



**ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION**  
Papua New Guinea



# SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON 2022 NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION

PAPUA NEW GUINEA ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION

DATED THIS: 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023



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## SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON 2022 NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION

ORGANIZATION:

PAPUA NEW GUINEA ELECTORAL COMMISSION

SUBJECT:

SUBMISSION ON 2022 NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION

PURPOSE:

ENQUIRE TO IDENTIFY ISSUES AFFECTING THE ELECTION MANAGEMENT IN PNG

OBJECTIVE:

IMPROVE THE SYSTEM BY RECOMMENDING SUITABLE APPROCHES TO BETTER  
MANAGE ELECTION AND ITS OUTCOME

MISSION:

IMPROVISE ELECTION RESULTS

DATED THIS: 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

**ELECTORAL COMMISSION - SUBMISSION TO THE SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY  
COMMITTEE ON 2022 NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTION**

The 2022 National General Election is the turning point for elections in PNG. The critical concern is the question of can PNG do better when it is conducting a national general election. Elections have been conducted since 1964 and hence, it could be argued that our electoral performance should be on par or better against other similar democracies.

The conclusion of the recent 2022 NGE however does raise very serious issues with the way that PNG prepares for and conducts an election event.

**The recently concluded National Election Review Workshop in November  
2022 examined the following key areas.**

- Stakeholder Partnerships and Consultation
- Electoral Boundaries
- Electoral Awareness
- Voter Enrolment
- Provincial Application and Data Entry Processing
- Logistics
- Temporary Electoral Workers
- Training
- Polling
- Counting
- Results Transmission
- Results Management
- Election Petition
- Financial Management

These are issues that have emerged in past elections and continue to persist.

**Reviews and recurring themes from past elections since 2007 also covered similar contents from the topics such as:**

- Electoral Roll and voter Identification
- Electoral Boundaries
- LPV – Voting System
- Nominations and Integrity Law
- Election Petitions
- Election Administration
- Security Issues in elections

**Next Steps towards 2027 National General Election- What can PNGEC do?**

**1. Election Administration**

- a. Section 16 of the election law requires the involvement of government agencies to make available such staff as may be required. The provision should authorise PNGEC to seek the advice and involvement of government on the conduct of the elections especially the IDEC, (Inter-departmental Election Committee) and PESC, Provincial Election Steering Committee.
- b. The critical qualification is the independence of the PNGEC. Section 126 ,(6) of the Constitution makes it quite clear, that “PNGEC is not subject to direction or control by any person or authority.

- c. To extend the power of the Returning Officer under Section 19(1) of the election law to seek assistance of individuals as well as groups including a committee to assist with the ward electoral roll updating and compilation.
- d. Provincial Election Managers should be authorised by the election laws to become permanent Returning Officers for all electorates in a province for the purposes of roll update, preparing polling schedules and recruitment of the needed TEWs; (Temporary Electoral Workers) for an election. The position is not mentioned in the Organic Law on Elections but only in Section 4 of the Regulations.

## ***2. Electoral Boundaries***

- a. The critical issues that require attention are boundaries of LLGs and Open Electorates. These boundaries always change during the conduct of an LLG Election and during the conduct of a National General Election.
- b. New Open Electorates inevitably need a brand-new electoral roll and adequate funding provisions must be appropriated for the purpose. Ideally PNGEC must be allowed sufficient time to prepare properly for their elections.
- c. The new electorates for the Prime Minister and Women must be formulated. Only parliament can do this.

## ***3. Electoral Funding and Appropriation***

- a. PNG has adopted a 5 Year Electoral Cycle according to the election law. This legal recognition must be supported by timely and adequate guaranteed funding arrangement for both the preparations, procurement, and the actual conduct of the election.

This will support the continuous roll awareness and updates and roll displays strategies being envisaged. PNGEC must be allowed to regularly perform these important responsibilities to mitigate election petition costs that have become a permanent feature of our electoral history.

#### ***4. Voter Awareness and Education***

- a. Guaranteed funding and appropriation annually will enable this important responsibility to properly conducted across PNG. The areas of Generic Awareness on the election law and the rights and responsibilities of a voter; LPV Awareness and Targeted Awareness are key demands upon PNGEC

#### ***5. Electoral Roll and Voter Identification.***

- a. The voter electoral framework is provided for by DPLA through the Proclamation of Wards Process. The creation of any new wards or changes to boundaries of existing wards must be made 12 months before the issue of WRITS for an election. For changes made less than 12 months before the Writs are issued; these will not take effect until after the election. Election preparation must not be thrown into disarray. The election law must prohibit such instances.
- b. Managing the roll at the ward level must be a proactive process and involve both the communities and other government officials within the LLG. The ward councillor must be a participant in the process as well. All stakeholders at this level must have clarity of their mandated roles and responsibilities.
- c. A ward electoral roll is the basis of an election there according to the election law. PNGEC is currently authorised to maintain and

keep rolls electronically. The printed roll has been the norm for all elections conducted so far in PNG.

- d. It must be recognised that PNGEC is the sole mandated authority to manage and update electoral rolls for elections in PNG. The election law and the Constitution Section 126 allow this.
- e. To professionalise the enrolment process, PNGEC will need to appoint a permanent Enrolment Coordinator for each province immediately. The official will facilitate the electoral roll update and maintenance process for the province including awareness, enrolment, and data processing.
- f. The electoral roll will be made available for public inspection, claims for inclusions, alterations and objections on a continuous basis throughout the electoral cycle. The roll can be made available for the public twice annually, (May and November) to check their details or otherwise.
- g. Appointed officials at the LLG level may conduct a verification of the ward electoral rolls against available data sources including the ward records.
- h. The Preliminary roll must be displayed for a minimum of 30 days for the public to check their details in the ward and at the LLG Offices.
- i. Prior to elections voter enrolment receipts can be issued to with the voters details and the voters unique numbers that would be printed and made available for collection during the final enrolment update or roll display period prior to elections. Additional collection centres will within each ward and LLG Office.

- j. PNGEC will progressively expand the identity based enrolment subject to availability and distribution of unique and verifiable identity documents for the citizens of PNG.
- k. Suggestions that enrolment, voting and counting could all be done electronically using a single electronic system. The features of such a system and its practicality and cost effectiveness remains unclear in the law. Experiences from around the world and the South Pacific Region attest to the very high cost of developing such a system and sustaining over time.
- l. Section 68 of the election law authorises PNGEC to establish voter identification systems and use them at elections. Section 77 of the National Election Regulations make allowances for photo identification to be used. PNGEC has already some experience with this, and will continue the procedure for future elections.

**6. *Nomination Fees***

- a. PNGEC recommend for an increase in Nomination Fees for National General Election to increase to K5,000 from K1,000. The LLG nomination fee may be increased to K1000.

**7. *Security Issues affecting elections.***

- a. The powers of PNGEC under Sections 96A, 96B, and 96C to cancel an election must be extended to delay issuing a writ if conditions within an electorate are such that a proper election cannot be held.
- b. A stakeholders collaborative meeting and assessment at the electorate level including Police, NIO and community groups as well as to proceed with the election or not.



**Logistics** – Greatest challenge ever, will remain so until such time link PNG concept links up the 96 Districts/ Electorates with an acceptable road infrastructure. (**Appreciates less cost on Chopper hires**)

Submitted by:

**Mr. Simon Sinai, ML**  
Electoral Commissioner

**SMT Members**

Mr. John Kalamoroh – Deputy Electoral Commissioner  
Ms. Margaret Vagi – Director Election Operations  
Ms. Kila Vaname – Director – Policy  
Mr. Isaiah Aire – Director – ICT  
Mr. Oscar Pomaleu – Director – HR  
Mr. Naiamo Bouauka – Director – Finance

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