



Lavetiviti



October 2021



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

FEO Receives 15,000 Voting Booths from New Zealand

The Fijian Elections Office ['FEO'] received a generous donation of 15,000 cardboard voting booths from the New Zealand government as assistance towards the General Election in 2022.

His Excellency, Mr Jonathan Curr, High Commissioner for New Zealand, presented the voting booths to the Electoral Commission Chairperson Mr Suresh Chandra during an official handover ceremony this month.

In thanking the New Zealand government, Mr Chandra said: "The cardboard voting booths

which have become a feature of Fijian elections since 2014 are much easier to store, setup, fold back and transport in comparison to the large wooden compartments and the cloth screen curtain that was used previously in Fiji."

"The cardboard voting screens are a classic example of innovation in elections. These lightweight, convenient, yet durable platforms are directly suited to the demands of the terrain and transport in Fiji and I would like to heartily thank the New Zealand Government and the people of New Zealand for this support

in kind towards the 2022 General Election," Mr Chandra said.

Meanwhile the NZ High Commissioner, Mr Jonathan Curr said the country remained committed to partnering with Fiji to support its democratic processes and were pleased to be making a tangible and practical contribution to the holding of next year's general election.

The New Zealand government had supported the FEO with over 15,000 cardboard voting booths for the 2018 General Election.

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Over 62,000
Voters Served

MOU Signing



Mr Jonathan Curr, Mr Suresh Chandra and Mr Mohammed Saneem during the signing of the MOU on 21 October 2021.

FEO Strengthens Partnership with NZ Electoral Commission

The FEO has extended its longstanding partnership with the New Zealand Electoral Commission ['NZEC'] with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding ['MOU'] that will further strengthen the collaboration between the two (2) agencies in the furtherance of elections.

With the signing of the MOU, both the Electoral Commission and the FEO have extended the partnership with NZEC for

another three (3) years.

Speaking at the event, Electoral Commission Chairperson Mr Suresh Chandra said the global issues and challenges in elections require the sharing of experiences, successes and lessons learnt between election management bodies and such partnerships will be critical in overcoming these challenges.

"The constant battle with misinformation is no longer



Following the MOU signing, His Excellency Mr Jonathan Curr handed over cardboard voting booths for the 2022 General Election.

a feature unique only to developing democracies, but it is something that is now gripping developed democracies as well," Mr Chandra said.

"The second is the motivating of voters to come forward and vote, turning interest into participation and converting disinterest into interest. Then there are global challenges of cyber terrorism and risks with technology. The challenges

seem substantial, but we can overcome or even manage these threats through collaboration."

The event was attended by His Excellency, Mr Jonathan Curr, High Commissioner for New Zealand, Ms Courtney Rose, Supervisor of Elections Mr. Mohammed Saneem, FEO staff and the Chief Electoral Officer of New Zealand Ms Alicia Wright who joined virtually via zoom.



Mr Jonathan Curr and Mr Suresh Chandra during the signing of the MOU.

Congratulations SoE



Supervisor of Elections Mr Mohammed Saneem during his thesis presentation on 26 October 2021.

The FEO team congratulates the Supervisor of Elections Mr Mohammed Saneem on the successful defence of his Masters Dissertation on Electoral Policy and Administration from the Scuola Sant'Anna University in Pisa, Italy.

Mr Saneem virtually presented his thesis titled 'The establishment of

a permanent election management body in Fiji and its impact on the transparency and credibility of elections' before a distinguished panel of academics on 26 October 2021.

Having successfully run two (2) general elections in Fiji and also having established the FEO from the ground up, Mr Saneem said he took up the

Masters program with an open mind and the belief that there was always something more to learn.

"The Masters Program was very well structured to introduce a new person to election management and at the same time will challenge a seasoned election professional," Mr Saneem said.

"The publications this far in the area of elections are mostly political commentaries and analysis. My research relied on observer reports to carry out a comparative analysis and focused on the administration of elections and the performance of the Office of the Supervisor of Elections in 2006 in terms of Voter Registration, Polling Venue Management and Voter Education as against the Fijian Elections Office in 2018."

While the task of putting together the thesis in three (3) months proved to be both exciting and challenging, Mr Saneem adds the impending 2022 General Election provided an added motivation to pursue the research and compile the thesis for assessment.

"I wish to thank the Australian Government for partially funding the fees for the Master's program. I also wish to convey my gratitude to the team at the FEO for their outstanding efforts in enhancing the transparency and credibility of elections in Fiji. Last but certainly not the least, I wish to acknowledge my wife and kids who stood by me as I undertook this study," Mr Saneem added.

FEO Staff Win Awards



In recognition of the projects completed by the FEO staff this year, the Supervisor of Elections presented awards to the recipients in appreciation of their achievements.

1. Mr Arnesh Chandra for the Development of the E-Learning Platform & Online Service Portal (Booking Module)
2. Mr Divnesh Chand for the Development of the Online Services Portal (Booking Module, Polling Venue & Voter Details Module) & My Voter ID Platform
3. Mr Joseph Sharma for the Development of the Online Recruitment Portal & Online Services Portal (Booking Module)
4. Ms Loata Waqanivalu for Completion of Training on an E-Learning Platform

Change of Name



Ms Jeanette Yam with her new Birth Certificate and VoterCard.

FEO Facilitates Change of Name for 14 Voters

The FEO received 54 change of name applications from voters in October and has already facilitated the name change process for 14 voters with each voter being issued a new birth certificate and the latest VoterCard reflecting the new name(s).

Supervisor of Elections Mr Mohammed Saneem said these applications were received by the FEO at various registration centres that were set-up to accommodate the upgrade from the 'Green Coloured' VoterCard which has expired to the 'Blue Coloured' VoterCard during the FEO's adhoc voter registration drive.

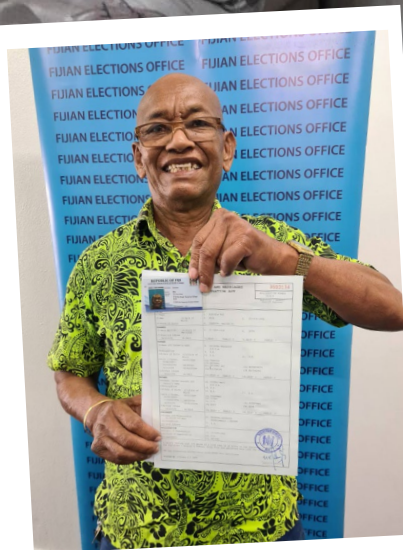
"People who wish to register for voting using names other than that which is on their Birth Certificate can simply apply and have their names on the Birth Certificate changed, so that the FEO can facilitate the new name on the person's VoterCard," explained Mr Saneem.

"This can be done by the voter simply

turning up to one of the Voter Services Centres and informing our staff who will assist the voter to complete the Change of Name application form as well as the Voter Registration form and the FEO will take it from there and facilitate the entire process with the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry ['BDM'], Mr Saneem said.

Applicant Ms Jeanette Yam emphasized the need for consistency of details on official documents adding that the name change process would now ensure that all her important documents reflected the same name.

Another applicant Mr Asesela Niu



Mr Asesela Niu (left) and Ms Mary Teresa Ah Koy (right) with their new Birth Certificate and VoterCard.



said he was very pleased with the convenience of the process.

"From filling out the form to receiving my VoterCard and birth certificate, the entire process took less than five (5) days and I was surprised at the ease and efficiency with which the name change process was conducted," Mr Niu said.

The FEO facilitates the name change process through the BDM Registry with the process typically taking up to 10 working days while it could be longer for voters living in maritime areas.

Business House Voter Registration Drive

Over 160 Organizations Register for Business House Voter Registration Drive

The FEO commenced its Business House Voter Registration Drive on 20 October, 2021 at the State House with the updating of His Excellency, the President Major-General (Ret'd) Jioji Konrote and First Lady, Madam Sarote Konrote's VoterCards.

Since its launch 164 organizations have registered their interest by booking appointments through the FEO website. The FEO will be sending teams to each organization in order to facilitate voter registration and other voter related services such as the updating and upgrading of VoterCards.

The registration exercise will ensure that these services are delivered to approximately 189,830 voters in both the Central and the Western Divisions.

Businesses can find the Business House Voter Registration form on the FEO website at www.feo.org.fj.

So far the FEO has facilitated voters services for 52 business houses with 3,966 engagements.

The Business House Voter Registration Drive ends on 17 December, 2021.



His Excellency, the President Major-General (Ret'd) Jioji Konrote updates his VoterCard at the State House.



Voter Registration Drive



Fijians being served at various voter registration centres around the country during the registration drive in October of 2021.

62,890 voters served during FEO's adhoc Voter Registration Drive

As at 29 October 2021, the FEO voter registration teams had served 62,890 voters as part of its adhoc Voter Registration Drive which had commenced on 4 October 2021.

FEO's Manager Voter Registration and Polling Venue, Rangeet Chand said the adhoc drive was rolled out to facilitate the upgrade to the Blue VoterCard following the announcement of the FEO to expire the green one.

"Initially the teams were only deployed to major centres such as Suva, Labasa and Lautoka but seeing the high demand for voter services we quickly had to open additional centres at popular spots in Nakasi, Nausori, Sigatoka, Tavua, Nadi, Rakiraki and Ba to cater to the huge crowds," he said.

"We also extended the opening hours for these centres so that every voter who walked in was served which meant that teams toiled through their weekends and public

holidays during this exercise."

In total the FEO had extended voter services to 15 centres in Viti Levu for maximum coverage with only one centre open in Labasa due to travel restrictions which prevented the deployment of teams to Vanua Levu for training and preparations before voter services could be rolled out.

Out of the 62,890 engagements, 9,426 were new registrations and 53,464 were for the updating of VoterCards or for correction of voter details.

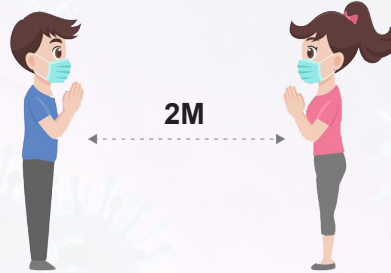
"The response has been amazing and it is good to see people take a proactive approach in terms of upgrading their VoterCards and updating their details so as to be ready for the next general election," Mr Chand added.

The FEO will conduct its Nationwide Voter Registration Drive for the 2022 General Election from 26 February to 2 April next year.

COVID PREVENTION TIPS



**WASH YOUR HANDS WITH
SOAP AND WATER**



MAINTAIN DISTANCE



WEAR MASK



GET VACCINATED

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