.65 | 2,201.83 |
| Purchase of office supplies | 2,812.50 | 509.40 |
| Catering | - | - |
| ED Access Working Group | 29.17 | 30.00 |
| Office Administration Expense | 16,146.23 | 7,463.25 |
| Telecommunication Expenses | | |
| Telecom - Telephone | 1,458.33 | - |
| Telecommunication Exp - Total | 1,458.33 | - |
| Travelling and Accommodation Expense | | |
| Accommodation - Local | 8,233.33 | 5,299.09 |
| Travelling Meals | 1,791.67 | 276.65 |
| Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance | 2,583.33 | 389.43 |
| Vehicle Fuel | 3,166.67 | 644.18 |
| Vehicle Registration/Road Tax | 208.33 | - |
| Travelling - Bus & Taxi Fare | - | 139.80 |
| Travelling - Air fare & Boat fare | 9,154.17 | 3,140.64 |
| Travel and Accommodation Expense | 25,137.50 | 9,889.79 |
| Bank Fees & Charges | - | 74.80 |
| Financial Expense - Total | - | 74.80 |
| EC and Office Meeting Expense | | |
| Meetings | 4,666.67 | 1,813.46 |
| EC and Office Meeting Expense - Total | 4,666.67 | 1,813.46 |
| Operating Expense VEP | 140,480.92 | 127,385.31 |
| Tax Expenses | 5,678.86 | 2,284.10 |
| Operating Expense | 146,159.77 | 129,669.41 |



APPENDIX 2



The Electoral Commission (EC) members with the Former EC Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra (Third from the left).

PHOTO GALLERY



Electoral Commission (EC) members having face to face meeting.



Electoral Commission meeting with Political Parties



Group photo of the Electoral Commission and Supervisor of Elections. Front row from left, Commissioner Margot Jenkins, Commissioner Kavita Raniga, Commissioner Selina Leewah, Back row from right, Commissioner Simione Naiduki, Commissioner Jay Lal and the Supervisor of Elections Mr. Mohammed Saneem.



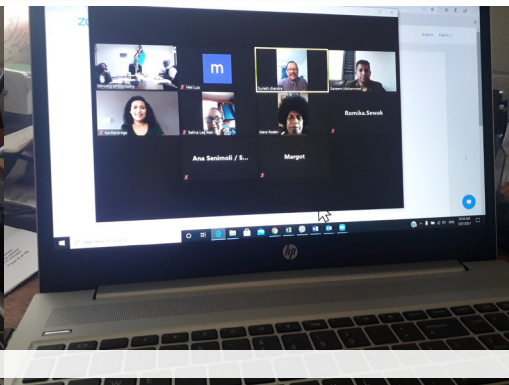
Electoral Commission meeting with Political Parties.



Group photo of Electoral Commission (EC) with the Secretariat staff.



EC Virtual Meetings during COVID 19 pandemic lock down.





Group photo of the EDAWG Terms of Reference Signing Ceremony between the Fijian Elections Office (FEO) and various representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs); Former EC Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra (middle front row) as Chief Guest.



High Commissioner H.E.P.S. Karthigeyan (right) with Mr. Saifullah Khan, Head of Chancery (left) paid a courtesy visit to the Former Electoral Commission Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra (center)

Former EC Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra was briefing the International partners and agencies and High Commission's based overseas on the preparations and plans for the 2022 General Election.



Former EC Chair Mr. Suresh Chandra approved the first three (3) digit number on the Ballot Paper for the next General Election.

Mr Suresh Chandra and His Excellency, Mr Jonathan Curr, High Commissioner for New Zealand during the handover ceremony of Cardboard Voting Booths.

The Electoral Commission Workshop.



Secretary to EC/Supervisor of Elections (SoE) Mr. Mohammed Saneem (first right front) made a Vote of Thanks to Australia Electoral Commission (AEC) and New Zealand Electoral Commission (NZEC) (on screen) during the EC Workshop.

Former Electoral Commission Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra (middle) as Chief Guest for the Elections Disability Access Working Group (EDAWG) Terms of Reference Signing Ceremony between the Fijian Elections Office (FEO) and various representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). EDAWG Chairperson Anaseini Senimoli (right) and Executive Director of National Council of Persons with Disability (NCPD) Mr. Lemaki Cagialau.



APPENDIX 3

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Fax: +679 331 9513 Website: www.feo.org.fj

Ref: Meeting Number 03/2021

Decision Number: 01/2021

DECISION OF ELECTORAL COMMISSION – INCREASE IN NUMBER OF VOTERS PER POLLING STATION

The Electoral Commission, having held a meeting on 18 February 2021 have resolved as follows:

1. Following the receipt of the recommendation from the Fijian Elections Office [FEO] and on considering the responses received by the FEO from Political Parties, the Electoral Commission has accepted the following:
 - 1.1. That there has been an increase of over 50,000 voters in the National Register of Voters since 2014, when it was last decided to allow a maximum of 500 voters per Polling Station in a Polling Venue,
 - 1.2. Voters have between 7:30am to 6pm to attend to their polling venue and cast their votes,
 - 1.3. All Polling Stations at the Polling Venue are on the ground level and the FEO makes arrangements for accessibility (where lacking) via temporary ramps,
 - 1.4. Most voters in the 2014 and 2018 General Elections had voted before midday and in some instances, there was considerable time between when the last voter turned up to when counting began at 6pm,
 - 1.5. Some Polling Venues, particularly in the urban centres, may not accommodate additional Polling Stations in the near future if the maximum number of voters remain at 500 per polling station.
 - 1.6. The recommendation to increase the number of voters at a Polling Station by 30 % (150) is a reasonable one. The FEO states that in doing so, the total number of voters at a Polling Station will increase to 650.
 - 1.7. In accordance with s 39(2) of the Electoral Act, the Electoral Commission approves that total number of voters that can be assigned to a Polling Station is increased from 500 to 650.

Dated this 19th day of February 2021



SURESH CHANDRA

Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Fax: +679 331 9513 Website: www.feo.org.fj

Ref: Meeting Number 07/2021

Virtual Meeting Number 01/21

Decision Number 03/2021

CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

COMPOSITION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

PURSUANT to Section 54 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, 2013, and upon review of the composition of Parliament having regard to the population of the Republic of Fiji and the National Register of Voters, the Electoral Commission has determined that the composition of Parliament, for the purpose of the election of members to Parliament in the next general election, be altered by increasing the number of seats in Parliament from 51 to 55.

Dated this 25th day of June 2021



SURESH CHANDRA

Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

All correspondence to be addressed to the Chairperson

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Fax: +679 331 9513 Website: www.feo.org.fj

*Ref: Meeting Number 07/21
Virtual Meeting Number 01/21
Decision Numbers 02-04/21*

The Electoral Commission, having held a virtual meeting on 25 June 2021 have resolved as follows:

1. In accordance with Section 41 (7) (8) of the Electoral Act 2014, the Electoral Commission approves the publication of the Provisional Polling Venue List.
2. Pursuant to Section 2 of the Electoral Act 2014 and in exercising its powers under section 3 (1) (h) of the Electoral Act 2014, the Electoral Commission approves the following forms and fees to be used with immediate effect:
3. Schedule of Fees
 - a. Section 27 (2) of Electoral Act – **Nomination of Independent Candidate Form; Fees \$1,000 (VIP)**
 - b. Section 27 (1) of Electoral Act – **Party List for Nomination of Party Candidates by a Political Party; Fees \$1,000 per candidate (VIP)**
 - c. **Objection to Nomination of Candidates Form; Fees \$100 (VIP)**
 - d. Section 6 (3) (k) of Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Act 2013 – **Application for Registration of Political Party; Fees \$5,005 (VIP)**
 - e. Section 23 (2) and Section 24 (4) of Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Act 2013 – **Request for Inspection of Political Party Disclosures Form; Fees \$20 per inspection (VEP)**
 - f. Section 40(9) Electoral Act 2014 – **Purchase of Voter Lists; Fees \$1,000 (VIP)**
 - g. **Request for Political Party Information; Fees \$1 per page (VEP) for photocopy charge**

All correspondence to be addressed to the Chairperson

4. List of Forms

- a. Section 25 of Electoral Act 2014 – **Nomination of Independent Candidate Form;**
- b. Section 26 of Electoral Act 2014 – **Party List for Nomination of Party Candidates by a Political Party;**
- c. Section 30 of Electoral Act 2014 – **Objection to Nomination of Candidates Form;**
- d. Section 31 of Electoral Act 2014 – **Appeals on Nomination of Candidates Form**
- e. Section 6 of Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Act 2013 – **Application for Registration of Political Party;**
- f. Section 23 & 24 of Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding & Disclosures) Act 2013 – **Request for Inspection of Political Party Disclosures Form;**
- g. **FEO Request for Political Party Information Form**

The approved forms are available from the Electoral Commission Website
www.electoralcommission.org.fj

Dated this 25th day of June 2021



SURESH CHANDRA
Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. F. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Fax: +679 331 9513 Website: www.feo.org.fj

*Ref: Meeting Number 08/21
Virtual Meeting Number 02/21
Decision Number 05/2021*

THE ELECTORAL ACT 2014

APPROVAL FOR THE FIRST NUMBER ON THE BALLOT PAPER

In Accordance with Section 36(2)(c) of the Electoral Act 2014, the Electoral Commission approves the following number to be the first number of the Ballot Paper for the next General Election.

1

7

3

Dated this 15th day of July 2021



SURESH CHANDRA

Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva. P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Fax: +679 331 9513 Website: www.feo.org.fj

*Ref: Meeting Number 09/21
Decision Number 07/2021*

DECISION OF ELECTORAL COMMISSION – AWARD OF SEAT IN PARLIAMENT

The Electoral Commission, having held a meeting through the use of electronic medium on 13 August, 2021 have resolved the followings:

1. As per section 64(1) of the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, Sachida Nand, candidate number 586, having secured 472 votes in the 2018 General Election is the highest ranked out of the candidates of the FijiFirst who did not get elected to Parliament but is still available to serve.
2. The Electoral Commission approves the awarding of the vacant parliamentary seat to Mr. Sachida Nand.

Dated this 13th day of August 2021.



SURESH CHANDRA
Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Website: www.electoralcommission.org.fj

*Ref: Meeting Number 11/21
Virtual Meeting Number 03/21
Decision Numbers 08/21*

The Electoral Commission, having held a virtual meeting on 17 September 2021 have resolved as follows:

1. In accordance with Section 40 (8) of the Electoral Act 2014, the Electoral Commission approves the publication of the Provisional Voter List for each polling station.
 - i. The Provisional Voter List for Turaga Ni Koro's and District Advisory Councilor's will contain the following :
 - a. Polling Venue Name
 - b. Polling Venue Code
 - c. Station Code
 - d. Area Name
 - e. Division
 - f. Surname
 - g. First Name
 - h. Photo
 - i. Gender
 - j. EVR number
 - k. Address
 - l. Comments
 - ii. As per Section 40 (9) of the Electoral Act 2014 the Provisional Voter List for Political Parties will contain the following:
 - a. Polling Venue Name
 - b. Polling Venue Code
 - c. Station Code
 - d. Area Name
 - e. Division
 - f. Surname
 - g. First name

- h. Gender
 - i. EVR Number
 - j. Address
2. The Electoral Commission has also approved the Provisional Voter List for Polling Stations to be given in Electronic copies for free, to every registered Political Party in Fiji for the first issue, so that they are able to peruse and provide feedback to the FEO for any corrections or issues they have identified in the Provisional Voter List.

Dated this 17th day of September 2021



SURESH CHANDRA

Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

All correspondence to be addressed to the Chairperson

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 0255 Website: www.electoralcommission.org.fj

*Ref: Meeting Number 12/21
Electronic Medium Meeting Number 03/21
Decision Number 09/21*

The Electoral Commission, having held an Electronic Medium meeting on 28 September 2021 has approved the following forms:

1. Nomination for Independent Candidate Form.
2. Nomination of Party Candidates by a Political Party Form.
3. Objection to Nomination of Candidate Form.
4. Appeal on Nomination of Candidate Form.
5. Application for Registration Political Party Instructions Form.
6. Political Party Membership Resignation Form.
7. Request for Inspection of Political Party Disclosures Form.
8. Voter Registration and Update Form.
9. Objection to Registration as a Voter Form.
10. Mobile Registration Request Form.
11. Reporting Deceased Voter Form.
12. Verification of Deceased Voter Form.
13. Declaration and Authorisation Form - HR Recruitment.
14. FEO Request for Political Party Information Form.

Dated this 28th day of September 2021



SURESH CHANDRA
Chairperson of the Electoral Commission

All correspondence to be addressed to the Chairperson

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPUBLIC OF FIJI

59 - 63 High Street, Toorak, Suva P. O. Box 2528, Government Buildings, Suva.
Phone: +679 331 6225 Website: www.electoralcommission.org.fj

*Ref: Meeting Number 13/21
Virtual Meeting Number 04/21
Decision Numbers 06 & 10/21*

The Electoral Commission, having held a virtual meeting on 22 December 2021 has approved as follows:

1. In exercising its powers under section 3 (1) (h) of the Electoral Act 2014, the Electoral Commission approves the following fees to be used with immediate effect:
 - a. Section 69(4) of Electoral Act – **Purchase of Register of Postal Voters: \$0**
 - b. Section 82(8) of Electoral Act – **Purchase of Pre-poll Voter List: \$0**
 - c. Section 11A of Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012 – **Purchase of National Register of Voters: \$1,000.00**

2. In accordance with Section 75 (2) (b) of the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, the Electoral Commission also approved the following materials for the 'Know Your Election' [KYE] campaign:
 - a. Flip Chart presentation
 - b. Brochure
 - c. Desktop Calendar
 - d. Calendar
 - e. Prism

Dated this 22nd day of December 2021



Jawahar Lal
Commissioner

All correspondence to be addressed to the Chairperson



APPENDIX 4

2021

Fijian Elections Office
Annual Report

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FOREWORD

Bula Vinaka,

I present the 2021 Annual Report of the Fijian Elections Office [**FEO**]. The Annual Report is prepared in accordance with the directive of the Electoral Commission [**EC**] so as to be attached to the Annual Report of the EC for the same period as required under the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, 2013.



Despite the restrictions and limitations caused by the COVID-19 environment, the FEO has managed to comprehensively conduct its activities and processes to ensure it is in a stable position to prepare and deliver the 2022 General Election. While in the general nature of things it would have been ideal for the FEO to undertake rigorous election preparation activities in this period, the FEO has had to resort to virtual planning and organizing of various activities that would have ideally been completed in the presence of all staff.

However, despite those challenges, the FEO has managed to prepare significantly by having comprehensive election planning programs and devising the plans for the successful conduct of the 2022 General Election. The FEO managed to, within the limited time frame, compile and obtain approval from the EC for its comprehensive election preparation plan.

Thereafter, the FEO conducted various presentations on the entire preparation plan for the 2022 General Election to the International Community and other stakeholders such as Political Parties, Civil Society Organisations and the voters on its Facebook platform. The FEO has also managed to successfully complete the Election Officials manuals and guides to facilitate the training of Election Officials in 2022. The various voter education initiatives were also presented to the EC for its approval so as to assist the Know Your Election program in 2022.

Overall, in the world of elections, it is understood that the year before election must be dedicated solely to the preparations for the election. However, as stated above, considering the impacts of COVID-19, the FEO has had to consolidate its activities with minimal expenditure so as to be able to deliver key processes prior to the election that would ensure that the General Election is transparent, fair, credible and reflective of the will of the Fijian people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Directors, Managers and staff of the FEO for their dedication, their commitment as well as their perseverance in planning, preparing and delivering various projects for this year despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

Vinaka.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammed Saneem', written in a cursive style.

Mohammed Saneem
Supervisor of Elections

VISION

Our vision is to be recognised as a professional institution that conducts fair and credible Elections broadly representing the will of the Fijian people.

MISSION

Our mission as Fiji's election management body is to implement internationally recognized election best practices in accordance with the law, effectively regulate political parties and efficiently register eligible Fijians to ensure that we deliver the highest quality of election services under the supervision of the Electoral Commission.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Right to vote

Every citizen over the age of 18 years has the right to vote by secret ballot.

One person, One vote, One value

Every voter has one vote, with each vote being of equal value.

A credible single National Register of Voters

Every registered voter shall be listed on a single National Register of Voters.

Independence, Impartiality and Neutrality

The Fijian Elections Office is an independent body and shows no preference in either speech or action for any individual candidate or political party.

Excellence in Service Delivery

Provide highest quality of electoral services to all Fijians in a professional, effective and timely manner.

Good Governance

The Fijian Elections Office values accountability, honesty, integrity and transparency in all its transactions and will ensure that all legislative disclosures are properly and adequately done.

Participation

Empowering every Fijian to take ownership of the election through active involvement.

Innovation

Strive towards continuous, innovative and practical solutions to contribute towards the evolution of electoral practices in Fiji.

Verifiability

In elections, to mechanise Fijian Elections Office processes so that given the same data and assumption, an independent and impartial Observer can produce the same results.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| AWEB | Association of World Election Bodies |
| BDM | Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry |
| DMS | Divisional Managers |
| EC | Electoral Commission |
| EMB | Election Management Body |
| EMiS | Election Management Information System |
| EMS | Election Management System |
| ESS | Exolvo Self Service |
| EVR | Electronic Voter Registration |
| FEO | Fijian Elections Office |
| GE | General Election |
| HRD | Human Resources Department |
| IDD | International Day of Democracy |
| MOFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MOG | Multinational Observer Group |
| NDA | Needs Development Assessment |
| NRV | National Register of Voters |
| RAMEO | Recruitment Assistant and Management of Elections Official System |
| RMiS | Results Management and Information System |
| SoE | Supervisor of Elections |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| SP | Strategic Plan |
| TDU | Training and Development Unit |
| ToTs | Training of Trainers |
| VSC | Voter Services Center |
| EA | Electoral Act 2014 |

INTRODUCTION

The FEO is an independent Electoral Management Body[**EMB**] formally established in March 2014 under the Electoral Act 2014 [**EA**]. Mr. Mohammed Saneem is the Supervisor of Elections [**SoE**] for Fiji. He was appointed by the (then) President of Fiji, H.E. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau on 28 March, 2014 and reports to the EC under the legal framework. The EC is authorised by the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji [**Constitution**] and the EA to formulate policies and relevant laws relating to the FEO.

The mandate of the FEO is to implement internationally recognised election best practises in accordance with the law, effectively regulate political parties, efficiently register eligible Fijians and to ensure that the highest quality of election services is carried out under the supervision of the EC.

Every year the Fijian Government issues the FEO with an annual grant from the National Budget. The Minister Responsible for Elections issues this to ensure implementation of electoral activities and projects are delivered and completed accordingly in due preparation for the 2022-2023 election year. Donor partners also assist the FEO in the implementation of its mandate through financial and technical support. The FEO through its international relations also receives technical and institutional support from overseas EMBs regional and international organisations.

The FEO is recognised as a centre for election information in Fiji. The FEO also analyses electoral data collected during elections and from other sources to enhance the quality of its election planning. This data is also used to produce literature on elections in Fiji for reference purposes.

The headquarters of the FEO is based in Suva and it has two (2) other branches in Lautoka and Labasa.

The FEO is made up of three (3) Directorates: Executive, Operations and Corporate Services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

The SoE oversees the day to day running of the Executive Directorate. There are seven (7) Departments that make up the Executive Directorate and they are as follows:

- Legal & Compliance
- Development Services
- EC Secretariat
- International Relations
- Communications
- Training and Development Unit
- Information Communication and Technology

The Executive Directorate plays a supporting role to the SoE, assisting the SoE to manage and ensure all functions of the FEO are carried out.

LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

The Legal and Compliance Department provides legal support to the FEO and ensures that the Standard Operating Procedures [**SOPs**] of the organization is consistent to the existing electoral laws, other relevant laws and international best practices on election.

In the year 2021, Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 was dedicated to making numerous extensive submissions to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights which was tasked to review the following Bills and Reports:

1. Electoral (Amendment) Bill 2020;
2. Electoral (Registration of Voters) (Amendment) Bill 2020;
3. Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) (Amendment) Bill 2020;
4. Review Report – Fijian Electoral Commission 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports; and
5. Review Report – 2018 General Election Joint Report by the EC and the SoE.

At these meetings we highlighted that there were 35 clauses to be amended in the Electoral (Amendment) Bill 2020, 10 clauses in the Electoral (Registration of Voters) (Amendment) Bill 2020 and 13 for the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) (Amendment) Bill 2020. All these were necessary as they reflected recommendations from the 2014 and 2018 Multinational Observer Group [**MOG**] as well as the recommendations from the EC and the SoE.

The outcome of this was the passing and commencement of the Electoral (Amendment) Act 2021, Electoral (Registration of Voters) (Amendment) Act 2021 and Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) (Amendment) Act 2021 on 10 June 2021 as well as the two (2) reports.

These allowed the FEO to successfully implement 23 out of the 38 MOG recommendations from 2014 and 14 out of the 21 MOG recommendations from 2018. The other recommendations were beyond the legal powers of the EC or SoE as it concerned other institutions.

In Quarter 3 we also tabled the (Registration of Voters) (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2021 (Bill No.32/2021) which was passed on 23 September 2021. This amendment allowed the FEO to register or update the details of voters using the name on their Birth Certificate. This assisted the organization in the verification exercise it conducts with the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry as well as the Department of Immigration to ensure that the voter meets the voter eligibility requirements as specified under the Constitution and the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012.

With the numerous amendments to the electoral laws, Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 was dedicated to the update of SOPs. So far, 20 policies and 70 procedures have been updated. The team have also managed to test and finalize the Polling Day Presiding Officer's Manual and Polling Day Workers' Manual. These manuals ensure that there is consistency in the delivery of the next General Election. However, the Training Manuals are not only limited to those working during the General Election but also include every other staff that have been recruited to other special projects in the organization. As such, the team have also been working with project holders to ensure their manuals are ready for implementation in preparation for the 2022 General Election.

Apart from this, seven (7) Memorandums of Understanding and three (3) Terms of References that FEO is engaged in have also been reviewed. These included those institutions that we normally engaged with, for verification purposes during the nomination of candidates' process, staff recruitment process and declaration of assets, liabilities and expenses by candidates and registered political parties. The endorsement and implementation of these Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference will be facilitated in 2022.

POLITICAL PARTY MANAGEMENT

The Registrar of Political Parties, being the regulating authority for political parties in Fiji, effectively managed political parties amidst a challenging year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Review and Compliance Officer who provides a supporting role to the Registrar of Political Parties had his position renamed in 2021 to Political Parties Engagement Officer. This was to ensure that the position specifically looked at political parties' engagement and all other affairs relating to it.

Registered Political Parties

In 2021 there were eight (8) registered political parties in Fiji and they are listed as follows:

1. Fiji First
2. Fiji Labour Party
3. Freedom Alliance
4. National Federation Party
5. Social Democratic Liberal Party
6. The People's Alliance
7. Unity Fiji
8. Hope [De-registered in 2022]

The only political party that was newly registered in 2021 was The People's Alliance that registered on 8 September 2021. There were three (3) political parties that were suspended on 12 April 2021, namely Unity Fiji, Freedom Alliance and HOPE for failing to submit their Audited Accounts as required under section 26(2) of the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Act 2013. While Unity Fiji and Freedom Alliance's suspension has been lifted after rectifying their breach, HOPE continued to be suspended.

Meetings of Political Parties

In 2021, the FEO convened four (4) meetings with political parties. The details of the meetings are provided as follows:

| Date of Meeting | Venue | Purpose of Meeting |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|
| 18/02/21 | FEO Conference Room | Meeting regarding the development of Audit Guidelines for political parties. |
| 25/04/21 | FEO Conference Room | Meeting of Auditors and Treasurers of Political Parties. |
| 30/09/21 | Virtual Meeting on Zoom | Meeting with political parties to brief them on FEO's preparations and plans for the 2022 General Election. |
| 02/12/21 | Virtual Meeting on Zoom | Meeting on submission of financial disclosures. |

Apart from the meetings, the political parties were also invited to attend the following events:

1. Ball Draw conducted by the EC to select the first three (3) digits of the Ballot Paper for the 2022 General Election; and
2. Handing over of Cardboard Voting Booths by the New Zealand Electoral Commission to the EC.

Provisional Polling Venue List Verification

The EC invited political parties to verify the Provisional Polling Venues List on 28 June 2021. Political parties were given 21 days to inspect the List and provide comments on any of the venues on the List. Only one (1) political party, Unity Fiji, provided comments to the List, which was received by the EC. The FEO further made responses and clarifications to the party on comments given regarding some of the venues.

Voter List Verification

In the meeting on 30 September 2021, the SoE invited political parties to verify the Provisional Voter List that was dispatched to them in a USB free of charge. An Excel template was created to assist the political parties in the verification process and members of the political parties that were present in this meeting were briefed by the SoE on this process. These political parties were given until 30 November 2021 to submit their findings. However, the FEO did not receive any feedback from any of them.

Polling Agents Handbook

The FEO launched the Polling Agents Handbook during its virtual meeting with political parties on 30 September 2021. The Handbook has been developed to help Polling Agents understand the electoral processes as well as their role as Polling Agents in the 2022 General Election. Since then, each political party has been issued with 100 copies of the Handbook and a soft copy of it made accessible on the FEO Website.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The International Relations of the FEO, under the Strategic Plan is responsible for facilitating and hosting election related workshops between FEO and other EMB's or International Cooperation Partners such as the Association of World Election Bodies ['**AWEB**'], International Foundation for Electoral Systems ['**IFES**'] and the Commonwealth Electoral Network ['**CEN**']. Most of the workshops for the FEO were virtually conducted through the Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Listed below is a list of webinars and other international events that FEO participated in during the year 2021.

| 2021 Webinars and other International Events that FEO Participated in | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Title of Webinars | Hosted By |
| 1. | BRIDGE Workshop | PIANZEA |
| 2. | Women in Electoral Management Virtual Mentoring Program | PIANZEA |
| 3. | Designing Great Workshop | NZEC |
| 4. | BRIDGE Workshop on Disabilities and Elections | PIANZEA |
| 5. | Senior Officials Meeting-Fiji Voter Survey | PIANZEA/Presentation from Fiji-Manager Communications |
| 6. | Women in Electoral Management Virtual Mentoring Program | PIANZEA |
| 7. | Capacity Development program on Electoral Technology | IIIDEM EC India |

The FEO is a member of the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network ['**PIANZEA**']. PIANZEA is a close association of Pacific Electoral Administrators who, in the Pacific spirit, collectively encourage the free flow of electoral information among member countries and aid where possible.

The FEO joined the AWEB during its second general assembly in 2015. A-Web is an umbrella organisation of EMB with some 100-member countries.

The FEO will continue with the various virtual programs organised by these two (2) organisations in 2022, which would include the following:

- PIANZEA Senior Officials Meeting.
- A-WEB and IFES Webinars.
- AWEB 10th EMB written Meeting through email.
- Online program run by PIANZEA.
- Women in Election Management (WEM): Virtual Mentoring Program.

2022 Election Planning Workshops

FEO together with the guidance of our international partners conducted several internal workshops to help in the planning of the 2022 General Election.

The FEO conducted the following workshops for staff:

| No. | DATE | NAME OF WOKSHOP | FACILITATOR | OUTCOMES |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | 09-12th March 2020 | 1st Election Planning Workshop. | SoE and TA's | SoE planning meeting with Technical Advisors (TA's) in drawing the road map for the 2022 General Election. |
| 2. | 29th November 2020 | 2nd Election Planning Workshop. | Manager EVR and Polling Venue and Divisional Mangers. | Proposed staffing structure for Divisional Office. Project processes for Divisional Office. Finalization of activities, projects and timelines for the Divisional Office. |
| 3. | 15th-16th February, 2021 | 3rd Election Planning Workshop. | | Procurement Plan. Warehouse Plan. Schedule & Recruitment of Election Officials. Divisional Managers Plan. |
| 4. | 14th-15th September 2021 | 4th Election Planning Workshop. | Director Operations | Staffing. Training. Projects. Budget. Resources. 2 years Annual Plan (2021-2022). |
| 5. | 12th-14th October 2021 | 5th Election Planning Workshop. | SoE | Managers and Coordinators finalized their timelines for the 2022 General Election. |

INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with FEO hosted a virtual presentation on 24 September 2021. The SoE presented major key dates, timelines and other fundamental operations for the 2022 General Election to the international community.

The presentation highlighted key electoral processes such as FEO Staffing, Recruitment and Training, Development Services, Budget and Voter Education and Awareness. SoE further highlighted key threats that could delay the process of the 2022 General Election, the major one being the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual presentation was an important one in the FEO calendar as it prepares for the 2022 General Election.

COMMUNICATIONS AND AWARENESS

The Communications arm of the FEO is responsible for the creation and dissemination of content for the promotion and sustenance of the organisation's brand and image within the public sphere. With reference to Pillar 4 of the FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023, the Communications Team also developed and implemented effective public outreach and engagement programs to strengthen electoral participation. The Communications Team undertook several key projects to engage with the electorate and to increase public awareness in 2021. A significant portion of this also included providing communications support to other departments to ensure the overall objectives of the FEO were met.

Below is a summary on the major projects:

Know Your Election ('KYE') Quiz Competitions

As part of the build-up to the KYE awareness campaign for the 2022 General Election, the Communications team ran four (4) successful quiz competitions in 2021. The marathon quiz competition was conducted through a virtual platform and garnered a lot of interest from the public during the year. As such, the FEO announced a Grand Finale Quiz in December of 2021. A total of 1,561 teams registered for the Quiz with the winning team scoring 94%.

With 2021 being a non-election year, the marathon quiz competitions became the FEO's primary tool for voter education and awareness. With lucrative prizes to be won, more teams participated in the quiz that required them to carry out extensive research on elections in Fiji in order to correctly answer the quiz questions. Individuals across different age groups and backgrounds, especially high school and tertiary students participated in the competition. As such, this allowed the FEO an opportunity to introduce elections to future voters through these competitions. The total number of teams to register for FEO's online quizzes in 2021 was 4,954.

International Day of Democracy

The International Day of Democracy was commemorated on 15 September 2021 with an online Quiz competition. The Quiz competition was complemented with awareness done on the FEO's social media platform. A total of 1,630 teams registered for the Quiz with the first prize being \$300 cash. The awareness campaign featured a series of live appearances by the SoE on the FEO Facebook page to raise awareness and also to promote the Quiz.

EC Communications Workshop

The EC Workshop was a three (3) day event in collaboration with the Australian Electoral Commission and the New Zealand Electoral Commission. The workshop was from 23 November 2021 to 25 November 2021 at the Marriott Resort, Nadi. The Manager Public Relations presented on the Communications Strategy for the 2022 General Election, which was approved, by the EC. The SoE presented on the KYE Campaign.

Phase 1 Recruitment Drive: 1 September -15 October, 2021

The Communications team carried out an extensive campaign to market the FEO's Phase 1 Recruitment Drive. An initial announcement was done by the SoE on 6 August 2021 followed by an official launch on 31 August 2021. The awareness was delivered through press conferences, media releases, FEO website, live updates on Facebook by the SoE, organic and sponsored posts on the FEO Facebook page, radio advertisements and announcer mention on FBC radio and the re-sharing of content on the Facebook pages of various FBC radio stations. Since Phase 1 was conducted through an online platform, awareness content on how to apply and the requirements for application were heavily emphasized.

One-Day Recruitment Drive for Central & Western Division

An awareness and marketing campaign were conducted for the one (1) Day Recruitment Drive in Suva (29 November 2021) and in Nadi and Lautoka (8 December 2021). A press conference was organized and awareness was done primarily through social media, specially to inform interested applicants of the online booking system as well as on the recruitment process and requirements.

Adhoc Voter Registration Drive & Business House Registration Drive

An extensive marketing campaign was undertaken to raise awareness on FEO's Adhoc Voter Registration Drive in October. Press conferences, media releases, radio announcer mentions, daily live updates on Facebook by the SoE, media interviews, testimonials and social media was used for this campaign. The Communications team followed the SoE's community visits as well as visits to various Voter Services Centres ['VSC'] around Viti Levu for the purpose of voter engagement.

For the Business House Voter Registration Drive, awareness was done through media releases and FEO Facebook page to encourage organizations to book an appointment online.

EC Endorsement of Awareness Materials

During the EC meeting on 22 December 2021, the Marketing Officer presented the awareness materials that will be used for the KYE Campaign for the 2022 General Election. The materials included a Flipchart presentation, brochure as well as the calendars and these were endorsed by the EC in the same meeting.

Distribution of FEO Calendars for 2022

The team designed the FEO calendars for 2022 of which 23,000 was circulated through the Fiji Sun in its 24 December edition. The calendars were also distributed to voters through the VSCs.

Launch of E-news

This is another initiative of the FEO to keep the public updated on its activities. Launched on 11 September 2021, E-news is a fortnightly segment featuring an update on the latest events, announcements and activities of the FEO. The segment is published through the FEO's Facebook page and to make it more inclusive, the segment includes sign language interpretations as well.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT ['TDU']

The TDU is the education and capacity building arm of the organization. Its main objective is to conduct or organize trainings that would meet the needs of the FEO. It also develops and offers accreditation for electoral courses to its internal and external stakeholders. Core staff are normally offered professional development trainings whilst temporary staff engaged in special projects or recruited for polling duties are trained on electoral processes relevant to them.

In April of 2021, Fiji was struck with the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in the organization implementing the Work from Home Policy for the staff. This ultimately disrupted the TDU training schedules for the year. Nevertheless, TDU still managed to implement 21 trainings out of which 16 were launched virtually. The breakdown of the trainings is reflected on **Annexure 1** of this report.

Further, the e-training platform (e-Vuli) that was developed in-house by the IT Directorate continued to allow core staff to develop and strengthen their abilities and skills despite working from home during the pandemic. In preparation for the 2022 General Election, the TDU also conducted Face-to-Face Workshops in the Central and Western Divisions. These workshops allowed TDU to train participants who would then become Field Trainers. So far, 40 Field Trainers have been selected. Additional workshops are scheduled to be conducted in the Northern Division early next year and in other divisions too, depending on the need for Field Trainers.

Apart from this, TDU have also developed Trainer Guides to be used by Field Trainers in training those that might work on Polling Days. These Guides have been derived from the 2022 General Election Operational Manuals. Moreover, TDU have been creating training packages and training kits that are resourceful items for these Field Trainers.

Furthermore, the TDU has been moved from the Human Resource Department to the Legal Department this year to ensure that the SOPs of the organization have been developed into training packages that are then implemented consistently during scheduled trainings nationwide.

ELECTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SPECIAL PROJECTS)

The Development Services is the software solutions arm of the IT Directorate. As a service provider for the other departments of the FEO, the team is responsible for developing and maintaining software applications needed for the core operation of the organization as well as being the central hub for data management and information reporting.

With the core system being the Election Management System, the team has embarked on developing new support systems that have enabled the organization to reach its strategic goal of adapting latest and current technologies to enhance the efficiency of FEO Objectives.

The year saw the completion of majority of the activities from the FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023 as well as the launch of some milestone projects. Below are the details on these projects.

e-Vuli

Online training platform based on the free open source learning management system – Moodle. After a pilot run on the local network and conducting training for internal staff, the platform was enhanced and deployed on our cloud infrastructure. Since the launch, multiple trainings and aptitude tests have been conducted. The platform has run nine (9) trainings so far and has a total of 1,492 registered users.

Inventory and Asset Management System (IAMS)

This development finished this year and was rolled out into production after months of testing and streamlining. Currently, the system is managing data and stock for 580 items and is being used at the warehouse.

Online Services portal

As one of the major projects that is part of our FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023, the Department has developed and launched the Online Services Portal. The first phase of the launch saw the development of the Voter ID check platform to assist voters in finding their VoterCard numbers during the closure of all VSCs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A booking module was also incorporated to enable voters to make appointments to use the services provided by the VSCs. Final modules to be incorporated were the Polling Venue Locator and Voter Details.

Online Recruitment Portal

The Online Recruitment Portal digitized the application of all FEO vacancies. Using this portal, potential staff viewed and applied for all FEO vacancies where the HR team performed administrative tasks of shortlisting and scheduling interviews for successful applicants. The portal was later enhanced to conduct returning Election Officials recruitment as Phase 1. Since its launch in April, a total of 33 vacancies have been processed with 2,689 applications and 12,769 registered users.

My Polling Assistant App

This app has been developed to be used by Presiding Officers and Hub Leaders on Election day to track election materials and to provide timely reporting and reminders to the users on their tasks. This app is currently used during training but it will be officially used during the 2022 General Election.

Recruitment and Management of Election Officials [RaMEO]

RaMEO was deployed and is currently being used by the HR and TDU to manage the recruited Election Officials. These officials have been recruited using the Online Recruitment Portal and the Election Officials Recruitment System ['EORS'] during Phase 1 and Phase 1b.

Enhancement to [EMS]

Major enhancements were made to the EMS. This involved enhancements to the Polling Venue and Party Registration Module, National Candidates List and the Voter List as requested by the authorized project owners. Gearing up for the 2022 General Election, the team is now focused on working on projects related to the National Results Centre, Central Processing Centre and the National Count Centre. Also, the enhancement of the Results Management and Information System, FEO Results App, Central Processing Centre App and the Consolidated Reporting Server. Continuous enhancements of the EMS, EORS and RaMEO will be done on need basis.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Department and its services are a major component in running the operations and projects of the FEO. As such it is also required to run a successful General Election whereby day to day activities all operate upon the ICT Platforms.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

The Corporate Services Directorate includes: Procurement, Human Resources, Finance and Administration and Election Material, Asset Management & Logistics. The Directorate's core responsibilities include the implementation of corporate governance within the legal framework, recruitment of staff, the sustainable management of resources and the exercise of prudent financial management.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The core functions of the Human Resources Department [“HRD”] is to conduct merit-based recruitment and selection of FEO staff focusing on selecting high performing, honest employees with high standards of integrity, providing equal employment opportunities and reviewing and confirming position-based remuneration and benefits for the FEO.

In 2021, the HRD completed their FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023 related activities such as finalization of the ongoing organization structure for the FEO, facilitation of external audit for the Department, implementation of online application module for FEO and appointment of personnel to vacant positions through advertisements.

Apart from these activities, the HRD undertook the following activities:

Post Processing:

In total nine (9) batches were advertised and the details are as follows:

a) Batch A/2021

| | | |
|---------|--|--|
| A1/2021 | Training & Development Coordinator | Offer declined - Readvertised - readvertised |
| A2/2021 | Asset Management & Procurement Coordinator | Appointed |
| A3/2021 | Storeman | Appointed |

b) Batch B/2021

| | | |
|---------|---|-----------|
| B1/2021 | Executive Secretary to Electoral Commission | Appointed |
|---------|---|-----------|

c) Batch C/2021

| | | |
|---------|--|----------------------|
| C1/2021 | Training & Development Coordinator | Alternative decision |
| C2/2021 | Administrative Assistant (Pool Position) | Pool Position |

d) Batch D/2021

| | | |
|---------|------------------------------|-----------|
| D1/2021 | Marketing & Creative Officer | Appointed |
| D2/2021 | Public Relations Officer | Appointed |
| D3/2021 | Graphics Design Officer | Appointed |

e) Batch E/2021

| | | |
|---------|--|-----------|
| E1/2021 | Manager Election Materials & Logistics | Withdrawn |
| E2/2021 | Programmer | Appointed |
| E3/2021 | Corporate Officer | Pool |
| E4/2021 | Operations Officer | Pool |
| E5/2021 | Driver | Pool |
| E6/2021 | Logistics Assistant | Pool |
| E7/2021 | Field Trainer | Pool |

f) Batch F/2021

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| F1/2021 | Deputy Supervisor of Elections | Withdrawn |
| F2/2021 | Director Information System | Withdrawn |

g) Batch G/2021

| | | |
|---------|------------------------------|-----------|
| G1/2021 | System Analyst/Programmer | Appointed |
| G2/2021 | Industrial Elections Officer | Pool |
| G3/2021 | Administrative Assistant | Pool |
| G4/2021 | Security Officer | Pool |

h) Batch H/2021

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| H1/2021 | Research Officer | In-progress |
| H2/2021 | International Relations Assistant | In-progress |
| H3/2021 | Administrative Assistant | Pool |
| H4/2021 | Driver | Pool |
| H5/2021 | Logistics Assistant | Pool |
| H6/2021 | Security Officer | Pool |

i) Batch I/2021

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| I1/2021 | Administrative Assistant Fleet | In-progress |
| I2/2021 | Storeman | In-progress |
| I3/2021 | Field Trainer | Pool |

Phase 1: Election Officials Recruitment Drive

The Election Officials recruitment drive was conducted in two (2) rounds:

1. Phase 1A- Returning EO Recruitment Drive was conducted on an online recruitment platform on vacancy@feo.org.fj commencing 1 September 2021 till 15 October 2021.
2. Phase 1B- one-day Face-to-Face recruitment drive was held in the Central Division at Kshatriya Hall on 29 November 2021 and in the Western Division at Lautoka and Nadi on 08 December 2021.

At the end of Phase 1 Recruitment Drive, a total of 5,136 applications were received.

Finalizing the Election Mode Structure

As part of the election preparations, the HRD finalized the election mode structure and had continued post processing of vacant positions. The HRD also supported project managers in the timely hiring of staff for projects.

As the FEO prepares for the next General Election, the HRD will ensure that staff needed by the organization are recruited in a timely manner to meet the operational needs and explore avenues for FEO to be part of various excellence awards.

Finance and Administration

The core function of Finance Department is to provide financial and administration support to ensure that election commitments are met. The Department has to ensure that all legislative requirements are met and that all financial and administration support required for the election operations are provided in a timely, efficient and effective manner.

The following are the activities that have been completed in year 2021:

- Conducted budget consultations/preparation with each Directorate.
- Approval of 2022-2023 General Election Budget.
- Approval of Operational Budget for the year 2021-2022.
- Managed appropriate financial records for donor funds.
- Requested Operational grant for EC and FEO.
- Prepared annual financial statement.
- Assisted in the conduct of financial statement audit for the year 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.
- Managed funds for the EC.

The following are the activities' which will commence in the year 2022 as we prepare for the next General Election:

- Assist the office of the Auditor General's Office in the conduct of 2020-2021 audit.
- Develop Election Officials salary payment platform.
- Open divisional bank account.
- Develop online platform for payments for Divisional office.
- Request for operating grant for EC and FEO.
- Prepare Annual Financial Statements.
- Provide financial support for all the projects and operational activity for the office.
- Manage funds for the EC.

Budget /Expenditure

This annual report falls on two (2) different financial year/budget year. The months from January 2021 to July 2021 is for the budget year 2020-2021, whereas, the months from August to December is for the budget year 2021-2022. The total funds released by the Ministry of Economy for the year 2020-2021 was \$3,886,816.13, whereas, for the year 2021-2022, \$23,113,820.00 has been allocated. The table that summarises the expenditure summary for the two (2) different budget cycles can be referenced in **Annexure 2** of this report.

Election Material, Asset Management & Logistics

Asset Management's core functions

Asset management is the process of planning and controlling the acquisition, operation, maintenance, renewal and disposal of organizational assets. This process improves the delivery potential of assets and minimizes the costs and risks involved. Adequate maintenance and proper deployment of systems, people and processes ensure a positive enhancement of capital over the asset lifecycle.

Assets Management Activities

Multiple IT items have been purchased which are regarded as assets as the value is over \$2,000.00 and have a useful life of five (5) years. These items are normally printers, scanners, laptops and phones.

- IT items that have been purchased and do not meet the assets requirements are considered as Inventory. However, these are registered by IT Department first and then the Assets Management team registers them in an excel spread sheet for reference.
- Apart from the IT items, the Assets Management team did not procure any other assets in 2021.
- A total of 16 assets were procured in year 2021 and 29 inventory items.
- The Board of Survey was carried out on 26 November 2021. A total of 42 items from the warehouse and 33 items were disposed. The disposal process had a 3rd party involvement and two (2) internal Evaluators to decide whether the items should be disposed or repaired.
- Transfer of items from HQ to respective divisions.

Warehouse, Materials & Logistics Management Activities

A good and well-organized stock management indicates a transparent storage system safeguarding the movement of stock within FEO. The FEO Warehouse is no stranger to such systems having less than 500 items in stock catering for the four (4) Divisions, including the FEO Headquarters.

As such, supplies for major projects dictates that all items will need to be recorded and procured should there be any shortage. The Stock Tally Card is updated both manually and electronically to ensure transparency and proper record keeping.

To ensure the success of any operation, the Logistics team plays a core role in ensuring activities are carried out to its full potential and the Warehouse oversees and manages this through the Manager Election Materials & Logistics.

Procurement

The core functions of the Procurement Department are:

- To promote accountability for the use of FEO funds in the acquisition of goods and services within FEO.
- To assist departments to acquire value added, appropriate and quality goods and services that meets immediate and long term needs with minimum impact on the environment.
- To acquire, manage and maintain all Assets of the FEO.
- Ensure procurement of Goods and Services processes are done in the most ethical, transparent and accountable manner at all times.

Under the FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023, the Procurement Department have completed the following activities:

Objective 2.4 An Effective procurement program that ensures goods and services are acquired in a timely and financially prudent manner.

2.4.1- Develop and finalise the Procurement Plan for the 2022/23 General Election- The final plan was submitted which was a continuation of the 2020 to 2021 plan as most activities did not take place due to COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4.3 Implement and Review Inventory Management System for FEO warehouse- The Inventory Management System was softly rolled out onto the IAMS platform, which means that all stocks are now being recorded through electronic means for better stock monitoring, movement and overall accountability from each Division offices including project holders.

2.4.6 Conduct Board of Survey and audit Inventory of All FEO assets- The Board of Survey was completed in Q4 2021(December 2021) and all boarded items will be disposed through either donation, disposal or tender process subject to whichever is feasible and has been collectively agreed by the BOS members and approved by the SoE.

2.4.4 Effectively Manage Tenders and EOI for FEO- The following tenders were facilitated and finalised in 2021 in line with the requirements from Internal stakeholders;

Request for Tenders

- RFT 01/2021-Tender for Laptops.
- RFT 02/2021- Tender for the supply of Polling Kits.
- RFT 03/2021-Tender for Postal Voting Courier Services.
- RFT 05/2021-Provision of Polling Sheds and Other Materials.

Expression of Interests

EOI 01/2021 Request for Commercial Space.

Apart from the FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023 Activities, the following major projects took place from January to December 2020 as part of Procurement & Asset Management:

Development of the Procurement and Asset Manual

This manual was made in consultation with the internal team members to be used by Divisions when conducting procurement related activities.

Cardboard Voting Booths

The Procurement team with Warehouse arranged for the clearance, logistics and storage of the 2000 Cardboard voting booths that were donated by the New Zealand Electoral Commission.

Opening of Division Office

Procurement team facilitated an EOI to seek interests from building owners for the provision of Division Offices. The Northern, Western, Central and Eastern offices were opened as a result of this exercise.

Opening of VSC Office

VSC offices were opened in Nadi, Rakiraki, Sigatoka, Levuka and Nausori through liaison with external stakeholders

Operations Directorate

The Operations Directorate includes the Operations, Industrial Elections Department and the Divisional Offices. The Operations Directorate's core responsibilities include the update and maintenance of an accurate National Register of Voters ['NRV'], management of Polling Venues, Postal voting, Pre-Poll voting and polling operations.

Voter Registration

In 2021 the FEO worked closely with the public and provided services via its Divisional VSCs.

The FEO began its voter registration exercise in February 2021 by having its Suva and Lautoka VSCs open on 1 February 2021. The Labasa VSC commenced on 12 April 2021.

Due to the lockdowns and limitations presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was observed that there was a lower than usual registration rate of newly eligible Fijians in the first six (6) months of the year. This was a direct result of the VSCs closing down due to the pandemic and damages caused by Tropical Cyclones Yasa and Ana. The Labasa VSC was closed for 10 weeks from 1 February 2021 till 9 April 2021 while the Lautoka VSC was closed for 18 weeks beginning from 19 April 2021 until it re-opened on 20 August 2021. A booking platform was developed for the re-opening of VSCs in August to ensure that overcrowding was avoided and that social distancing measures were observed. This was in line with the COVID-19 safety protocols given by Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Despite reporting low voter engagement for the first six (6) months of 2021 due to the pandemic and the eventual zoning of containment lockdowns, the FEO saw a huge turnout of voters at the VSCs from July onwards.

Since closing in April, the Suva VSC resumed normal operations on 16 August 2021 while the Lautoka VSC re-opened on 23 August 2021. The Labasa VSC had continued operations with COVID-19 safety protocols in place as it was not affected by the zoning containment lockdowns.

In October, the FEO decided to commence the Adhoc Voter Registration Drive to cater for the increasing demand from the public for voter services as well as to facilitate the upgrade to the blue VoterCard following FEO's announcement to phase out the green VoterCard.

Initially the teams were only deployed in Suva, Labasa and Lautoka but seeing the high demand for voter services, the FEO opened additional centres at popular spots in Nakasi, Nausori, Sigatoka, Tavua, Nadi, Rakiraki and Ba to cater for the demand.

Additional VSCs were also opened in other parts of the county to cater for the demand. Through the VSCs, the FEO provided services such as new registrations, corrections/change of details, replacement and confirmation of deceased and at the same time accepted request for mobile registrations.

Below are the VSCs that provided services to the general public in 2021.

| Division | Area | Location | Date Opened |
|----------|-----------|--|-------------|
| Central | Suva | Old Fiji Visitors Bureau Building, Suva. | 1/02/2021 |
| | Navua | Provincial Administrator Serua Office, Ro Matanitobua Complex | 1/09/2021 |
| | Korovou | District Officer's Office - Waimaro House | 25/10/2021 |
| | Nausori | Tailevu House, Nausori | 10/11/2021 |
| | Wainibuka | DO's Office, Nayavu | 1/12/2021 |
| Western | Lautoka | 36 Vitogo Parade, Lautoka. | 1/2/2021 |
| | Sigatoka | Provincial Administrator Nadroga/ Navosa Office, Lawaqa Park | 6/09/2021 |
| | Ba | Provincial Administrator Ba Office, Koronubu House, Ground Floor - Foyer | 8/10/2021 |
| | Rakiraki | Provincial Administrator Ra Office, Cakova Crescent, Rakiraki | 8/10/2021 |
| | Nadi | Shop 3 Westpoint Arcade, Nadi | 1/11/2021 |
| | Keyasi | Do's Office, Navatumaili Government Station, Keyasi | 11/11/2021 |
| Northern | Labasa | Legal Aid Building, Jaduram Street, Labasa. | 3/2/2020 |
| | Taveuni | Waiyevo, Tailevu | 29/12/2021 |
| Eastern | Levuka | PA's Office, Totogo Lane, Levuka | 1/12/2021 |

Voter Registration Statistics

Through the EVR system, the FEO maintains a complete list of all registered voters in Fiji. As of December 2021, there were a total of 142,886 engagements/services provided through the VSCs, Adhoc and Business House registrations. There was an increase of 94,126(193.03%) engagements as at December, 2021 compared to December 2020.

Below is the breakdown of the Voter Registration Tally for the year 2021.

| Month | New Registration | Correction & Replacement | Total Engagement |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| February | 1245 | 2396 | 3641 |
| March | 955 | 2970 | 3925 |
| April | 513 | 1439 | 1952 |
| May | 50 | 238 | 288 |
| June | 121 | 440 | 561 |
| July | 179 | 594 | 773 |
| August | 315 | 886 | 1201 |
| September | 599 | 1074 | 1673 |
| October | 9759 | 56097 | 65856 |
| November | 3524 | 30733 | 34257 |
| December | 3194 | 25565 | 28759 |
| Total for 2021 | 20454 | 122432 | 142886 |

Data Cleaning Exercise

Data cleaning exercise was also conducted in the months of January, July and December 2021 to remove deceased voters from the NRV. These voters were identified from the Confirmation of Deceased forms received by the VSCs and through secondary verifications of the Data received from Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry. This resulted in a total of 6576 voters confirmed deceased who were removed from the NRV between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021.

As required by Law, a voter serving a sentence of imprisonment for a term of 12 months or more must be removed from the NRV, as such 435 voters were removed (flagged as inmate) from the NRV during the data cleaning exercises. During these exercises, those people whose disqualification have expired were reinstated based on the list provided by the Fiji Corrections Service. There was a total of 47 voters whose records were reinstated in the NRV.

National Register of Voters Statistics as at 31/12/21.

Age Cohort Distribution by Division and Gender

| Division | Gender | 18-20 | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 | 71-80 | 81+ |
|--------------|--------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Central | Male | 4221 | 35382 | 34414 | 25407 | 20363 | 13126 | 5707 | 1709 |
| Central | Female | 5113 | 35837 | 33390 | 25098 | 20938 | 14621 | 6781 | 2499 |
| Eastern | Male | 55 | 2119 | 3048 | 2438 | 2339 | 1644 | 827 | 274 |
| Eastern | Female | 73 | 1765 | 2670 | 2034 | 1943 | 1351 | 762 | 345 |
| Northern | Male | 995 | 9902 | 10839 | 9465 | 8595 | 5475 | 2292 | 908 |
| Northern | Female | 1311 | 9704 | 9619 | 8370 | 7966 | 5487 | 3127 | 1254 |
| Western | Male | 3019 | 25897 | 30698 | 24550 | 20512 | 13461 | 5807 | 1774 |
| Western | Female | 3519 | 26781 | 28716 | 22688 | 20071 | 14277 | 7234 | 2472 |
| Overseas | Male | 0 | 325 | 781 | 1080 | 949 | 636 | 240 | 49 |
| Overseas | Female | 0 | 278 | 675 | 891 | 810 | 586 | 206 | 31 |
| Total | | 18306 | 147990 | 154850 | 122021 | 104486 | 70664 | 32983 | 11315 |

Gender Distribution by Division

| Division | Gender | Total | % |
|--------------|--------|---------------|--------|
| Central | Male | 140329 | 21.18% |
| | Female | 144277 | 21.77% |
| Western | Male | 125718 | 18.97% |
| | Female | 125758 | 18.98% |
| Northern | Male | 48471 | 7.32% |
| | Female | 46838 | 7.07% |
| Eastern | Male | 12744 | 1.92% |
| | Female | 10943 | 1.65% |
| Overseas | Male | 4060 | 0.61% |
| | Female | 3477 | 0.52% |
| Total | | 662615 | |

Summary and Voter Count by Division

| Summary | Total | % |
|-------------------|---------|--------|
| Registered Voters | 662,615 | |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 331,293 | 50.00% |
| Male | 331,322 | 50.00% |
| Division | | |
| Central | 284,606 | 42.95% |
| Western | 251,476 | 37.95% |
| Northern | 95,309 | 14.38% |
| Eastern | 23,687 | 3.57% |
| Overseas | Female | 1.14% |

E-filing of EVR Forms

The Development Services Team successfully developed the E-filing of registration forms software, called the EVR Document Manager. After the successful implementation of the E-filing of EVR forms project in 2020, management gave approval to start the second phase in February 2021.

Despite COVID-19 challenges, the project was completed in December 2021, where the teams managed to scan 553,886 forms and uploaded them on the EVR Document Manager.

Below is the breakdown of forms scanned in the three (3) phases.

| Summary | Total |
|----------------|----------------|
| Phase 1 - 2020 | 207,202 |
| Phase 2 - 2021 | 193,172 |
| Phase 3 - 2021 | 153,512 |
| Total | 553,886 |

Polling Venue Management

Polling Venue assessment was carried out in the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2021, this was carried out by having the FEO staff call and interview venue owners. A total of 561(39%) of the venues were successfully assessed whereas the remaining venues were not assessed as the phone numbers of the venue owners were unreachable. As part of the management of polling venues around the country, the Divisional Managers carried out a performance analysis of all polling venues in their Divisions, after which the assessment was carried out.

During the analysis, the Divisional teams developed a polling area boundary for each Hub. Using the analyzed data, the GIS Officer of the FEO developed hub maps and polling venue maps for the Operations team. In line with the legal requirements, 13 Pre-Poll polling venue that were locked were activated for Disciplinary Forces staff and this was approved by the EC.

The Divisional Manager Western identified a new Pre-Poll venue (Marou Community Hall, Yasawa) in the Western Division which was approved in June 2021. The total number of Polling Venues approved and published by the EC in June 2021 is 1437, which included the 13 Disciplinary Forces Venues from 2018.

Below is a summary of polling venues as at 30 June 2021.

| As at 30 June 2021 | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Total No. of Polling Venues | 1437 |
| No. of Pre-Poll Venues | 583 |
| No. Election Day venues | 854 |
| Total No. of Polling Stations | 1941 |
| No. of Pre-Poll Stations | 570 |
| No. Election Day Stations | 1371 |

The FEO in consultation with the various Disciplinary Force's organization identified additional Pre-Poll venues for their staff. A total of 33 new Pre-Poll venues were identified around the country, 30 for the Fiji Police Force, two (2) for the Fiji Corrections Service and one (1) for Republic of Fiji Military Forces.

Internal Audit

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations.

The FEO Internal Auditor ensures the FEO maintains best practices and good governance through providing input to all corporate services activities. It also ensures that support policies and procedures of the FEO undergoes an ongoing program of audits of internal practice to ensure compliance with documented procedures.

The following are the activities that were undertaken by the Internal Auditor for the year 2021:

- Monitoring of activities of the FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarter for Executive Directorate, Corporate Services Directorate and IT Directorate.
- Internal Audit framework has been developed and submitted to the respective Director for review.

The following are the activities that are currently in progress and will continue in 2022:

- Monitoring of activities of the FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for 4th quarter for Executive Directorate, Corporate Services Directorate and IT Directorate. This activity will be concluded in January 2022.
- Development of Internal Audit Charter.
- Development of Internal Audit Trainer Guide to train the audit staff of the 2022 General Election.

Divisional Managers

The following activities were completed by the DM's in 2021:

- Opening of VSCs. Apart from the ongoing permanent centres in Suva, Lautoka and Labasa, the following VSCs were open from between October to December 2021:
 - Central Division: Navua, Nausori and Korovou.
 - Western Division: Rakiraki, Ba, Nadi Sigatoka and Keiyasi.
 - Northern Division: Taveuni.
- Conduct of the adhoc voter registration drive in October for Central and Western Division. Northern Division adhoc registration drive was conducted in December.
- Conduct of the Business House Voter Registration program from between November to December.
- Revision and update of the Fiji National Polling Venue Directory.
- Provisional Voter List (PVL) I verification with the Turaga-Ni-Koro's (TNK).
- Development and finalizing of Polling Venue boundaries.
- Assist in the facilitation of the 1 Day Recruitment Drive and ToT's training for Central and Western Division.

Industrial Elections

Under section 154 of the Electoral Act 2014, the Industrial Elections ['IE'] Department is responsible for the conduct of trade union elections for registered trade unions and any other elections approved by the Minister Responsible for Elections.

In 2021, the IE Department conducted over nine (9) trade union elections out of which there were 49 branch elections and six (6) national elections. From these elections, there was a total of two (2) contested elections and seven (7) uncontested elections.

Most of the election operations were on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and the lockdown. Nevertheless, the total turnout of voters for the contested elections was 3,115 out of the 6,125 registered members. Invalid votes were very minimal which was 3.37% compared to the 96.63% valid votes. Out of the two (2) elections conducted, both elections were conducted through attendance voting and Postal Voting system.

The following activities have been completed by the IE Department in 2021 under the FEO Strategic Plan 2020-2023:

- Identify, develop and implement strategies so Trade Union members with disabilities to have access to Trade Union electoral process.
- Compile and publish an Annual Trade Union Election Plan.
- Implement changes to the overall conduct of Trade Union Elections.

Listed below is the list of the on-going activities which will be conducted all throughout the year 2022 and will roll over in 2023:

- Develop regulations for the conduct of Trade Union Elections.
- Conduct Trade Union elections.
- Submit annual reports on trade union elections to Executive Management.

Milestone achievements for 2021

The FEO's four (4) year strategic plan highlights a number of milestone achievements for each year, which must be accomplished.

The FEO has successfully completed seven (7) of the 10 milestones that were allocated for 2021. The following were the milestones achieved for 2021.

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | Finalise operational manuals, handbooks and trainer guides |
| 2. | PRINCE 2- Project management training for senior staff |
| 3. | Finalise procurement plan for 2022/23 General Elections |
| 4. | Divisional offices are operational for 2022/23 General Elections |
| 5. | Finalise General Election 2022/2023 operational plan |
| 6. | Implement E-Training platform and E-Service portal |
| 7. | Establish a software and network monitoring system |

The following three (3) milestone achievements were not implemented due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

| | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Publish Fiji National Polling Venue Directory (v 2.0) |
| 2. | Conduct Overseas Voter Registration |
| 3. | Audit of National Register of Voters |

Conclusion

2021 has indeed been a challenging year as the COVID-19 pandemic had a global effect. Fiji also had its share of issues relating to COVID-19, including lockdown in certain areas of the country.

However, the FEO continued its work towards the preparations and planning for the 2022 General Election. Various strategies were implemented such as the Work from Home policy whereby staff continued to work and deliver output during lockdown. The FEO continued with business as usual during this period in terms of planning and execution of projects related to the 2022 General Election.

For FEO, the business was usual and through virtual trainings, meetings and conferences, staff continued to work and deliver their outputs.

2022 will be an important year for the FEO as we prepare for the General Election. Despite all the challenges faced in 2021, we are optimistic that FEO will be ready to deliver to the best of its' ability the 2022 General Election even in the event the COVID-19 pandemic continues in 2022.



ANNEXURES

Annexures 1

| Name of Training | Mode |
|---|--|
| Internal Trainings organized By TDU (Conducted by External Stakeholders) | |
| Designing Great Workshop: Phase 1 | Online (zoom) |
| Designing Great Workshop: Phase 2 | Online (zoom) |
| Training Great Workshop: Phase 1 | Online (zoom) |
| Training Great Workshop: Phase 2 | Online (zoom) |
| Fire Warden Training | Face to Face |
| Internal Trainings organized and conducted by TDU | |
| Managing Upwards Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Managing Change Effectively | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Business Process Mapping Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Email Etiquette Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Induction Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Sexual Harassment & Bullying Prevention Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Time Management Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Short term staff Induction Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Project Management Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| EVR Training for internal staff: Phase 1 | Face to Face |
| EVR Training for internal staff: Phase 2 | Face to Face |
| Internal Information Sessions | |
| World Day for Health & Safety at Work | Email |
| International Men's Day | Email |
| Bribery & Anti-Corruption [FICAC facilitated, TDU organized] | Face to Face |
| Trainings Conducted by TDU for External Stakeholders | |
| Introduction to Elections Module Training of Trainers Program for Year Ten School Curriculum: Teachers Training | Online (e-Vuli) |
| Training of Trainers workshop | Face to Face (Central & Western Division) |

Annexures 2

Fijian Election Office Expenditure Report from January 2021 to December 2021.

| | January 2021-July 2021 | August 2021 - December 2021 | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Expenditure | Expenditure | Total |
| Information Technology Expenses | \$ 432,795.12 | \$ 149,470.75 | \$ 582,265.87 |
| Consultants Fees | \$ 3,050.00 | \$ 22,287.21 | \$ 25,337.21 |
| Depreciation Expenses | \$ 1,431.81 | \$ - | \$ 1,431.81 |
| Management Expense | \$ 488.05 | \$ 402.14 | \$ 890.19 |
| Insurance | | \$ 28,660.76 | \$ 28,660.76 |
| Legal Fees | \$ 7,932.72 | \$ 10,500.00 | \$ 18,432.72 |
| Loss-Disposal Fixed Asset | \$ 4,491.99 | | \$ 4,491.99 |
| Voter Awareness Expense | \$ 73,065.25 | \$ 188,314.99 | \$ 261,380.24 |
| Newspaper & Subscription | \$ 337.62 | | \$ 337.62 |
| Personnel Emoluments Expense | \$ 1,260,583.24 | \$ 1,426,485.58 | \$ 2,687,068.82 |
| Staff Training - Training | \$ 192.66 | \$ 5,096.74 | \$ 5,289.40 |
| Postage and Courier Expense | \$ 59,539.21 | \$ 2,685.85 | \$ 62,225.06 |
| Office Administration Expense | \$ 288,160.25 | \$ 502,413.70 | \$ 790,573.95 |
| Telecommunication Exp | \$ 59,710.45 | \$ 74,501.71 | \$ 134,212.16 |
| Travel and Accommodation Expense | \$ 26,003.49 | \$ 96,311.29 | \$ 122,314.78 |
| Financial Expense | \$ 1,657.60 | \$ 1,097.00 | \$ 2,754.60 |
| EC and Office Meeting Expense | | \$ 168.39 | \$ 168.39 |
| Total | \$ 2,219,439.46 | \$ 2,508,396.11 | \$ 4,727,835.57 |



Supervisor of Elections (SoE) Mr. Mohammed Saneem (fifth right front) presented a token of appreciation of Thanks to the Former Electoral Commission Chairperson Mr. Suresh Chandra (fourth left front) for his service.



THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

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