



Fijian Elections Office

My Election. My Fiji

Lavetiviti



ISSUE 25

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) family officially welcomed the Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) Ms. Ana Mataciwa on Wednesday 15 February 2023 after her appointment by His Excellency the President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere on Friday 27 January 2023.

In expressing their joy and delight in what seems to be a milestone achievement for the organisation, the female staff of the FEO performed the traditional ceremony of “vaka-mamaca”, where bails of cloth were presented to the ASoE.

The longest serving FEO staff and Divisional Manager West (DMW) Mr. Viliame Vuiyanuca

spoke on behalf of the FEO staff. He reminisced memories of the ASoE's first moments at the FEO and shared how experience and endurance brought Ms. Mataciwa to where she is today.

The ASoE in her maiden speech thanked the FEO family for their gestures of welcome and reaffirmed her commitment in restoring the dignity and integrity of the FEO.

The FEO through the Director Corporate Services (DCS) Mr. Sanjeshwar Ram reassured the ASoE of their commitment to working with her for the betterment of the FEO.



Newly appointed Acting Supervisor of Elections Ms. Ana Mataciwa (with garland) and FEO staff.

FEO staff prepare for the 2023 FTU election

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) conducted a Presiding Officer Training for 22 of its staff in preparation for the Fiji Teachers Union (FTU) 2023 election.

In her opening remarks the Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) Ms. Ana Mataciwa reminded staff on the importance of their role in ensuring the successful and credible conduct of the FTU Election.

“After this training, 22 of you will serve as Presiding Officers in the designated polling venues across Fiji, I wish to stress the importance of incorporating these skills together with neutrality and integrity,” said Ms. Mataciwa.

The ASoE further reiterated the need to be accommodative to voters. She also reminded the team to be good ambassadors of the FEO.

“True to our line of work, please remember you are ambassadors of the FEO, represent us well,” Ms. Mataciwa stated.

The FTU elections was held on 22 April 2023 in 22 polling venues nationwide.



ASoE Ms. Ana Mataciwa addresses the Presiding Officer Training in preparation for the FTU 2023 election.



ASoE Ms. Ana Mataciwa and FEO staff as they prepare for the FTU 2023 election.



FEO staff during the Presiding Officer Training.

FEO conducts FTU 2023 election

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) staff were all hands on deck as they facilitated and conducted the FTU Election 2023.

More than 30 staff were engaged as Presiding Officers and Polling Day Workers for the election which took place in 22 polling venues across Fiji.

They were deployed as far as Taveuni for the Northern division, Rakiraki for the Western, Navua and Tailevu for the Central and Levuka for the Eastern division.

The one day FTU Election is one of the biggest elections the Industrial Elections Department of the FEO undertakes.



Teachers casting their votes at Vunimono High School.



Teachers voting at Vunimono High School for the 2023 FTU election.

FEO celebrates Eid

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) celebrated Eid al - Fitr, the Festival of the Breaking of the Fast or the end of Ramadan.

In emphasizing the importance of the celebrations, Manager Human Resources Ms. Afreena Hussein stated that while Eid al - Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, fasting is viewed as a time to exercise self - control and a time to cleanse the mind, body and spirit.

“Celebration of Eid marks the first time Muslims are able to eat during daylight. For many Muslims, fasting is a spiritual detox and a way to bring themselves closer to God.”

“The lessons learnt during the Ramadan are obvious from the business and social successes. This has flowed around us and our communities. Like any other celebration, Eid is a time of sharing, fellowship, reflection and reconciliation,” said Ms. Hussein.



International Women's Day at FEO

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) celebrated International Women's Day in a different way this year, when compared to the previous years.

In celebrating the momentous occasion, a “Food and Cleaning Supplies” drive was conducted over a two (2) week period and donations received were sent to a charitable organisation. This year the ‘Homes of Hope’ was identified as the partner charity for this particular drive.

The ‘Homes of Hope’ is the only organization of its kind in Fiji and the South Pacific that provides long-term care, trauma-informed therapies, and holistic training for girls, young women and children who are victims of or vulnerable to forced sex.

Through this drive, each Directorate were given a list of food and cleaning supplies to donate and boxes were placed at each level to allow staff to place their donations in.

The supplies included much needed food items and household cleaning items.

The items were donated to assist the home in ensuring the surrounding was clean and spotless.



Celebration cake for the International Women's Day at FEO.

Speaking at the handing over ceremony, the Homes Finance Officer Melesia Silipa thanked the FEO for its generous contributions and stated that the items collected would go a long way in assisting the Home care for the ladies and girls under their care.

Director Operations (DOps) Ms. Anaseini Senimoli, whilst handing over the boxes of donations said that the FEO was indeed privileged to support an organization that looked after and cared for some

of the most vulnerable women in our society.

Items donated to the Home included food such as rice, flour, dhal, tea leaves, sugar, milk, cocoa, porridge, tin fish, chicken, fresh and frozen vegetables, fruits, carrots, onions, potatoes and garlic. Cleaning supplies included janola; dish sponges; scrubbing brush; washing powder; dishwashing detergent; disinfectant; bug spray; cockroach traps; mouse bait; rubbish bags.

International Womens Day is celebrated globally on March 8 annually to honor the movement for women's rights and to build support for achieving universal suffrage for women.

International Womens Day was first celebrated in 1911 after the second International Conference of Working Women where Clara Zetkin, a German



FEO staff during the International Women's Day.

Leader of the "Womens Office" of the Social Democratic Party, proposed that every year in every country there should be a celebration to press womens demands.

From that initial celebration of 1million people, the day is now celebrated annually across the globe.



List of food items donated by the FEO staff and management.

Polling Venue Assessment is crucial

An assessment of polling venues was conducted in the Yasawa Group by the Fijian Elections Office.

In undertaking this exercise, the Divisional Manager West Mr. Viliame Vuiyanuca stated that the condition of polling venues, structure and durability was assessed.

Mr. Vuiyanuca said that such exercises were important especially after a general election.

“Conducting Polling Venue Assessment (PVA) is important especially after a general election. As it is, these polling venues were used in the last general election and it is crucial that an assessment be done to ascertain the durability of these venues for the next general election,” said Mr. Vuiyanuca.

He added that during the assessment, FEO held discussions with the venue owner as well as those living nearby these polling venues.

“We had discussions with the venue owners, Turaga ni Koro, boat and hotel owners as well as those who live near these venues to get their thoughts and suggestions on whether these venues served their purpose in the last general election. We also discussed at great length how the venues could be improved before the next election.” Mr. Vuiyanuca stated.

For the Western division, assessments were held at the polling venues on Yasawa I rara, Nacula, Yaqeta, Naviti, Waya and Viwa Island respectively.

Polling Venue Assessment was also conducted for the Central, Eastern and Northern divisions.



Divisional Manager West Mr. Viliame Tuiyanuca and his team conducting Polling Venue Assessment in Yasawa.

More consultation will be done with the media - ASoE

While delivering her statement, the Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) Ms. Ana Mataiciwa thanked members of the media for their efforts in covering the 2022 General Election.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your understanding and cooperation during the 2022 General Election. I know it was not easy for most of you, but you managed to deliver. You enabled parties, candidates, and others to present their messages to voters, and on balance, you informed voters of their choices. I therefore thank you for your hardworking patience and perseverance, and we look forward to receiving the same level of commitment come the next General Election,” said the ASoE.

The ASoE assured members of the media of the FEO's intentions in conducting more consultative and capacity building engagement initiatives moving forward.

The FEO invited representatives from various media organisations to provide their feedback on the conduct of the 2022 General Election.

In addition, members of the media were encouraged to give their suggestions on new areas of engagement with the FEO and how processes could be improved moving forward.

The media representatives present used the opportunity to voice their concerns, highlighting challenges encountered during the 2022 General Election.

The Media Consultation included representatives from The Fiji Times, The Fiji Sun, Fijian Broadcasting Corporation, Fiji TV, Communications Fiji Limited, Mai TV, and Fiji Live.

This was the FEO's first consultation with members of the media in reviewing the 2022 General Election.



ASoE Ms. Ana Mataiciwa (second from left) with members of the media.

FEO celebrates Mother's Day, Girmit Remembrance Day and Ratu Sukuna Day

Staff of the Fijian Elections Office (FEO) commemorated and celebrated Mother's Day, Girmit Remembrance and Ratu Sukuna Day.

While addressing the staff, the Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) Ms. Ana Mataciwa said even though celebrations were held weeks ago, it was always never too late.

"Even though the celebrations for the Girmit Remembrance and Mother's Day were held weeks ago, its the thought behind it that matters." said the ASoE.

The ASoE further stated that it was only fitting that she thanked the staff for all they have achieved as an organisation.

"I would like to thank you for all you have accomplished as a team. The journey has been challenging but you managed to get the job done and deliver. This is an exciting time for the FEO and remember we have been called for such a time as this, not only for the organisation, but for the nation." stated Ms. Mataciwa.

She added that it was important for the FEO staff to stand together with the same goal in moving the FEO to greater heights.

"We must continue to drown the noise of the outside world and lean on each other for support. Let us not put our guard down but instead continue to strive forward," the ASoE elaborated.

Ms. Mataciwa also thanked the FEO's Social Club Committee for organising the celebration.

The celebration included a presentation on the history of the Girmit Remembrance Day as well as the Ratu Sukuna Day.



Mothers acknowledged for their contribution to the FEO and their families.



Social Club Chair Mr. Atish Chand addressing the staff during the celebration.



FEO staff come together to commemorate and celebrate Mother's Day, Girmit Remembrance Day and Ratu Sukuna Day.

FEO conducts FNUSA 2023 election

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) through the Industrial Elections & Postal Voting Department, facilitated and conducted the Fiji National University Student Association (FNUSA) 2023 election. Manager Industrial Elections & Postal Voting Mr. Aisea Wainiqolo said that the FNUSA election is conducted every year to elect Fiji National University (FNU) students who will represent the ten FNU campuses to the FNUSA body.

"The FNUSA election is important, given that the FEO is mandated under Section 154 of the Electoral Act 2014, to conduct all registered trade unions and such other elections as determined by the Minister through a notice published in the Gazette," stated Mr. Wainiqolo.

He added that for the FEO, it was important to ensure that a credible election is conducted. "As facilitators, it is crucial that we ensure a credible election is conducted and that the FNUSA members are able to cast their votes within the specified time at the various election venues, while the election results are generated and submitted to the FNUSA in a timely manner," Mr. Wainiqolo said.

The FNUSA election was conducted at the various FNU campuses nationwide.



A member of the FNUSA casting her vote using the Touch Screen Voting Machine.



Staff of the Industrial Elections Department assisting students during the election.

EDAWG 4-Year Work Plan to guide FEO

"Today's workshop is a hallmark of what is needed to ensure that the next General Election has greater level of participation and inclusion".

Those were the words of the Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) Ms. Ana Mataciwa whilst officiating at the opening of the Election Disability Access Working Group (EDAWG) 4-Year Work Plan Workshop for Inclusive Election in Suva.

Ms. Mataciwa added that the workshop was a milestone achievement, as the participants worked together in developing the 4-Year Work Plan.

"This comprehensive 4-Year Work Plan will guide the EDAWG and the Fijian Elections Office (FEO) in conducting a more inclusive future General Elections," said Ms. Mataciwa.

The ASoE also reiterated the recommendation highlighted in the Multinational Observers Group (MOG) Report on the continuation of the EDAWG.

"The MOG Report acknowledged the efforts of the FEO and EDAWG in promoting the participation of Fijian voters with disabilities in the electoral process and thus recommended the continuation of the EDAWG. This is something you all should be proud of," Ms. Mataciwa stated.

Ms. Mataciwa further encouraged the participants to openly share their thoughts and experiences and to confidently contribute to developing the work plan.

"You are not here by accident nor by chance. You are here because you have been called for such a time as this. Your contribution is valuable and you are part of the bigger picture," said the ASoE.

Ms. Mataciwa also acknowledged and thanked the USAID Pacific Islands and the PROJECT Governance programme for organizing the workshop and ensuring election materials were made available to persons with disabilities during the 2022 General Election.



ASoE with participants of the EDAWG workshop.

FEO holds consultation on 2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) conducted a four (4) day consultation with its stakeholders on its 2024 to 2027 Strategic Plan.

Whilst officiating at the launch of the consultations, the Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) Ms. Ana Mataiciwa said that the FEO was on a new course as far as stakeholder engagement and consultation is concerned.

"In our recent review process, it was revealed that the FEO did not have enough collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Civil Civil Society and Media organisations."

"Given the fact that our end users are mutual, we believe more effort must be directed at our collaborative works in enhancing voter participation and civic education," said the ASoE.

Ms. Mataiciwa added that it was important for the FEO to collate the contribution of all stakeholders, as they would assist in drafting a Strategic Plan that is more engaging and collaborative.

"I encourage all stakeholders to maximize this opportunity by voicing your constructive criticisms with regards to our Strategic Plan and I look forward to reviewing your collective inputs at the conclusion of these discussions as well as to further work with you all in strengthening our democracy," the ASoE stated.

The consultation involved media organisations, Civil Society Organisations, Government Ministries and Departments, Statutory Authorities, Development Partners and Political Parties.



Fiji Women's Rights Movement Executive Director Ms. Nalini Singh expressing her views during the consultation.



Representatives of Human Rights based groups, Faith based and media organisations during the consultation.

Chairperson of the Electoral Commission Mr. Mukesh Nand resigns

The Acting Supervisor of Elections (ASoE) Ms. Ana Mataciwa in her capacity as the Acting Secretary to the Electoral Commission received communication from the Office of the President conveying the acceptance of the letter of resignation from Mr. Mukesh Nand by His Excellency the President Ratu Willame Maivalili Katonivere on Friday 23 June 2023.

Mr. Mukesh Nand wrote to His Excellency the President on Thursday 22 June 2023, informing His Excellency of the same. He was appointed as Chairperson of the Electoral Commission on 24 February 2022 overseeing the 2022 General Election.

Ms. Mataciwa extended the gratitude and appreciation of the FEO and the Electoral Commission to Mr. Mukesh Nand for his selfless service and sacrifice to the nation.

“Mr. Mukesh Nand deserves our thanks and appreciation for the selfless service and sacrifice he has committed to the important role of Chairperson of the Electoral Commission this far. We wish him good health and every success in his future endeavors”, said Ms. Mataciwa.



Former Chairperson of the Electoral Commission Mr. Mukesh Nand.

Electoral Commission Members Meet

The newly appointed members of the Electoral Commission [‘EC’] as well as Commissioner Ateca Ledua held their first official meeting on Wednesday 12 July 2023. The meeting was chaired by the Interim Chairperson of the EC Ms. Barbara Malimali.

The EC meeting focused on the filling of the vacant seats in parliament. The EC has resolved to appoint Mr. Sachida Nand to fill the first vacant seat. The EC is currently undertaking the background check on the next candidate to fill the remaining seat. The Interim Chairperson of the EC Ms. Barbara Malimali was happy with the meeting and the decisions the EC was able to undertake.

“I am happy with the decisions we have been able to make today, particularly to the fact that the EC is at the moment gender balanced and made up of members from diverse backgrounds, experience and shared values in good governance,” said Ms. Malimali.

Ms. Malimali further stated that the EC has decided on sitting dates and looks forward to their induction workshop and dealing with the outstanding matters.

“We have decided on sitting dates and we are looking forward to having our induction workshop and dealing with outstanding matters before the Commission,” said Ms. Malimali.

The EC members are: Ms. Barbara Malimali – Interim Chairperson, Commissioner Ateca Ledua – EC Member, Commissioner Nalini Singh – EC Member, Commissioner Reginald Jokhan – EC Member, Commissioner Ratu Inoke Dokonivalu Loganimoce – EC Member, Commissioner Nemani Mati – EC Member.



The EC members (from left): Commissioner Ratu Inoke Dokonivalu Loganimoce, Ms. Barbara Malimali – Interim Chairperson, Commissioner Nalini Singh, Commissioner Ateca Ledua and Commissioner Nemani Mati.

Members of the public advised to visit the VSC

The FEO would like to advise members of the general public to visit its Voter Services Centre ['VSC'], should they need to have a new VoterCard or a Voter Replacement Card done.

The FEO would like to issue the following advice:

1. VoterCard services are not available at the FEO Headquarters located at 59-63 High Street Toorak, Suva;
2. All VoterCard services, new registration, card renewal and update of card information are available at our three (3) VSC's around the country;
3. For card renewals and update of card information, members of the public are advised to take with them original or certified copies of their Birth Certificate and a valid photo ID;
4. For new registration services, members of the public are advised to take their original or certified copies of the original birth certificate.

Furthermore, VoterCard services and Voter Services are available from our VSC's located in the following areas:

1. **Suva Voter Services Centre**
Scott Street Suva | (Old Fiji Visitors Bureau Building) | 8.30am to 3.00pm (Monday – Friday)
2. **Lautoka Voter Services Centre**
36 Vitogo Parade Lautoka | 8.30am – 3.00pm (Monday – Friday)
3. **Labasa Voter Services Centre**
8 Legal Aid Building, Jaduram Street, Labasa | 8.30am – 3.00pm (Monday – Friday)