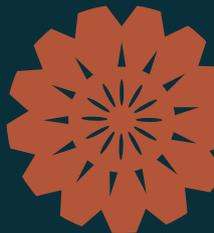
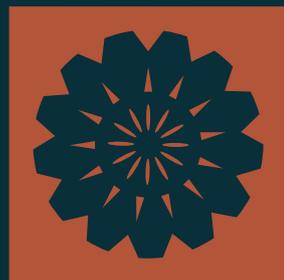
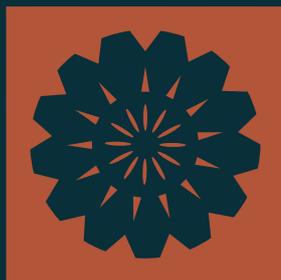
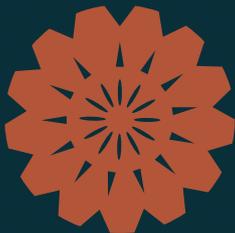
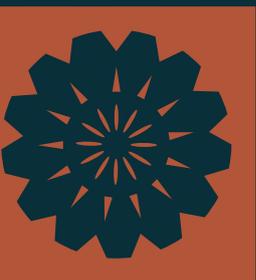


ELECTORAL COMMISSION
Annual Report

2023



FOREWORD



Pursuant to section 75(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji 2013, the Electoral Commission (“the Commission”) must deliver its Annual Report to his Excellency the President, with a copy to the Secretary-General to Parliament. This Report overviews the activities of the Commission in the calendar year 2023.

Early in 2023 the terms of the majority of the existing Commissioners expired. The full Commission was not reconstituted until August 2023, under the leadership of a new Chairperson: Ms Barbara Malimali.

The new Commissioners all received a 3 day induction, and thereafter embarked on a quest to deepen their understanding of electoral administration. As well as attending local and international electoral events, the Commissioners made a range of determinations as required under the 2013 Constitution and under the Electoral Act 2014.

In 2024 there were further changes to the composition of the Commission, the records of the Commission were seized under warrant by FICAC, and, as a result, the preparation of this report was delayed. As the Commission official records have not yet been released by FICAC, this report is compiled as fully as possible using ancillary records and information.

Justice Usaia Ratuvihi
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'U. Ratuvihi', written over a horizontal dashed line.

Electoral Commission

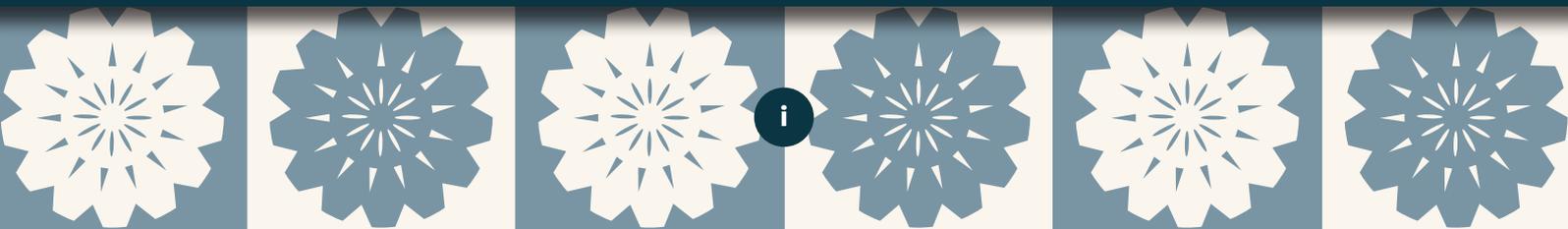


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ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Pursuant to section 75 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji 2013 (“the Constitution”), the Electoral Commission (“the Commission”) is an independent constitutional office, with responsibility for the conduct of free and fair elections in accordance with the written law governing elections and any other relevant law. In particular, the Commission is responsible for:

- the registration of citizens as voters, and the regular revision of the Register of Voters;
- voter education;
- the registration of candidates for election;
- the settlement of electoral disputes, including disputes relating to or arising from candidate nominations; and
- monitoring and enforcing compliance with any written law governing elections and political parties.

The Supervisor of Elections is also an independent constitutional office (as set out in section 76 of the Constitution), with responsibility for administering voter registration and the conduct of elections. Those responsibilities are subject to any directions of the Commission pertaining to the performance of those functions.

Composition

Section 75(6) of the Constitution provides that the Commission consists of a chairperson and six (6) other members.

At the beginning of 2023, the Commission consisted of the Chairperson and five (5) other members.



(L-R) Ms Margot Marie Jenkins, Ms Ateca Ledua, Ms Kavita Raniga, His Excellency, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, President of the Republic of Fiji, Mr Mukesh Nand, Chairperson, Ms Selina Lee Wah & Mr Jawahar Lal.

On 20 March 2023 the terms of four (4) members expired, leaving a Commission consisting of just the Chairperson and Ms Ateca Ledua. Under section 5 of the Electoral Act 2014, the quorum for Commission meetings and decisions is four (4) members. The Commission was therefore unable to progress any formal business.

Mr Mukesh Nand, Chairperson, resigned from the Commission on 22 June 2023, leaving Ms Ledua as the sole member.

Between July and August 2023 Ms Ledua was joined by six (6) new members appointed by the President, and the composition of the Commission for the remainder of the year was:



Standing (L-R) – Commissioner Dr Atu Emberson-Bain, Commissioner Nalini Singh and Commissioner Ateca Ledua.

Sitting (L-R) – Commissioner Inoke Dokonivalu, Commissioner Reginald Jokhan, Commission Chairperson Barbara Malimali and Commissioner Nemani Mati.

Under section 5 of the Electoral Act 2014, the Supervisor of Elections is required to act as the Secretary to the Commission.

Budget

The Commission has been provided its own budget since 2020, and prepares its budget for each financial year to cater for its operational expense.

The Table below shows the summary Electoral Commission Budget & Expenditure for January 2023 – December 2023:

Electoral Commission Budget & Expenditure for January 2023–December 2023		
Activities	Budget	Expenditure
Fixed Assets	\$32,650.43	\$32,650.43
Information Technology Expenses	\$4,081.00	\$ -
Consultants Fees	\$448.00	\$448.00
Electoral Commission Allowance	\$84,581.00	\$41,030.00
Legal Fees	\$5,831.00	\$ -
Marketing /Advertising Costs	\$62,497.81	\$5,157.10
Personnel Emoluments Expense	\$77,327.25	\$69,926.02
Postage and Courier Expense	\$856.00	\$83.49
Office Administration Expense	\$13,848.22	\$4,447.64
Telecommunication Expense	\$1,784.78	\$107.72
Travel and Accommodation Expense	\$65,385.63	\$11,944.55
Financial Expense	\$104.60	\$104.60
EC and Office Meeting Expense	\$838.00	\$3,192.94
Total Operating Budget & Expenses	\$350,233.72	\$169,092.49

Note: The full breakdown of the Commission Budget and Expenditure Report from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 is set out in the Annexure to this Report along with The Electoral Commission Financial Statements for 2023

Allowances

The Chairperson and Commission members are appointed by the President on the advice of the Constitutional Offices Commission in accordance with section 75(7) of the 2013 Constitution. They are required to meet to discuss and determine issues pertaining to their responsibilities as set out in section 75 of the Constitution, and under sections 3–5 of the Electoral Act 2014.”

Allowances are determined by the Constitutional Offices Commission. All Electoral Commission members are remunerated with a sitting allowance of \$500FJD per day when a meeting is held.

Commission members are also entitled to a meal allowance of \$50FJD per meeting day which, as agreed between the members, is not paid directly to them but utilised by the Commission secretariat to arrange for their meals and refreshments within the allocated budget (when a face-to-face meeting is held).

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S WORK IN 2023

The Commission held few formal meetings in 2023 prior to the expiry of the term of four (4) Commissioners, and was thereafter unable to conduct any business until the appointment of the new Chairperson and five (5) other new Commissioners in July and August 2023.

Induction

In mid August, the Commission attended an intensive 3-day Induction Workshop delivered by a Technical Advisor from the New Zealand Electoral Commission.

The workshop provided Commissioners with an overview of elections in Fiji and the international setting for elections (such as UN Conventions and international good practice), the Fiji electoral legislation and the Commission functions under that legislation and the Constitution, the Commission's governance role, and the decision making required of the Commission including its appellate functions.



Commission meetings

Between January and December 2023 the Commission met 12 times. The Commission conducts its meetings in person, and via virtual and other electronic mediums.

Section 5(1) of the Electoral Act 2014 states that the Commission must adopt all of its decisions at meetings. Section 5(4A) requires that these decisions be published within five days of a meeting. These decisions are summarized below.

Between January and December 2023 the Commission issued and published nine (9) formal decisions.

Five (5) of those decisions pertained to awarding seats in Parliament to fill vacancies as they occurred:

- 13-Jan-23 Award of Seat in Parliament - Alipate Tuicolo
 - 3-Feb-23 Award of Seat in Parliament - Penioni Koliniwai Ravunawa
 - 21-Feb-23 Award of Seat in Parliament - Virendra Lal
- [Suspension of decision making until the Commission again had a quorum in

July]

- 12-Jul-23 Award of Seat in Parliament – Sachida Nand
- 25-Jul-23 Award of Seat in Parliament – Taito Rokomatu

The remaining decisions were to:

- Uplift the suspension of the conduct of elections for Trade Unions and other small scale elections under section 154 of the Electoral Act.
- Approve publication of Provisional Polling Venues as required under section 41 of the Electoral Act.
- Amend the Voter Registration Policy and Procedure, and associated forms.
- Approve publication of Provisional Voter Lists for each Polling Station as provided for under section 40 of the Electoral Act.

Complaints to the Commission

The Commission's complaints register indicates that four (4) complaints or enquiries were received from the public. All four were responded to, and no substantive issues arose for the Commission to address.

Audit of the National Register of Voters

In 2021 the Commission decided to audit the National Register of Voters and its associated system, following the recommendation from the Multinational Observers Group Report for the 2018 General Election. The 2022 Multinational Observers Group Report repeated this recommendation, and the Commission agreed to continue to pursue that audit.

The Commission was able to confirm that funding for the audit remained available from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and continued to pursue options for the audit.

Commission Reports

In accordance with section 14 of the Electoral Act, the Commission prepared and delivered to the President and Parliament on 20 November 2023 the Commission's 2022 Annual Report, and the Joint Report of the Commission and the Supervisor of Elections on the 2022 General Election.

The Joint Report on the 2022 General Election included joint responses from the Commission and the Supervisor to the recommendations of the Report of the Multinational Observer Group, along with a variety of further recommendations for electoral reform.

The Commission and the FEO jointly recommended that the review of electoral legislation consider the implementation of temporary special measures to enhance gender diversity and women's representation in Parliament in line with Fiji's obligations under international law, in particular Articles 3 and 4 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Fiji in 1995.

In addition, the Commission recommended the removal of disability-based discrimination in the law as part of the review process and that the electoral legislation be strengthened to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in political life (as voters and candidates) on an equal basis with others, as necessary for compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by Fiji in 2017.

Commissioners expressed concern about the lack of synchronization between their terms of appointment (3 years) under the Constitution (section 135) and each electoral cycle (4 years). This meant that their appointments could potentially expire just prior to an election which would be a waste of the large amount of public funds invested in developing institutional capacity and knowledge for the effective oversight of elections. The Commission recommended that appointments be extended to at least the full electoral cycle (4 years) and that they be staggered to avoid vacancies arising at the same time which would likely give rise to quorum difficulties, the loss of institutional knowledge, and less effective performance.

Review of Electoral Laws

With a full complement in the last quarter of the year, the Commission began a scoping of the Electoral Act 2014, Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012, and Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures Act) 2013. The Commission also reviewed the Local Government (Amendment) Bill and provided preliminary comments and suggestions to the FEO Legal Team for consideration by the Working Committee established by the Minister for Local Government.

In November, the Commission submitted a detailed submission to the Prime Minister and Cabinet in support of the inclusion of temporary special measures (TSM) in the Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2023. The Commission outlined Fiji's obligations as a State Party to CEDAW and Fiji's commitment to gender equality under the Constitution. It also clarified the purpose and role of TSM as a form of affirmative action, consistent with the Constitution and the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee in its 2018 Concluding Observations on Fiji's 5th periodic report. The submission expressed concern that nearly 30 years since the ratification of CEDAW, women in Fiji still represented no more than 10.9% of Fiji's 55-member Parliament, occupying just 6 seats compared to the 49 seats occupied by men. Disturbingly, this represented a downward trend since 2014 (16%) and 2018 (19.6%).

The Commission contributed to the Consultation Plan and Budget for Review of Electoral Laws prepared by the Office of the Attorney-General.

The Commission then initiated consultations with all registered political parties.

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS IN 2023

The Commission participated in a variety of external events. These comprised Fiji-based events and international events.

Fiji Events

The Commission hosted a Talanoa session with political parties, which was very well received by the attendees.



The Commission was also represented at events hosted by:



- High Commission of India: Cultural Evening to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of India's Diplomatic Presence in Fiji.
- President of the Republic of Fiji: Fiji Day Reception.
- Minister for Home Affairs & Immigration: Fiji Day Parade.
- Acting Supervisor of Elections: Chief Guest for the Launch of the Fijian Elections Office (FEO) Strategic Plan and the Elections Disability Access Working Group (EDAWG) 4 year Workplan.
- Minister for Home Affairs & Immigration: Remembrance Day 2023.

International Engagements

The Commission accepted invitations to participate in knowledge exchange activities with, and funded by, international partners to broaden its understanding of electoral administration. Significant knowledge exchange activities included:

International IDEA: Commissioners attended this workshop hosted in Fiji, which had as its theme *Protecting Electoral Processes in the Information Environment*.

New Zealand Election Visitor Programme: Funded by the New Zealand Electoral Commission (under the NZ Aid Programme) Commissioners, along with other Pacific election management bodies, attended the Election Visitor Programme to learn about



New Zealand's approach to electoral administration.

Asian Network for Free Elections: Funded by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), Commissioners attended the 6th Asian Electoral Stakeholder Forum, providing further opportunities to engage with Asia and Pacific electoral management bodies on emerging electoral issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

Commissioners expressed sincere gratitude to their international partners for providing opportunities and the associated funding to facilitate their participation in knowledge exchange programmes to deepen their understanding of electoral administration, especially in relation to the Pacific context.

The Commissioners also thank the Supervisor of Elections and the Commission Secretariat for their dedication to the work of the Commission, including the rigorous arrangements required to facilitate the Commissioners' participation in the international knowledge exchange opportunities outlined above, and the record keeping that has facilitated the compilation of this report.

ANNEXURE 1

Budget and Expenditure Report

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

The table below sets out the Commission's Budget and Expenditure Report for the financial year 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023:

Electoral Commission Budget & Expenditure for January 2023–December 2023		
Description	Total Budget	Total Expenditure
Fixed Assets		
Computer Hardware	\$32,650.43	\$32,650.43
Fixed Assets - Total	\$32,650.43	\$32,650.43
Information Technology Expenses	\$ -	\$ -
Software Lic & Maint Contract	\$4,081.00	\$ -
Info Tech Expenses - Total	\$4,081.00	\$ -
Consultants Fees	\$ -	\$ -
Professional Fees-Consultancy	\$448.00	\$448.00
Consultants Fees - Total	\$448.00	\$448.00
Electoral Commission Allowance	\$ -	\$ -
Electoral Commission Allowance	\$84,581.00	\$41,030.00
Electoral Commission Allowance	\$84,581.00	\$41,030.00
Legal Fees	\$ -	\$ -
Legal fees -	\$5,831.00	\$ -
Legal Fees - Total	\$5,831.00	\$ -
Marketing Costs	\$ -	\$ -
Publication	\$59,578.81	\$3,689.21
Advertising Expense	\$1,451.11	\$ -
Signages	\$1,467.89	\$1,467.89
Marketing Costs	\$62,497.81	\$5,157.10
Personnel Emoluments Expense	\$ -	\$ -

Electoral Commission Annual Report 2023

FNPF Contribution	\$9,637.25	\$5,863.75
Salaries	\$66,700.00	\$62,991.58
FNU Levy	\$790.00	\$ 887.20
OHS Expense	\$200.00	\$183.49
Personnel Emoluments Expense - Total	\$77,327.25	\$69,926.02
Postage and Courier Expense	\$ -	\$ -
Postage	\$856.00	\$83.49
Postage and Courier Expense	\$856.00	\$83.49
Office Administration Expense		\$ -
Stationery Expenses	\$581.00	\$500.00
Printing - Stationery	\$10,465.22	\$3,723.83
Hire of Venue	\$1,750.00	\$ -
Purchase of office supplies	\$828.19	\$ -
Catering	\$223.81	\$223.81
Office Administration Expense	\$13,848.22	\$4,447.64
Telecommunication Expenses	\$	\$
Telecom - Telephone	\$72.94	\$72.94
Mobile Phone Expenses	\$1,711.84	\$34.78
Telecommunication Exp - Total	\$1,784.78	\$107.72
Travelling & Accommodation Expense	\$	\$
Accommodation - Local	\$42,339.46	\$ 6,917.40
Travelling Meals	\$8,066.39	\$225.60
Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance	\$60.80	\$ -
Vehicle Fuel	\$3,291.38	\$2,730.96
Travelling - Bus & Taxi Fare	\$63.20	\$30.53
Travelling - Air fare & Boat fare	\$11,564.40	\$2,040.06
Travel and Accommodation Expense	\$65,385.63	\$11,944.55
Financial Expense	\$ -	\$ -
Bank Fees & Charges	\$104.60	\$104.60

Electoral Commission Annual Report 2023

Financial Expense - Total	\$104.60	\$104.60
EC and Office Meeting Expense	\$ -	\$ -
Meetings	\$838.00	\$3,192.94
EC and Office Meeting Expense - Total	\$838.00	\$3,192.94
Operating Expense - Total	\$350,233.72	\$169,092.49

ANNEXURE 2

The Electoral Commission
Audited Financial Statements for 2023

**The Electoral Commission
Financial Statements
For year ended 31 July 2023**

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FINANACIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023

Contents

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Statement of Financial Position	6
Statement of Cash Flows	7
Notes to the Financial Statements	8 - 14

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023

Statement by the Chairperson

In the opinion of the Chairperson, the accompanying Statement of Financial Position gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the EC as at 31 July 2023 and the accompanying Statement of Comprehensive Income and Statement of Cash Flows give a true and fair view of the results and the cash flow for the year then ended, and all related party transactions have been recorded and adequately disclosed in the attached financial statements. In preparing the financial statements, the management is responsible for assessing the TEC's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intend to liquidate the Commission or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Dated :

29/7/25
.....
.....

Signed :

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Promoting Public Sector Accountability and Sustainability through our Audits



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Karsanji Street, Vatuwaqa
P. O. Box 2214, Government Buildings
Suva, Fiji

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Website: www.oag.gov.fj



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

REPORT ON THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of the Electoral Commission (the Commission), which comprise the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 July 2023, Statement of Comprehensive Income and Retained Earnings, Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Commission as at 31 July 2023, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-sized Entities (IFRS for SMEs).

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of my report. I am independent of the Commission in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountant's Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Fiji and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Other Information

The Commissioners and Management are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Statement by the Chairperson but does not include the financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, which I obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, and the Annual Report, which is expected to be made available to me after that date.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information identified above and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained during the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed on the other information that I obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

When I read the Annual Report, if I conclude that there is a material misstatement therein, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance.

Responsibilities of the Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

The Commissioners and the Management are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance IFRS for SMEs and for such internal control as the Commissioners and Management determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Commissioners and Management are responsible for assessing the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Commissioners and Management either intend to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Commissioners are responsible for overseeing the Commission's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISA will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISA, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Commissioners use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures, are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Commission to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

In my opinion, the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Electoral Act 2014 in all material respects, and:

- a) I have been given all information, explanations and assistance necessary for the conduct of the audit; and
- b) the Commission has kept financial records sufficient to enable the financial statements to be prepared and audited.

F. Sen

Finau Seru Nagera
AUDITOR-GENERAL



Suva, Fiji
06 March 2025

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
 STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND RETAINED EARNINGS
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023

	Note	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Government grant revenue		<u>259,104</u>	<u>127,239</u>
		259,104	127,239
Administrative expenses	3	(187,256)	(127,960)
Other expenses	4	(75,231)	(17,983)
Financial Expenses	5	<u>(111)</u>	<u>(118)</u>
		(262,598)	(146,061)
Deficit for the year		(3,494)	(18,822)
Accumulated funds at start of year		(6,253)	-
Effects of Transfer of balances to EC		-	12,569
Accumulated funds at end of year		<u><u>(9,747)</u></u>	<u><u>(6,253)</u></u>

The statement of comprehensive income and retained earnings should be read in conjunction with the notes to and forming part of the financial statements set out on pages 8 to 14.

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 JULY 2023

	Note	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Current assets			
Cash	6	377,733	772
Receivables	7	1,254	61
Total current assets		<u>378,987</u>	<u>833</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	8	-	-
Total non-current assets		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total assets		<u>378,987</u>	<u>833</u>
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	385,367	4,490
Employee entitlements	10	3,367	2,596
Total current liabilities		<u>388,734</u>	<u>7,086</u>
Non-Current liabilities			
Employee entitlements	10	-	-
Total non-current liabilities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total liabilities		<u>388,734</u>	<u>7,086</u>
Net liabilities		<u>(9,747)</u>	<u>(6,253)</u>
Equity			
Accumulated funds		<u>(9,747)</u>	<u>(6,253)</u>

The amounts stated for 2022 is the balance that was reflected in the FEO Financial Statements and is now transferred to EC as first comparative balances for the 2023 Financial Statements disclosed in Note 17. Fijian Elections Office (FEO) and The Electoral Commission (EC) accounts has been adjusted as comparative for FY 2023.


.....
Financial Controller
Date : 29/4/23


.....
Electoral Commission
Date : 29/4/23

The statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the notes to and forming part of the financial statements set out on pages 8 to 14.

**THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023**

	Note	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipt of Government grants		635,815	127,239
Net VAT paid/receivable		(1,193)	(61)
Payment to employees and suppliers of goods and services		(257,661)	(138,975)
Net cash provided /(used in) by operating activities		<u>376,961</u>	<u>(11,797)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Acquisition/disposal of property, plant and equipment		-	-
Net cash (used in) investing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Cash flow from financing activities			
Tender deposits/Term Deposit		-	-
Net cash (used in) financing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		376,961	(11,797)
Adjustments to Opening Balance		-	12,569
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		772	-
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	6	<u><u>377,733</u></u>	<u><u>772</u></u>

The statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the notes to and forming part of the financial statements set out on pages 8 to 14.

**THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023**

Note 1 General information

The Electoral Commission (“EC”) was established under the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, 2013. The address of its registered office and principal place of business is 59-63 High Street, Toorak, Suva, Fiji.

Principal activity

The EC has the responsibility to conduct free and fair elections in accordance with the written law governing elections and any other relevant law. The EC also formulates policies and procedures in regards to Elections.

Note 2 Basis of preparation and accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-sized Entities (IFRS for SMEs) issued by the International Accounting Standards Board. They have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

a) Foreign currency translation

Functional and Presentation Currency

The financial statements are presented in Fiji dollars, which is EC’s functional currency, rounded to the nearest dollar.

Transactions and balances

Foreign currency transactions are translated into the functional currency using exchange rates prevailing at the dates of the transactions. Foreign exchange gains and losses resulting from the settlement of such transactions and from the translation at year-end exchange rates of monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are recognised in profit or loss.

b) Cash

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand and cash at bank.

c) Receivables

Receivables are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for impairment of receivables is established when there is objective evidence that the EC will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

d) Income tax

The Electoral Commission is exempt from income tax in accordance with the provision of Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Regulation 3 of the Fiji Income Tax Act.

e) Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.

Note 2 Basis of preparation and accounting policies (continued)

e) Property, plant and equipment (cont'd)

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method. The following annual rates are used for the depreciation of property, plant and equipment:

- Motor Vehicles 20 percent (20%)
- Office Equipment 10 - 20 percent (10%- 20%)
- Fixtures & Fittings 10 percent (10%)
- Computer Equipment 10 - 20 percent (10%- 20%)
- Plant and Machinery 20 percent (20%)

If there is an indication that there has been a significant change in depreciation rate, useful life or residual value of an asset, the depreciation of that asset is revised prospectively to reflect the new expectation.

f) Intangible asset

Intangible asset is a purchased software that is stated at cost less accumulated amortisation and any accumulated impairment losses. It is amortised over its estimated life of using the straight-line method. The software has an estimated useful life of 5 years.

If there is an indication that there has been a significant change in amortisation rate, useful life or residual value of an intangible asset, the amortisation is revised prospectively to reflect the new expectations.

g) Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, property, plant and equipment are reviewed to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If there is an indication of possible impairment, the recoverable amount, the higher of an asset's (or cash generating unit's) fair value less costs to sell and its value in use, of any affected asset (or group of related assets) is estimated and compared with its carrying amount. If estimated recoverable amount is lower, the carrying amount is reduced to its estimated recoverable amount, and an impairment loss is recognized immediately in profit or loss.

If an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but not in excess of the amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognized for the asset in prior years. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognized immediately in profit or loss.

h) Trade and other payables

Trade and other payables are obligations on the basis of normal credit terms and do not bear interest. They are measured at amortised cost.

i) Employee benefit obligations

Superannuation

Contributions are paid to the Fiji National Provident Fund on behalf of employees to secure retirement benefits. Costs are included in profit or loss as the services are rendered by employees.

Note 2 Basis of preparation and accounting policies (continued)

i) Employee benefit obligations (cont'd)

Short-term benefits

Short-term employee benefit obligations are measured on an undiscounted basis and are expensed in profit or loss as the related service is provided. A liability is recognised for the amount to be paid under short-term benefits if the EC has a present or constructive obligation to pay this amount as a result of past service provided by the employee and the obligation can be measured reliably.

Liabilities for non-accumulating sick leave are recognised when the leave is taken and measured at the rates paid or payable.

j) Revenue recognition

Government grants and donor funds

Grants from the government are recognised at their fair value in profit or loss where there is a reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and the EC has complied with all attached conditions.

Grants and donor funds received where the EC has yet to comply with all attached conditions are recognised as a liability (and included in deferred income within trade and other payables) and released to income when all attached conditions have been complied with.

The government grant received from the Ministry of Finance for the year 2022-2023 is carried forward to 2023-2024 financial year. The grant request for the following financial year was subtracted from the funds left at the year end before release of grant for the new financial year. This portion of grant is recorded as a liability.

k) Leases

Leases in which substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are retained by the lessor are classified as operating leases. Payments made under operating leases (net of any incentives received from the lessor) are charged to profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

l) Value Added Tax (VAT)

The EC is registered for VAT purposes and as a result the financial statements are prepared on a VAT exclusive basis.

m) Comparatives

Where necessary, comparative balances have been adjusted to confirm with changes in the presentation in the current year.

i) Going Concern

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, which assumes that The Electoral Commission will continue to exist in the foreseeable future, and will be able to realise its assets and dissolve its liabilities in the normal course of business.

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023

	2023	2022
	(\$)	(\$)
Note 3		
Administrative expenses		
Personal Emoluments	78,673	57,968
Stationary Expenses	500	7,303
Repair and Maintenance	-	120
Purchase of office supplies	716	396
Catering	224	-
Hire of services	7,205	-
Information Technology expenses	378	273
Electoral commissioner allowance	99,560	61,900
	<u>187,256</u>	<u>127,960</u>
Note 4		
Other expenses		
Advertising	46,323	2,747
Postage and courier expense	83	313
Telecommunication expenses	73	274
Travel and accommodation expenses	24,125	11,566
Meeting and management expenses	4,627	3,083
	<u>75,231</u>	<u>17,983</u>
Note 5		
Financial Expenses		
Bank charges	111	118
	<u>111</u>	<u>118</u>
Note 6		
Cash		
Electoral Commission - Westpac Banking Corporation	377,483	772
Petty Cash	250	-
	<u>377,733</u>	<u>772</u>
Note 7		
Receivables		
VAT Receivable	1,254	61
	<u>1,254</u>	<u>61</u>
Note 8		
Property, Plant and Equipment		
The EC does not hold any assets.		
Note 9		
Trade and other payables		
Creditors and accruals	7,884	3,718
VAT payable	-	-
Revenue Received in Advance	377,483	772
	<u>385,367</u>	<u>4,490</u>
Note 10		
Employee entitlements		
Opening balance	2,596	865
Additional accrual during the year	3,625	2,596
Benefits paid during the year	(2,854)	(865)
Closing balance	<u>3,367</u>	<u>2,596</u>
Note 11		
Prior period adjustment		
There are no prior period adjustments.		
Note 12		
Commitments		
Commitments under operating leases		
The EC does not have any commitments under non-cancellable operating leases that falls due.		

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONT'D)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023

Note 13 Contingent Liabilities

Contingent liabilities amounted to \$...nil... as at 31 July 2023 (2022:nil).

Note 14 Subsequent events

The EC has entered into a non Election Year following the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report. Any item, transaction or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the Chairperson, did not affect significantly the operations of EC, the results of those operations, or the state of the affairs of EC, in subsequent financial years.

Note 15 Related party transactions

Identity and transactions

(i) FEO means the Office of the Supervisor of Elections which is responsible to the Electoral Commission and the Supervisor for the conduct of elections in accordance with the Constitution and the Electoral Decree. The role of the organisation is to conduct free and fair elections in a professional, just and transparent manner.

ii) During the year, FEO received an operating grant of \$26,266,052 (2022: \$23,729,145) from the Government of Fiji.

(iii) During the year, the EC received an operating grant of \$648,893 since this was an Election Year. (2022: \$150,424) from the Government of Fiji.

The Electoral Commission members are appointed by the Office of the President. There are 7 commissioners appointed for a term of three years. One of the members from the 7 commissioners is appointed as a Chairperson. During the financial year, the commissioners were:

Name	Position	Date	Allowance Paid
Kavita Raniga	Member	Term expired 20/03/2023	\$ 14,000
Selina Lee Wah	Member	Term expired 20/03/2023	\$ 14,000
Simione Naiduki	Member	Existing Member	\$ 3,500
Jawahar Lal	Member	Term expired 20/03/2023	\$ 10,500
Margot Jenkins	Member	Term expired 20/03/2023	\$ 14,000
Mukesh Nand	EC Chairperson	Existing Member	\$ 22,500
Ateca Ledia	Member	Existing Member	\$ 15,000
Resignation			
Mukesh Nand	EC Chairperson	22/06/2023	
Simione Naiduki**	Member	Term was until 20/03/2023- resigned before term expired- 2022	Resignation letter not available.
New Appointments			
Barbara Malimali*	Acting Chairperson	7/11/2023	-
Nemani Mati	Member	23/06/2023	-
Inoke Dokonivalu Loganimoce	Member	23/06/2023	-
Naini Singh	Member	23/06/2023	-

**The appointment and resignation for the Electoral Commission is handled by the Constitutional Officers Commission.

FEO does not receive the resignation documents for EC members.

* Appointed as Chairperson on 16/08/2023.

There was total of 2..... staff at 31 July 2023.

Note 16 The financial statement were approved by the Electoral Commission and authorised for issue on:

Name Usaia Rakevili

Sign: 

Date: 29/04/25

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONT'D)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023

Note 17 Separate Reporting for EC

These financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2023 are EC's first set of financial statements that comply with the IFRS for SME'S. EC's date of separation from FEO is 1 August 2022. Its last financial statements for the year ended 31/07/2022 were prepared together with FEO's (Fijian Elections Office) financial statement reporting under IFRS for SME's. The government grant received previously was combined with FEO grant and reported in the FEO financial statements. From 01/08/2022, EC has acquired separate finance system to manage its finances and reports.

The transition has resulted in an adoption of accounting policies for the EC which was previously incorporated in FEO financial statement.

The following explanatory notes to the financial statements describe the movement between the equity and profit or loss presented under the FEO and the newly presented amounts under EC for the reporting period ended 31 July 2022 (i.e. comparative information), as well as the equity presented in the opening statement of financial position (i.e. at 1 August 2022). It also describes all the required accounting policies that is applicable to EC.

In the table below, equity determined in accordance with the IFRS for SMEs, is reconciled to equity determined in accordance with the previous reporting with FEO at both 1 August 2022 (the date of separation from FEO) and 31 July 2022 (the end of the latest period presented in the most recent financial statements prepared in accordance with the previous accounting with FEO).

Reconciliation of Equity

	8/1/2021		Restated Balance
	Previous Accounting	Effect of Separation	As at 31 July 2022
17.1	Cash	-	772
17.2	Receivables	-	61
17.3	Property, plant and equipment	-	
	Total Assets	-	833
17.4	Trade and other payables	-	4,490
17.5	Employee entitlements	-	2,596
	Total Liabilities	-	7,086
	Accumulated Funds (Retained Earnings)	-	(6,253)
	Equity Total	-	(6,253)

Reconciliation of profit or loss for the year end 31 July 2022

	Previous Accounting	Effect of Separation	Balances
17.6	Government grant revenue	-	127,238
17.1-17.5	Administrative expenses	-	(127,960)
17.1-17.5	Other expenses	-	(17,983)
17.1-17.5	Financial Expenses	-	(118)
	Profit or Loss for the period		(18,823)

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONT'D)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2023

Presented below are the notes to the above reconciliation:

- 17.1 Adjustments to the cash refers to the ending bank balance in the EC bank account at the year end 31/07/2022.
- 17.2 Receivables balance refers to vat receivable at the year end for EC for the month of July 2022.
- 17.3 The EC does not hold any assets. All assets are held by the Fijian Elections Office .
- 17.4 Adjustments to Trade and Other Payables relate to the following :
- Recording of expenses and related liabilities for payroll vendor payments to FNPF, FNU, commission payable to Ministry of Finance and payment to FRCS.
- Recording of expenses and related liabilities for the payment of goods and services to vendors .
- Recording of utilised grant as revenue received in advance as government grant will be carried forward to the next financial year and subtracted from next FY grant allocation.
- 17.1-17.5 The balances presented as disclosure in the financial statement of Fijian Elections Office under Note 20 related party transaction has been transferred to EC.
- 17.5 The adjustments to Employee entitlements relates to the recording of annual leave liability in accordance with section 8 "Employee Benefits". The employees of TEC are entitled to annual leave as per section 21.2 of the FEO Human Resource Policy. Previously EC staff's leave was reflected with FEO leave. TEC does not have a separate HR policy, it follows FEO's human resource policy.
- 17.6 The recognition of "government grant revenue" relates to recording of income in accordance to "Government Grants" to match the expenses incurred by EC. TEC receives annual grant from the government to cater for its operational and administrative expenses. The utilised grant at the year end is booked as liabilities in the current year and carried forward to next financial year.

ANNEXURE 3

Fijian Elections Office
2023 Annual Report



Fijian Elections Office
My Election. My Fiji

FIJIAN ELECTIONS OFFICE
2023 | **ANNUAL**
REPORT

www.feo.org.fj

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Abbreviations

ASoE	Acting Supervisor of Elections
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
EDAWG	Elections Disability Access Working Group
EVR	Electronic Voter Registration
FEO	Fijian Elections Office
GIS	Geographic Information System
HR	Human Resources
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
NRV	National Register of Voters
PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators
PO	Presiding Officer
PVL	Provisional Voter List
SoE	Supervisor of Elections
SP	Strategic Plan
TDU	Training and Development Unit
VSCs	Voter Services Centres

Vision

Excellence in the conduct of elections that strengthens democracy in Fiji.

Mission

We deliver electoral services that have the trust and confidence of our stakeholders.

Guiding Principles

Guided by our mission and in realising our vision, we commit to uphold the following Guiding Principles:

- a. **ACCESSIBILITY** - We strive to strengthen electoral processes to foster inclusiveness and equal participation for all eligible voters to exercise their right to vote.
- b. **ACCOUNTABILITY** - We take ownership and responsibility of our actions and decisions.
- c. **COLLABORATION** - We are committed to strengthening relationships with our stakeholders to promote greater electoral participation and trust on election integrity.
- d. **IMPARTIALITY** - We are non-partisan and committed to neutral and fair conduct.
- e. **INDEPENDENCE** - We operate independently in accordance with the rule of law.
- f. **INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY** - We create innovative solutions to meet the needs of our stakeholders within the confines of our legal mandate.
- g. **INTEGRITY** - We are mandated to carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the rule of law and upholding high levels of ethical standards.
- h. **PROFESSIONALISM** - We strive to ensure service excellence to all our stakeholders.
- i. **GOOD GOVERNANCE** - We implement and uphold good governance practices to ensure transparency and adherence to the rule of law.



Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the 2023 Annual Report of the Fijian Elections Office (FEO). This report captures our continuous efforts to uphold electoral integrity, foster public confidence, and strengthen democratic institutions in Fiji.

The year 2023 was one of reflection, engagement, and strategic realignment.

Following the successful delivery of the 2022 General Election, the FEO embarked on a critical post-election review process, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to improve future operations and policy. We also embarked on the mammoth task of launching our 2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan. Our international engagements reaffirmed our commitment to transparency and regional leadership in electoral management.

We are proud of the achievements made possible by the tireless efforts of our dedicated staff, the trust of the Fijian public, and the support of our partners and stakeholders. I invite you to explore this report as a testament to our accountability, resilience, and readiness for the future.

Ana Mataciwa

Supervisor of Elections

Introduction

The FEO 2023 Annual Report provides a detailed overview of our strategic operations and achievements throughout the year. As a post-election year, 2023 presented an opportunity for the FEO to reflect, consolidate, and build upon the successes and lessons learned from the 2022 General Election.

This report covers our commitment to institutional strengthening, stakeholder engagement, internal reforms, and innovations aimed at improving service delivery and electoral readiness. Each directorate's contributions are highlighted in alignment with the FEO's Strategic Plan 2024–2027.

The FEO continues to uphold its responsibility to facilitate free, fair, and credible elections, ensuring that electoral services are professional, impartial, and accessible to all citizens of Fiji.

Executive Directorate

Executive Directorate

The Executive Directorate of the FEO is responsible for providing strategic oversight and support across key operational areas, including Legal, International Relations, the Electoral Commission Secretariat, Internal Audit, and Communications and Public Relations. In 2023, the Directorate played a pivotal role in ensuring legal compliance, advancing international cooperation, supporting the effective functioning of the Electoral Commission, enhancing institutional transparency through internal audits, and maintaining public trust through targeted communications and outreach. The Executive Directorate is headed by the SoE and supports her in the function of her roles as SoE, Registrar of Political Parties and Secretary to the Electoral Commission.

Legal

Legal Department

The year 2023 saw the Manager Legal, Ms Ana Mataciwa, being appointed as ASoE. This saw the Political Parties Engagement Officer being appointed to act in the position of Manager Legal. The Department also includes a Research Officer, Ms Rachel Simmons, who assists the Acting Manager Legal with all legal work.

The Legal Department provides the following services to the FEO:

- Legal vetting of all FEO documents to be published, contracts, and content put out for our stakeholders;
- Provide legal research on best practices;
- Provide legal opinion and advise to the executive management of the FEO;
- Monitor compliance for Political Parties in submitting financial disclosures to the Registrar of Political Parties;
- Manage relevant projects assigned by Executive Management; and
- Any other assigned duties by the ASoE.

Review of 2022 General Election

FEO's review team conducted a Review Workshop at Warwick Resort Fiji from 21 to 24 March 2023 and compiled a list of recommendations that were finalised from the said workshop.

The consolidated recommendations from the internal review addressed three areas within FEO, which is the Executive Directorate, the Operations Directorate and the Corporate Directorate.

Given that the internal review was conducted by the project holders of the FEO, the recommendations thus touched on the projects under each of the three Directorates, and identified the processes that did not work well, those that would work better and recommendations for improvement of FEO operations.

Local Government Elections Working Group

On 31 January 2023, Cabinet approved the formation of a Working Group to oversee the review of the local government elections in Fiji. The Working Group is comprised of the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Local Government as Chairperson and includes the ASoE, the Solicitor General, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Economy, and the Chief Executive Officers of all 13 municipalities. The ASoE delegated the Acting Manager Legal, the Divisional Manager West and the Director Operations to be part of the Working Group representing the FEO.

The first Working Group meeting took place on 9 February 2023 and it was decided that public consultations would have to roll out to all the municipalities to gather people's views on municipal elections. The first round of public consultations took place from 24 April – 5 May 2023. The Acting Manager Legal was nominated by ASoE to be part of the team to go around the country for public consultations and all 13 municipalities were covered.

After the Public Consultations, suggestions and recommendations were submitted to Cabinet along with proposed timelines on 24 May 2023.

The Drafting Subcommittee of the Working Group worked on reviewing the Local Government Act as well as looking at other consequential amendment in July 2023. A draft Bill was prepared and submitted to Solicitor General's Office for their vetting on 9 August before it was submitted to Cabinet on 31 August 2023.

Another round of consultations was organized for the Draft Bill. In order to prepare for the public consultations, the Working Group undertook briefings, from 11 September 2023, with key stakeholders, which included:

- i. internal stakeholders - Electoral Commission, FEO, chief executive officers of municipal councils and special administrators;
- ii. political parties;
- iii. media;
- iv. civil society organisations; and
- v. diplomatic core and development partners.

Awareness on the public consultation was undertaken through all forms of media, including television – talkback shows, radio advertising, newspaper advertising and social media blasts. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems supported the Working Group through funding of travel and accommodation.

From 25 September to 14 October 2023, the Working Group held face to face consultations in the 13 municipalities for the Draft Bill. The Bill was further amended taking into account some feedback from the public, stakeholders and also Cabinet instructions. It was then tabled in Parliament and passed on 24 November 2023 as Local Government (Amendment)(No.2) Act 2023.

Investigation into the Glitch

On 26 May 2023, A meeting was held in the SG's Office and the FEO was being informed by the Solicitor General of the Cabinet Decision on the Glitch Audit. In this meeting the FEO gave an undertaking to provide the necessary support to the Glitch Task Force made up of representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The legal department prepared a draft Terms of Reference for External Audit of Results and submitted it to SG's Office. This was done following a request from SG's Office for us to develop the same.

The Taskforce conducted their investigations but nothing was concluded and the FEO did not receive any further updates from the Taskforce or the Ministry of Justice.

Legal Review of Electoral Laws

The Cabinet in February this year approved the review of the electoral laws. The FEO, following the review of the 2022 General Election commenced work on reviewing the electoral laws with the Legal Department taking a lead role in it. The FEO used the recommendations from the Multinational Observer Group Recommendations for the 2022 General Election, FEO-EC Joint Report and the 2022 General Election Review as a basis in looking at amending the three (3) electoral laws.

Amendments to the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2012

This year, Parliament passed the following legislations which had implications on how the FEO conducts voter registration:

- **Act No. 18 of 2023** – Interpretation (Amendment) Act 2023; and
- **Act No. 19 of 2023** – Electoral (Registration of Voters) (Amendment) Act 2023.

The amendments removed the mandatory requirement of using birth certificate names in an Application for Voter Registration. This required the FEO to amend its voter registration policies, procedures and forms to adhere to the change in the law. It was a smooth transition and the organization did not encounter any major issues or challenges while making changes.

Political Party Management

Political Parties Management

The Registrar of Political Parties, being the regulating authority for political parties in Fiji, effectively managed political parties. The Political Parties Engagement Officer who provides a supporting role to the Registrar of Political Parties ensured that political parties and candidates complied with all statutory requirements.

Registered Political Parties

At the beginning of 2023 there were nine (9) registered political parties in Fiji and they are listed as follows:

1. **All Peoples Party**
2. **FijiFirst**
3. **Fiji Labour Party**
4. **National Federation Party**
5. **New Generation Party**
6. **Social Democratic Liberal Party**
7. **The People's Alliance**
8. **Unity Fiji**
9. **We Unite Fiji Party**

There were no new registered parties in 2023. There were four (4) political parties that were suspended on 17 May 2023, namely All Peoples Party, FijiFirst, New Generation Party and We Unite Fiji Party for failing to submit their Audited Account as required under section 26(2) of the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Act 2013. The New Generation Party was later deregistered on 1 August 2023 while the other three (3) parties rectified breach and had their suspension lifted.

Submission of 2022 General Election Forms 2, 3 and 4

Political Parties and Candidates for the 2022 General Election had to submit final disclosures relating to the election by 13 February 2023. The disclosures that had to be submitted included the Forms 2, 3 and 4. All political parties and candidates complied with this requirement.

Invitations of Political Parties

In 2023, the FEO invited political parties to the following organised events:

DATE OF MEETING	VENUE	EVENT
05/04/22	FEO Conference Room	Meeting with the ASoE
07/07/23	FEO Conference Room	Political Parties' consultation for FEO Strategic Plan 2024-2027

12/09/23	FEO Conference Room	Local Government Elections Consultation meeting with the Working Group
03/11/23	Holiday Inn	Launch of FEO's Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Provisional Voter List

On 9 October, 2023 political parties were invited via email to purchase a USB copy of the Provisional Voter List at \$1,000 a copy. No political parties made a purchase of the Provisional Voter List.

Internal Audit

Internal auditing is an independent and objective assurance and consulting function designed to add value and enhance the effectiveness of an organization's operations.

At the FEO, the Internal Audit function plays a vital role in promoting best practices and strengthening governance by providing oversight and advisory input across all corporate service areas. In 2023, the Internal Audit function was reinstated under the Executive Directorate, reporting directly to the ASoE, thereby reinforcing the independence and integrity of the role. During the year 2023, the Internal Audit Coordinator undertook the following major activities:

- **Monitoring of Strategic Plan Measurable Objective** - Oversaw the progress and reporting on measurable objectives under the Strategic Plan (SP).
- **Review of 2022 General Election Processes** - Facilitated a comprehensive review of the 2022 General Election processes in collaboration with the Legal Department to identify lessons learned and areas for improvement.
- **Financial Investigation** - Conducted an internal investigation into discrepancies identified in financial documents and accounts for one of the Divisions, with recommendations provided for corrective action.
- **Verification of Protocol of Results** - Performed verification of scanned copies of the Protocol of Results to confirm the completeness and integrity of election-related documentation.
- **Strategic Planning Contribution** - Actively contributed as a committee member in the development of the FEO's Strategic Plan 2024-2027.
- **Audit of Data Cleaning Exercise** - Conducted an audit of the Data Cleaning exercise to assess the accuracy and consistency of voter registration records and ensure data quality standards were upheld.

The Internal Audit function remains committed to enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accountability within the FEO. Regular engagements with management and collaborative reviews continue to strengthen the organization's internal control environment.

Stakeholder Engagement & Awareness

Stakeholder Engagement

In 2023, the FEO undertook a broad and inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement following the conclusion of the 2022 General Election. Key consultations were held with civil society organisations, media and trade union representatives, to review election outcomes and foster collaborative improvements. These engagements were part of a structured post-election review initiative that also included the 2022 General Election Review Workshops for faith-based organisations, youth groups, and other community actors.

The FEO further strengthened domestic collaboration through regional consultations with Divisional Managers and local election stakeholders, aimed at informing the development of its Strategic Plan 2024–2027. Media consultations and targeted awareness sessions were held to align stakeholder understanding with the FEO's evolving role and responsibilities.

Additionally, the FEO launched a series of public outreach and awareness activities through television platforms such as Fiji TV's "Breakfast Show", FBC's "Saqamoli Matters", "Ketekete nei Nau", and the Fiji Times' "The Lens @177" program, where the Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) addressed voter concerns and election readiness. These engagements played a critical role in rebuilding public confidence in the FEO and enhancing institutional visibility.

As part of efforts to strengthen relations with the media, the ASoE facilitated two (2) Quarterly Press Conferences. These sessions served as key platforms for open and transparent engagement, allowing the ASoE to directly update the media on the FEO's ongoing activities, key projects, and strategic initiatives.

Equally important, the Press Conferences provided an invaluable opportunity for journalists to raise questions and receive timely, first-hand responses from the ASoE, reinforcing trust and fostering a collaborative relationship between the FEO and the media.

VENUE	ACTIVITY DATE
International IDEA Meeting with ASoE and EC Chair	22/02/23
ASoE Meeting with Dialogue Fiji	24/02/23
ASoE Meeting with IFES Vice President Katherine Ellena	07/03/23
Divisional Managers Stakeholder Consultation on 2022 GE Operations	02/03/23 - 18/03/23
2022 General Election Review workshop with the Fiji Police Force	10/03/23
SoE 2022 GE Report Submitted to EC	16/03/23
EDAWG 2022 GE Feedback Meeting	20/03/23
2022 General Election Review Workshop	22/03/23 - 24/03/23
2022 Fiji Election Project Review and Planning Workshop (UNDP)	26-28/04/23
FEO hosts the 25th Anniversary PIANZEA SoM	02 -04/05/23
FEO undertakes first Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Workshop	08 - 10/05/23
Media Consultation on Review of 2022 GE	18/05/23
EDWAG 4-Year Workplan Workshop	06-07/06/23
Trade Union Election Awareness and Review with registered Trade Unions	05-14/06/23
ASoE Receives PNG Constitutional and Law Reform Commission	02/08/23
ASoE first TV interview - FijiTV Breakfast Show	21/08/23
ASoE Second TV Interview - FBC Saqamoli Matters	23/08/23
ASoE third TV interview - Ketekete nei Nau	28/08/23
ASoE fourth TV interview - 'Na I Katalau'	30/08/23
FEO Conducted EVR Training for new staff	31/08/23 - 01/09/23
EC Chair and ASoE submit EC 2020-2021 Annual Report to the Parliament Standing Committee	01/09/23
PIFs, PIANZEA, UNEAD BRIDGE Workshop Co-hosted by the FEO	19 -22./09/23
FEO conducts internal Managing Change Effectively Workshop	13/10/23

FEO receives courtesy visit by Kiribati PEO Takiakia Maatia	20/10/23
USAID Chief Digital Democracy and Rights Officer Courtesy Call to ASoE	20/10/23
Launch of the FEO's Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027 and EDAWG 4 Year Work Plan	03/11/23
5 FEO staff complete external capacity building training - USP Certificate in Project Management	(29/05-04/06) 09/11/23
FEO conducted Introduction to Elections Training for 16 staff	26-27/11/23
Stakeholder Engagement and Awareness Department established	24/11/23
BRIDGE Operational Planning Workshop	29/11/23 - 01/12/23
LDS College Year 8 Students Visit (First FEO School Visit)	04/12/23
International IDEA Protecting Electoral Processes in the Information Environment Phase 1 workshop	04-05/12/23

International Relations

The year 2023 saw the FEO reinforcing its international partnerships and solidifying Fiji's standing within the global electoral community. The Office began the year by meeting with key international democracy stakeholders, including International IDEA and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), to share lessons from the 2022 elections and identify areas for technical collaboration.

A major highlight of the year was the successful hosting of the 25th Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (PIANZEA) Senior Officials Meeting in Nadi, which convened electoral leaders from across the Pacific. This event reaffirmed the FEO's commitment to regional cooperation and knowledge exchange.

The ASoE also engaged in bilateral meetings with representatives from international missions and partners, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and development agencies supporting the Electoral Donors and Agencies Working Group (EDAWG), to align electoral support initiatives.

These efforts contributed to the development of multi-year international support frameworks and enhanced Fiji's credibility as a regional leader in electoral administration.

Corporate Services Directorate

Corporate Services Directorate

The Corporate Services Directorate plays a pivotal role in supporting the core operations of the FEO by managing key internal functions that ensure organisational efficiency and effectiveness. It oversees Human Resources, Finance, Training, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and Procurement. Through these units, the Directorate is responsible for workforce planning and development, financial management and reporting, staff capacity building, technological support and infrastructure, as well as the timely and compliant acquisition of goods and services. Collectively, these functions enable the FEO to operate smoothly and deliver its electoral mandate with professionalism and integrity.

Human Resources

The core functions of the Human Resources (HR) Department include conducting merit-based recruitment and selection processes to ensure the appointment of high-performing, honest individuals who uphold the highest standards of integrity. The Department is also committed to promoting equal employment opportunities and is responsible for reviewing and confirming position-based remuneration and benefits across the FEO.

In 2023, the Department successfully completed several SP initiatives aimed at strengthening organisational capacity and operational efficiency. Key achievements included exploring opportunities for the FEO to participate in various award programs, finalising the FEO's organisational structure, and facilitating external HR audits. The Department also organised corporate social responsibility activities, implemented an online application module for FEO vacancies, and reviewed, amended, and finalised the IT Directorate structure.

In addition to its SP initiatives, the Department carried out several key operational activities in 2023.

Post Processing

A total of seven (7) recruitment batches were advertised during the year. The breakdown of these recruitment activities are listed as follows:

Batch A/2023

A1/2023	Divisional Manager	Appointed
A2/2023	Operations Planning Officer	Appointed

A3/2023	Divisional Administrative Assistant-Northern	Appointed
A4/2023	Driver	Appointed

Batch B/2023

B1/2023	Public Relations & Engagement Coordinator	Appointed
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Batch C/2023

C1/2023	Finance Officer- Payments & Reconciliation	Appointed
C2/2023	Graphics Design Officer	Appointed
C3/2023	Human Resource Officer	Appointed

Batch D/2023

D1/2024	Manager Procurement & Asset Management	Appointed
D2/2024	System Analyst/Programmer	Re-advertised
D3/2024	ICT Coordinator	Appointed
D4/2024	Operations Coordinator	Appointed
D5/2024	Operations Coordinator - Voter Registration & Polling Venue	Appointed
D6/2024	Finance Officer- Payroll	Appointed
D7/2024	Geospatial Officer	Appointed
D8/2024	Divisional Administrative Assistant-Western	Appointed
D8/2024	Storeman	Appointed

Batch E/2023

E1/2023	System Analyst/Programmer (re-advertised)	Appointed
E2/2023	Training & Development Coordinator	Appointed

E3/2023	Divisional Administrative Assistant - Central	Appointed
E4/2023	Digital Engagement Assistant Operations Assistant- Voter	Appointed
E5/2023	Registration & Polling Venue	On-Hold
E6/2023	Procurement Assistant	On-Hold
E7/2023	Receptionist	Appointed

Batch F/2023

F1/2023	Programmer	Appointed
F2/2023	Asset Management & Procurement Coordinator	Appointed

Batch G/2023

G1/2023	Administrative Assistant	Pool Position
G2/2023	Driver	Pool Position
G3/2023	Logistics Assistant	Pool Position

Performance Management System (PMS)

During the year, the organization continued to implement a robust PMS to assess and enhance employee productivity and alignment with strategic goals. Regular performance evaluations were conducted, focusing on key deliverables, competencies, and individual contributions. Based on the outcomes of these assessments, staff were remunerated accordingly, ensuring a fair and transparent link between performance and reward.

Information and Communication Technology

This year, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Department developed initiatives aimed at improving operational efficiency, strengthening cybersecurity, enhancing communication infrastructure, and supporting digital transformation within the organization. The Department was able to complete 91% of the activities that were planned for the year 2023 as outlined in the SP.

Key ICT Activities

Infrastructure Upgrades

- Network Optimization: Upgraded network infrastructure, including the installation of new QNAP NAS (Quality Network Appliance Provider) for Production and DR (Disaster Recovery) Site and enhanced Wi-Fi coverage in all departments.
- Server Modernization: conducted review on existing server infrastructure to continue using virtual servers for high-performance through fine tuning reliability and scalability.

Cybersecurity Enhancements

- Firewall & Endpoint Protection: Implemented new FortiGate next-generation firewalls and implemented new ESET endpoint protection solutions to safeguard against cyber threats.
- Security Awareness Training: Updated the ICT Security Training contents on the online learning platform (eVuli) and organised training for all core staff via this platform.
- Captive Portal: Rolled out network access authentication across all offices to enhance access security.
- Email Security: enabled MFA in Google Workspace for all FEO account users to enhance email access security.

Software and Systems Development

- Research and pre project planning for the upgrade of the Electronic Voter Registration (EVR) System from a desktop application to web-based application which included a visit to the Solomons Islands Electoral Commission.
- Applications Review and Update: preparation of plans for the upgrade and enhancements on systems and applications from the post election review report.
- Website Revamp: Conduct updates on public facing websites for improved user experience, mobile compatibility, and search engine optimization.

ICT Support and Maintenance

- Helpdesk Operations: Increased responsiveness of the ICT helpdesk by educating all user to send all ICT requests to the ICT Helpdesk. Reviewing responses times and ensuring that tickets are attended to in a timely manner. Configured a feature whereby tickets that are older than 7 days is notified to the ICT Team.
- Hardware Maintenance: Regular servicing and replacement of outdated hardware across departments and EVR Kits.

Digital Transformation Initiatives

- Remote Work Support: Enhanced VPN (Virtual Private Network) services and remote collaboration tools to support hybrid working models.

Achievements and Impact

- **Increased Efficiency:** Reduction in system downtime and improved workflow processes.
- **Improved Security:** Zero major cybersecurity incidents reported, thanks to proactive measures and staff awareness.
- **Higher User Satisfaction:** Positive feedback on upgraded systems and support services.

Challenges

- Budget constraints delayed some infrastructure projects.
- Limited bandwidth in remote offices posed connectivity issues.
- Adoption resistance in some departments to new digital tools and security.

Election Projects

- Completion of Voter List Analysis Project between June to September.

Finance

The core function of the Finance Department is to provide financial and administration support to ensure that Election commitments are met. The department must 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 the year 2023.

- Conducted budget consultations/preparation with each directorate.
- Compilation and submission of the 2023-2024 budget.
- Managed appropriate financial records for donor funds.
- Requested operational grant for Electoral Commission and FEO.
- Prepared annual financial statement.
- Assisted in the conduct of financial statement audit for the year 2021 and 2022.
- Managed funds for the Electoral Commission.

The following are the activities which will commence in the year 2024:

- Assist the office of the Auditor General's Office in the conduct of 2021 and 2022 audit.
- Request for operating grant for Electoral Commission and FEO.
- Prepare Annual Financial Statements.
- Provide financial support for all the projects and operational activity for the office.
- Manage funds for the electoral Commission and the FEO.

Budget /Expenditure

This annual report falls on two different financial year/budget year. The months from January 2023 to July 2023 belong to the budget year

2022-2023 whereas the months from August to December is for the budget year 2023-2024. The total funds released by Ministry of Finance for the year 2022-2023 was \$ 23,118,819.00 whereas for the year 2023-2024, \$5,531,156.00 has been allocated. The table below summarises the expenditure summary for two different budget cycles. Procurement

FEO EXPENDITURE REPORT JANUARY 2024 TILL DECEMBER 2024			
	JANUARY - JULY	AUGUST - DECEMBER	
	EXPENDITURE	EXPENDITURE	TOTAL
Fixed Assets	71,904		71,904
Other operational Exp	10,790	340	11,131
Information Technology Expenses	308,897	145,686	454,583
Consultants Fees	51,570	6,739	58,309
Depreciation	289,776		289,776
Management Expense	1,414		1,414
Insurance	1,952	29,463	31,415
Legal Fees	14,135	18,403	32,538
Loss-Disposal Fixed Asset	18,510		18,510
Marketing Costs	333,126	15,171	348,297
Operational Losses			
Newspaper & Subscription	570		570
Personnel Emoluments Expense	1,935,305	1,025,108	2,960,413
Staff Training - Training	9,512	230	9,743

Postage and Courier Expense	495,789	1,477	497,265
Office Administration Expense	1,181,128	306,830	1,487,958
Telecommunication Exp	273,719	54,428	328,147
Travel and Accommodation Expense	898,239	42,540	940,780
Financial Expense	3,042	1,569	4,610
EC and Office Meeting Expense	347		347
Operating Expense - Total	5,899,724	1,647,985	7,547,709

Procurement

The year 2023 was a relatively quiet year for the Procurement Team with the following key activities being carried out:

1. Movement of ballot boxes from the containers to racks by Area Office;
2. Sorting of materials received from the divisional offices;
3. Facilitation of Board of Survey materials donated to the Ministry of Education and Hilton Special School;
4. Tender of Mahindra Vehicles;
5. Closure and return of divisional offices and warehouse back to the landlord;
6. Account transfers of Electricity Fiji Limited and Water Authority of Fiji, including bond collection;
7. Contract renewals for services;
8. Cleared of all pending payment for 2022 General Election; and
9. General stock take at the warehouse.

Training and Development Unit

In 2023, the Training and Development Unit (TDU) remained committed to building organisational capacity through targeted learning initiatives and

continuous professional development. The Unit focused on aligning training programs with strategic priorities, enhancing staff capabilities, and fostering a culture of continuous learning. Key activities included the delivery of in-house workshops, and partnerships with external providers to ensure the workforce remains competent, adaptable, and well-prepared for future challenges.

Capacity Development Training

The TDU organised major trainings in line with the transition at the FEO. These trainings were Strategic Planning Workshop, Change Management Workshop, Risk Management Workshop, Introduction to Election, Time Management, Certificate of Professional Development in Project Management.

Furthermore, Manager of ICT and Infrastructure attended a course on Technology and Cyber Risk Management for Managers. The training emphasised that responsibility for technology and cyber safety does not lie solely with an organisation’s ICT department but is a shared responsibility among all staff who have access to digital systems and platforms.

In addition, a Critical Thinking and Decision-Making training session was organized to enhance participants’ cognitive skills and improve their decision-making abilities. A total of twenty-four (24) staff attended the training.

Lastly, Azure Administrator Training was organised for FEO IT personnels to manage subscriptions, secure identities, administer infrastructure and configure virtual networking.

Mandatory Training

A Basic First Aid and CPR Training was conducted by the St. Johns Association of Fiji. The training was attended by seventeen (17) staff members and aimed to equip participants with the essential knowledge and practical skills required to provide immediate care to individuals experiencing



medical emergencies. This initiative ensures that staff are prepared to respond effectively to health-related incidents, offering critical support until professional medical assistance is available. The two-day, full-day training program incorporated a combination of theoretical instruction, practical exercises, and group activities to enhance participant engagement and learning outcomes. The training concluded with individual assessments conducted by the external trainer to evaluate participants’ understanding and application of the skills taught.

This comprehensive approach ensured that staff not only acquired essential first aid and CPR knowledge but were also able to demonstrate competence in real-life scenarios.

Analysis of the Presiding Officers (PO) Record Book (RB).

The analysis of the Presiding Officers' Record Book (PORB) for Election Day and Pre-Poll Voting was conducted at the Centre for Training and Development in Nasese, Suva in early 2023, following the 2022 General Election.

The aim was to enable FEO to: identify areas where POs may have made errors and understand the underlying causes; develop targeted training strategies to address skill and knowledge gaps in preparation for future elections; streamline or improve operational processes where necessary; and collect data on voters with disabilities and instances of assisted voting. This latter information will be particularly valuable in informing initiatives to enhance electoral participation among persons with disabilities.

The project was conducted by nineteen (19) project staff.

Project Team	
Supervisors	02
Data Entry Clerks	12
Quality Assurance	03
Scanning Clerks	02

A total of one thousand, four hundred and thirty-four (1,434) PORBs for Election Day and six hundred and eight (618) PORBs for Pre-Poll were analysed. The following outcome was successfully achieved; the errors made

including their nature and location, were identified. These insights support the FEO in updating relevant operational manuals and record books as needed. In addition, the analysis gathered valuable data on voters with disabilities and instances of assisted voting, which has assisted the FEO to identify strategies to improve accessibility and inclusiveness in future electoral processes. Finally, the findings have assisted the Training and Development Unit in designing and delivering targeted, effective, and contextually relevant training programs for Presiding Officers in preparation for the next General Election.

Operations Directorate

Operations Directorate

In 2023, the Operations Directorate of the FEO focused on strengthening its operational readiness and refining internal systems to support the organisation's strategic goals. The Directorate played a central role in planning, coordinating, and delivering logistical and operational support for key electoral activities, with a strong emphasis on preparedness for future elections. Continuous improvement in processes, resource deployment, and stakeholder coordination remained a priority throughout the year.

Voter Registration Services

The Voter Registration team plays a vital role in maintaining the integrity of the electoral process by conducting continuous voter registration. This ensures that all eligible individuals can register up until the issuance of the writ for the next General Election. As part of this process, the team also carries out regular data cleansing activities to enhance the quality of voter information. This includes the removal of deceased, renounced and duplicate records, ensuring that the National Register of Voters remains accurate, up-to-date, and of the highest quality.

The FEO commenced its voter registration exercise in January 2023. From 16 January 2023, Voter Services Centres (VSCs) in Suva, Labasa, and Lautoka began offering registration services to the public. These VSCs facilitated a range of services, including new registrations, updates or corrections to voter details, replacement of voter cards, confirmation of deceased individuals, and the acceptance of mobile registration requests.

Below is a list of Voter Services Centres that delivered these services to the public.

DIVISION	AREA	LOCATION	DATE OPENED
Central	Suva	Old Fiji Visitors Bureau Building, Suva.	02/01/23
Western	Lautoka	36 Vitogo Parade, Lautoka.	02/01/23
Northern	Labasa	Legal Aid Building, Jaduram Street, Labasa.	02/01/23

In addition to the services offered at the VSCs, the FEO also carried out mobile voter registrations in response to requests received from the public. This included facilitating on-site registrations at various locations, notably fulfilling a request from the Fiji National University (FNU). As part of this initiative, the registration team visited both the Samabula and Nasinu

campuses to provide registration services to students and staff.

In July 2023, Parliament passed the Interpretation (Amendment) Act 2023 and the Electoral (Registration of Voters) (Amendment) Act 2023, marking a significant change in the voter registration process. These amendments removed the mandatory requirement for applicants to use the name exactly as stated on their birth certificates when registering to vote. Applicants may now register using the names stated on their certificate of registration or naturalisation, where applicable. In response, the FEO revised its Voter Registration Policy and Procedures to align with the new legislative requirements. The Voter Registration form, along with all other relevant EVR forms, was amended accordingly and submitted to the Electoral Commission for approval, in accordance with section 4(2A) of the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act 2013. Additionally, comprehensive training materials were developed, and FEO staff were trained on the updated laws, processes, and revised forms to ensure consistent implementation nationwide.

The FEO maintains a comprehensive and up-to-date record of all registered voters in Fiji through the EVR system. As of December 2023, the three Voter Services Centres recorded a total of 42,758 engagements. This included 8,606 new voter registrations and 34,152 instances of corrections and card replacements.

The graph below illustrates the Voter Registration Trend for 2023.



Data Cleaning

As part of its ongoing efforts to maintain the accuracy of the National Register of Voters (NRV), the FEO conducted a data cleaning exercise in July 2023 to remove deceased voters from the register. These individuals were identified through Confirmation of Deceased forms submitted at the Voter Services Centres, as well as through secondary verification of data received from the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry and the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPf). As a result, a total of 2,176 deceased voters were removed from the NRV between 1 January and 31 December 2023.

In compliance with legal requirements, individuals serving a sentence of imprisonment for a term of twelve months or more must be removed from the NRV. Accordingly, 48 voters were flagged as inmates and removed during the data cleaning process. Additionally, individuals whose disqualification period had expired were reinstated to the NRV, based on a list provided by the Fiji Corrections Service. This resulted in the reinstatement of 66 eligible voters.

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	6659	36411	36332	27439	20672	14066	6017	1809
Central	Female	6711	36300	35063	27198	21071	15777	7536	2737
Eastern	Male	405	2554	3325	2655	2346	1803	773	253
Eastern	Female	340	1939	2800	2200	1934	1403	744	314
Northern	Male	1989	10597	11604	10045	8446	5607	2178	710
Northern	Female	2135	9973	10252	8687	7787	5679	2994	1163
Western	Male	4841	26636	30741	26310	20224	14283	5872	1788
Western	Female	4844	27147	29406	24382	19628	15302	7494	2918
Overseas	Male	13	472	1083	1424	1088	763	327	78
Overseas	Female	11	275	767	1064	935	709	284	52
Total		27948	152304	161373	131404	104131	75392	34219	11822

GENDER DISTRIBUTION BY DIVISION		
Division	Gender	Totals
Central	Male	149405
	Female	152393
Eastern	Male	14114
	Female	11674
Northern	Male	51176
	Female	48670
Western	Male	130695
	Female	131121
Overseas	Male	5248
	Female	4097
Total		698593

GENDER DISTRIBUTION BY DIVISION		
Summary	Total	Percentage
Registered Voters	698,593	
Gender	Gender	Gender
Female	347,955	49.81%
Male	350,638	50.19%
Division	Total	Percentage
Central	301,850	43%
Western	261,713	37%
Northern	99,800	14%
Eastern	25,885	4%
Overseas	9,345	1%

Electronic Filing

The FEO undertook an Electronic Filing (E-Filing) Project from April to September 2023 to upload Voter Registration (EVR) forms stored at its headquarters and warehouse. The project aimed to improve the efficiency and accessibility of voter information by scanning and uploading these forms into the EVR Document Manager. Originally targeting 15,000 forms per week, the project team exceeded expectations by scanning up to 20,000 forms per day with the support of eight scanners and a dedicated team of staff.

Throughout the project, a total of 611,695 forms were scanned, of which 345,064 underwent quality assurance (QA) checks. The project involved 15 dedicated staff initially, later expanded to 30 due to time constraints near the end of the financial year. Despite challenges such as limited drive space, scanner issues, and staff absenteeism, the project was successfully completed with strong interdepartmental coordination and support from the EVR, EMIS, ICT, HR, and Procurement teams.

Approximately 266,631 forms are yet to go through QA, and a second phase of the project was proposed for the upcoming financial year to complete this task.

Enhancement of the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) System

The FEO has been using a desktop-based BVR system since its implementation in 2012. While it has supported three successful General Elections, the system has not undergone any major upgrades. Challenges such as delayed data syncing, manual backups, risk of data loss, and inefficiencies in remote registration have highlighted the need for modernization. Following extensive internal reviews and consultations with the system vendor, Electoral Services International (ESI), the FEO determined that upgrading to a web-based application would significantly improve accessibility, efficiency, data security, and scalability. The proposed upgrade aligns with the FEO's strategic objectives to enhance service delivery and digital transformation.

As part of its efforts to modernize and enhance the BVR System, the FEO sent a delegation to the Solomon Islands in October 2023 to observe the implementation of a web-based BVR system by the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC). The visit aimed to gather insights on the system's functionality, assess its potential for adoption in Fiji, and engage with the system's vendor, Electoral Services International (ESI), for technical discussions. The mission was undertaken by Manager Voter Registration and Polling Venue, Mr. Rangeet Chand, and Manager ICT, Mr. Asish Prakash.

During the visit, the FEO team observed the operational environment, tested system features, and received in-depth demonstrations of the web-based portal's core functionalities including voter registration, duplicate adjudication, voter list generation, and security controls.

The system proved to be user-friendly, efficient, and highly scalable, with robust data security and verification measures. Discussions with SIEC staff and ESI highlighted the system's advantages in terms of accessibility, real-time updates, remote registration capabilities, and streamlined management of electoral processes.

Based on their observations, the FEO team concluded that transitioning from the current desktop-based BVR system to a web-based application would significantly improve registration efficiency, data integrity, and service delivery in Fiji. The team recommended the adoption of the system, highlighting features such as multi-factor authentication, integration with election management systems, and the potential for overseas and mobile registration. The report proposes initiating a second phase of consultation and customization to align the system with FEO's specific electoral needs.

Publication of the List of Removed Persons from the NRV

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Electoral (Registration of Voters) Act, 2012 the FEO published the 'List of Removed Persons from the National Register of Voters' [List] for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, the FEO undertook the formal process of publishing the List of Voters Removed from the NRV in early 2023. The process commenced with a formal request to the Development Services team to generate the list, followed by a thorough verification of all entries to ensure accuracy and compliance with the relevant provisions of the law.

Once verified, the finalised list, along with the corresponding notice of removal, was submitted to the SoE for formal approval. Upon approval, the FEO proceeded with the publication of the list on its official website, ensuring transparency and public access to the information. Additionally, a formal notice was published in national newspapers on 11 February 2023. The published list included the names of 19,039 voters who were lawfully removed from the NRV. These removals were based on criteria such as confirmed cases of deceased individuals or legal disqualifications in accordance with the Electoral Act.

Publication of Provisional Voter List

The FEO continued its commitment to transparency and electoral integrity through the publication of the Provisional Voter List (PVL) in 2023. As mandated under Section 40(8) of the Electoral Act 2014, the SoE may publish the PVL for each polling station by 30 September each year, except in an election year. The PVL is a key element of the voter registration process, serving as a mechanism for voters, political parties, and stakeholders to verify the accuracy of registration records and provide feedback for corrections prior to the General Election.

To facilitate public verification, the FEO made the PVL accessible through multiple platforms. Voters were able to review their details—including name, gender, division, polling venue, and voter photo—via the FE services portal. Political parties, on the other hand, received a formatted electronic

services portal. Political parties, on the other hand, received a formatted electronic copy of the PVL, which included key voter data such as surname, first name, gender, EVR number, and address. This access enabled parties to carry out their own verification processes and report any discrepancies for rectification by the FEO, thereby strengthening the inclusiveness and reliability of the National Register of Voters.

The publication and verification process plays a critical role in maintaining an accurate and trustworthy voter list. It ensures that voters are correctly assigned to polling stations and reinforces the legal requirement that individuals can only vote at their designated location, as per section 53 of the Constitution. Additionally, the PVL publication enhances voter confidence in the electoral process by allowing timely corrections and ensuring readiness ahead of the 2026 General Election. This approach aligns with FEO’s ongoing efforts to uphold transparency, accountability, and public engagement in all aspects of election administration.

Table with summary of Voter List as at 31 December 2023.

Division	Pre -Poll	Election Day	Total
Central	113	620	733
Western	175	539	714
Northern	141	250	391
Eastern	189	33	222
Overseas	0	16	16
	618	1458	2076

Polling Venue Management

Publication of Provisional Polling Venue List

The FEO remains committed to ensuring that all polling venues are accessible, properly equipped, and strategically located to facilitate an efficient and inclusive voting process. In accordance with Section 41 of the Electoral Act 2014, the SoE is required to identify and publish the physical locations of all polling venues by 30 June of each year, except in an election year. For the reporting period, the FEO continued its assessment of polling venues used during the 2022 General Election to determine their suitability for future use and to incorporate feedback from key stakeholders.

To support transparency and public engagement, the FEO prepared a Provisional Polling Venue List (PPVL) comprising 1,468 venues, including 43 pre-poll venues designated for members of the disciplined forces. The list was submitted to the Electoral Commission for approval and subsequently published by the Commission. The FEO also leveraged its

digital platforms to promote voter awareness by making the PPVL accessible via the online Polling Venue Locator. This interactive tool allowed voters to view polling venue details, including photographs and addresses, and provide feedback on their accessibility and suitability.

Looking ahead to the 2026 General Election, the FEO will continue to use its established guidelines and consultation processes to confirm existing polling venues or identify new ones where necessary. Venues are assessed on criteria such as accessibility, capacity, infrastructure, and overall appropriateness for conducting polling. Through these ongoing efforts, the FEO strives to uphold the principles of accessibility, efficiency, and transparency in the administration of polling venues across Fiji.

Polling Venue Assessment

In preparation for the 2026 General Election, the FEO conducted a nationwide Polling Venue Assessment (PVA) in 2023. The primary goal of the exercise was to reassess existing polling venues, identify new locations, and update classification, naming, and accessibility information where necessary. This comprehensive review ensured polling venues met legal requirements for accessibility, security, and suitability as outlined in the Electoral Act 2014. A total of 587 venues were assessed across all four divisions, including rural and maritime regions. The initiative was strategically aligned with the FEO's operational goals to enhance voter access and polling day efficiency.

The assessment process involved on-site inspections, data collection, and engagement with community stakeholders. It resulted in 120 recommended changes, including 28 new polling venues, 69 name updates, 13 classification changes (e.g., from pre-poll to election day), and the closure of 10 venues deemed unsuitable. Key improvements included relocating venues to areas with better road and network access, using permanent community halls instead of temporary tents, and consolidating voter allocation for logistical efficiency. Additionally, the assessment incorporated feedback previously gathered before the 2022 General Election but not implemented due to time constraints.

Despite logistical challenges such as adverse weather, communication limitations in maritime areas, and vehicle and accommodation constraints, the project was completed within the approved timeframe and budget. The coordinated efforts between Operations, Corporate, EMIS, and Divisional teams ensured smooth execution. The FEO acknowledges the vital support from local communities, especially in remote areas, and remains committed to further refining venue selections. These efforts reflect FEO's ongoing commitment to delivering accessible, inclusive, and well-organized elections across Fiji.

Summary of polling venue as of 30 June 2023

POLLING VENUE AS OF 30 JUNE 2024	
Total No. of Polling Venues	1468
No. of Pre Poll Venues	613
No. Election Day venues	854
Overseas - HQ	1

Divisional Office

Divisional Managers

In 2023, the Divisional Managers (DMs) continued to play a critical role in supporting the FEO post-election operations. Their decentralised responsibilities ensured the smooth closure of divisional activities following the 2022 General Election.

Key activities completed included:

- Closure of Divisional Offices and reconciliation of all election materials to the FEO Warehouse.
- Participation in the Election Review Workshop at the Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort and Spa.
- Review of the 2022 Pre-Poll Journals to assess operational strengths and areas for improvement.
- Assessment of selected polling venues with low voter turnout to guide future planning.
- Contributed to the development of the FEO's Strategic Plan 2024–2027 through participation in strategic planning activities and consultations.

Ongoing initiatives include refining divisional operational procedures and enhancing stakeholder engagement, ensuring the FEO remains well-prepared for upcoming electoral events.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

The year started off with the inclusion of a new staff at FEO to look after our GIS activities. Ms Elisa Toroca was recruited as our GIS Officer on July 3, 2023.

In 2023, most of the work carried out in terms of GIS was the compilation of the ward boundaries submitted by the Ministry of Local Government. The FEO was also represented in GIS workshops, conferences and meetings throughout the year, where presentations were delivered on current GIS projects at FEO. Additionally, an assessment report on the current capacity of GIS at FEO was conducted and report submitted to management for approval.

Industrial Elections

The Industrial Elections (IE) Department, under Section 154 of the Electoral Act 2014, is responsible for conducting elections for all registered trade unions, as well as other elections approved by the Minister responsible for elections.

In 2023, the review process was conducted in collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders. The aim was to assess and improve the efficiency, transparency, and integrity of the trade union electoral process.

External Consultations

External consultations were conducted across various locations in Fiji. Trade union representatives were invited to provide feedback and suggest improvements. The schedule was as follows:

No.	Date	Area	Election Day
1	05/06/23	Nadi	Capricorn Hotel Conference Room, Martintar, Nadi
2	07/06/23	Lautoka	Waterfront Hotel Conference Room, Lautoka
3	10/06/23	Labasa	Galaxy Hotel Conference Room, Naodamu, Labasa
4	12/06/23	Taveuni	Taveuni Womens Hall, Waiyevo, Taveuni
5	19/06/23	Suva	FRCS Building 2, Level 2, Conference Room, Nasese

Internal Consultations

Internal consultations were held in-house with relevant managers and appointed Returning Officers. Feedback gathered contributed to refining IE operational procedures and strengthening electoral transparency.

Implementation of Trade Union Election Plans

The IE Department published the annual schedule of trade union elections in 2023. Prior to this publication, a list of registered trade unions was obtained from the Registrar of Trade Unions. Confirmation of intended election dates was then sought from each union. The final schedule was published in the daily newspapers on 29 April 2023.

Throughout the year, the IE Department conducted both national and branch elections for registered trade unions, as well as other elections approved by the Minister.

Election Summary

Category	National Elections	Branch Elections
Registered Trade Unions	20	29
Other Elections	2	10

Detailed Summary of Registered Trade Union Elections conducted in 2023

Name of Trade Union	Branch/ National	Date of Publication	Date of Election	Mode of Election	Contested/ Uncontested
Fiji Teachers Union (FTU)	Branch:				
	Nasinu	10/02/23	09/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Navua	10/02/23	09/03/23	Attendance	Contested
	Levuka	10/02/23	11/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Nadi	10/02/23	15/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Tavua	10/02/23	15/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Rewa	10/02/23	15/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Ba	10/02/23	16/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Rakiraki	10/02/23	16/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Suva	10/02/23	16/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Bua	10/02/23	18/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Labasa	10/02/23	18/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Savusavu	10/02/23	18/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Taveuni	10/02/23	18/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Lautoka	10/02/23	20/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Nadroga	10/02/23	22/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Tailevu	10/02/23	23/03/23	Attendance	Uncontested
National	03/02/23	22/04/23	Attendance	Contested	
Fiji Public Service Association (FPSA)	Branch:				
	Savusavu	03/02/23	10/03/23	Attendance & Workplace Voting	Uncontested
	Labasa	03/02/23	11/03/23		Uncontested
	Western	03/02/23	18/03/23		Uncontested
	Suva	03/02/23	15/03/23		Uncontested
National	03/02/23	25/03/23	Attendance	Contested	
Federated Airline Staff Association (FASA)	National	05/05/23	29/05/23	Attendance	Contested
Fiji Airline Pilots Association (FAPA)	National	04/05/23	23/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
National Union of Public Workers (NUPW)	Branch:				
	Lautoka	04/05/23	03/06/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Suva	04/05/23	10/06/23	Attendance	Contested
	Korovou	04/05/23	17/06/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Nausori	04/05/23	24/06/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Labasa	04/05/23	01/07/23	Attendance	Contested
National	08/07/23	26/08/23	Attendance	Uncontested	

Sugar Milling					
Staff's Officers Association (SMSOA)	National	05/04/23	28/04/23	Attendance	Contested
Fiji Sugar Tradesman Union (FSTU)	Branch: Labasa	05/04/23	13/04/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Ba	05/04/23	18/04/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	Lautoka	05/04/23	19/04/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	National	05/04/23	21/04/23	Attendance	Uncontested
Staff Association of the University of Fiji (SAUF)	National	05/04/23	29/04/23	Attendance	Uncontested
Fiji Fletcher Challenge Steel Workers Union (FFCSWU)	National	04/05/23	31/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
Fiji Hotels Allied Industries Employees Union (FHAIEU)	National	17/06/23	28/07/23	Attendance	Uncontested
Fiji Sugar Clerks & Supervisors Association (FSCSA)	National	03/06/23	22/06/23	Attendance	Uncontested
National Union of Municipal Workers (NUMW)	Branch: Suva	22/07/23	18/08/23	Uncontested	Attendance
	National	22/07/23	18/08/23	Contested	Attendance
University of the South Pacific Staff Union (USPSU)	National	05/08/23	07/09/23	Contested	Attendance & Postal
National Union of Factory and Commercial Workers (NUFCW)	National	05/08/23	09/09/23	Uncontested	Attendance
Transport Workers Union (TWU)	National	12/08/23	16/09/23	Uncontested	Attendance
Communications Mining and General Workers Union (CMGWU)	National	18/08/23	07/09/23 – 21/09/23	Contested	Postal
Fijian Teachers Association (FTA)	National	04/10/23	20/10/23 – 03/11/23	Contested	Attendance & Postal
Communications Mining and General Workers Union (CMGWU) - [Re-election]	National	28/10/23	15/11/23– 30/11/23	Contested	Postal

Fiji National	National	28/10/23	25/11/23	Uncontested	Attendance
University Workers Association (FNUWA)					
Fiji Mine Workers and Staff Union (FMWSU)	National	11/11/23	08/12/23	Contested	Attendance
National Union of Trade Union Workers (NUTUW)	National	25/11/23	13/12/23 – 20/12/23	Uncontested	Postal

Organisation	Date of Publication	Date of Publication	Date of Election	Mode of Election	Contested/Uncontested
	Branch:				
Fiji National University Student Association (FNUSA)	FNU College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Students Association (FNUCAFFSA)	21/04/23	22/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	FNU Nasinu Students Association (FNUNSA)	21/04/23	22/05/23	Attendance	Contested
	FNU Derrick Students Association (FNUDSA)	21/04/23	22/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	FNU Student Nurses Association (FNUSNA)	21/04/23	23/05/23	Attendance	Contested
	FNU Fiji School of Medicine Association (FNUFSMedA)	21/04/23	23/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	FNU Nabua Campus Students Association (FNUNCSA)	21/04/23	24/05/23	Attendance	Contested
	FNU Namaka Students Association (FNUNASA)	21/04/23	25/05/23	Attendance	Contested
	FNU Students Association of Natabua (FNUSAN)	21/04/23	25/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	FNU Ba Students Association (FNUBSA)	21/04/23	26/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
	FNU Labasa Campus Students Association (FNULCSA)	21/04/23	26/05/23	Attendance	Contested

FNU Student Rep (Postgraduate and Undergraduate)	National	09/09/23	04/10/23	Attendance	Uncontested
FNU Student Rep to the University Research Committee (URC)	National	21/04/23	22/05/23 – 26/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
FNU Student Rep to the High Degree by Research Committee (HDRC)	National	21/04/23	22/05/23 – 26/05/23	Attendance	Uncontested
Fijian Holdings Limited	National	02/09/23	27/10/23	Attendance	Uncontested

Strategic Plan Formation (2024–2027)

In preparation for the 2024–2027 operational cycle, the Strategic Planning Team (SPT) was formally established in May 2023. This marked the beginning of a structured and participatory planning process to develop the Strategic Plan 2024–2027.

The process commenced with a Strategic Planning Induction Workshop from 9–11 May 2023, facilitated by Mr. Antonio Spinelli, aimed at building internal capacity and establishing a shared understanding of strategic planning frameworks.

Key milestones in the Strategic Plan formation timeline included:

- **16 May 2023:** Selection of the Strategic Planning Team (SPT), including the Planning Committee and Core Team.
- **17 May 2023:** A joint meeting between SPT and Management Representatives was held to align on priorities and expectations. This was followed by the development of the Master Plan.
- **18–19 May 2023:** Finalization and submission of the draft Master Plan by the SPT, followed by review and approval by senior leadership.

Throughout this process, collaborative workshops, including a 4-day intensive session, were conducted to define the mission, vision, and

strategic objectives. Each activity was carefully documented in the Master Plan and Activity Log to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with institutional goals.

This foundational work forms the basis for the execution and monitoring of key initiatives from 2025 onwards.

Activities Undertaken by the Strategic Planning Committee (SPT)

1. Strategic Planning Induction Workshop (9–11 May 2023)
 - Conducted at FRCS Training Room and facilitated by Mr. Antonio.
 - Purpose: To provide orientation on strategic planning concepts, frameworks, and best practices.
 - Participants: Members of the SP Committee and Core Team.
2. Selection of Strategic Planning Team (16 May 2023)
 - Identification and confirmation of Planning Committee and Core Team members.
 - Establishment of working teams for thematic areas and strategy formulation.
3. Joint Meeting with Management (17 May 2023)
 - Engagement between the SPT and Management Representatives.
 - Purpose: Align expectations, priorities, and responsibilities.
 - Output: Agreement on the strategic planning timeline and collaboration protocol.
4. Development of the Draft Master Plan (17–18 May 2023)
 - SPT met to identify strategic activities and develop timelines.
 - Creation of the initial draft of the Strategic Master Plan.
 - Review and refinement of draft content.
5. Submission and Review of Draft Master Plan (18–19 May 2023)
 - Draft submitted to senior management for review.
 - Feedback incorporated, and final refinements made for approval.
 - Review facilitated by Coordinator and senior divisional heads (DCS/DOPs/AML).
6. Preparation for Intensive Workshop
 - Designed and scheduled a 4-Day Intensive Strategic Planning Workshop.
 - Sessions included development of vision, mission, assumptions, stakeholder analysis, and KPIs.
7. Ongoing Documentation and Reporting
 - All actions, decisions, and timelines were recorded in the Activity Log.
 - Ensured transparency and allowed tracking of progress and accountability.

These activities collectively laid the foundation for the finalisation of the Strategic Plan and set the course for its implementation in 2024–2027.

Conclusion

The FEO concludes 2023 with a renewed sense of purpose, reinforced partnerships, and strategic clarity. The year's accomplishments reflect our firm commitment to operational excellence, transparency, and participatory democracy.

As we prepare for future electoral activities including the Local Government Elections and eventually the 2026/2027 General Election, the FEO remains steadfast in its mission to serve all Fijians with professionalism, integrity, and inclusiveness. We extend our appreciation to all partners, stakeholders, and staff for their dedication to strengthening electoral democracy in Fiji.

Together, we move forward—building trust, enhancing accessibility, and ensuring every vote counts.



www.feo.org.fj

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My Election. My Fiji

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The Electoral Commission

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