



Autonomous Region of Bougainville

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Provincial Election Manager

Date: 10th May 2023

The Special Parliamentary Committee on General Election 2022

The Chairman

PO Box

Boroko

NCD

Dear Chairman, Hon. Allan Bird, MP

RE: AROB 2022 National Election Submission

As the Provincial Returning officer for the 2022 National General Election in AROB, it is my pleasure to be part of this very special meeting which is the Special Parliamentary Committee on General Elections hosted by the National Government. I would like to acknowledge the Chairman, Hon Allan Bird and his team members. I will be giving an overview on the 2022 National General Elections conducted in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville with Challenges faced and recommendations.

Prime Function of the Electoral Commission

- It is the prime function of electoral commission to organize and conduct all elections for the Parliament and the Legislative arms of the Local – level Governments.

Our Vision

To be a vibrant, leading and credible Electoral Commission that has the ability to innovate and change to better deliver transparent, free, fair, safe, and inclusive elections

Our Mission

To plan and conduct free, fair, transparent and democratic elections by providing quality electoral services in accordance with relevant laws and by providing greater voter education to enhance public and stakeholder participation and confidence in the electoral process



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- **Overview of Autonomous Region of Bougainville (Provincial Level Government context)**

1. AROB consist of three open electorates, South Bougainville, Central Bougainville, North Bougainville & the regional seat.
2. AROB consists of 13x LLGs and 442 wards
3. Population approximately at 400,000
4. Security operations during the election didn't experience much election violence and entire election operations was quiet and maintain normalcy.
5. 2022 National Election service providers outstanding for polling vehicles, boats for the three electorates is at K1.3million yet to be paid
6. Other payments for the service providers for AROB for the 2022 General elections were paid last year December 2022

- **Provincial Election Administration Planning**

1. Budget – 2022 National Election budget request was K8.7million but only K1million was allocated to PNGEC Buka to conduct the General Election.
2. No assistant funding from the Election steering committee during the elections

Issues encounter: Bougainville land geography settings are huge compare to other NGI province, with the budget cut, it was a big challenges to coordinate the 128 polling teams during polling with logistics and other administration but we manage to coordinate the multiple days of polling.

Electoral Roll – PNGEC has a MoU with OBEC (office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner) and used its base roll to do the update (enrolment). Data entry was done in the provincial level and updated rolls send to HQ, approved by Electoral Commissioner as a certified roll to be used during polling. Total eligible voters for the region stands at 216,000 on the electoral roll.



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Election Operations

Nomination Process

1. 2022 National Election Nomination day in AROB was peacefully conducted and candidates and supporters maintained peace in the three region/ Electorates

Issues encounter – All gazette Returning officers or Assistant Returning officers must be release by the Electoral Commissioner before the issue of writ for planning and administration purposes within the province.

2. A total of 55 candidates in AROB contested during the 2022 National General Election. Out of the 55 candidates, four (4) female candidates nominated.

Issues encounter – Candidates endorsed by political parties **NEED** to provide all necessary documents on timely manner in order for the Provincial Returning officer /Returning officer to accept his/her Nomination. *Example: (endorse letter for the party leader/ secretary of the political party)*

Campaigned period

1. Candidates and supporters did performed very well in maintaining orderly manner in their conduct during campaigning
2. Candidates campaigned postures were respected by other candidates by not vandalism it and promote respect in the region.

Polling period

1. AROB went for multiple polling days during the 2022 General Elections (5days) ✓
2. Polling went well but few issues that come upon (names not on the roll)



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- Counting period

1. Counting period for AROB for the three Open Electorate's as well the Regional Seat were well managed and the writs were return on the 28th July 2022 for the two electorates and the regional seat except North Bougainville Open after Late William Nakin pass on. North Bougainville Open Electorate will go for By Election as soon as National Government release Funding.

Issues encounter – issues by candidates & their scrutineer's were well managed by Returning officers and electoral process were understood well till declaration were made.

Recommendation for PNG Electoral Commission in to the future

Base on the challenges/issues faced listed are some of the recommendations listed below;

1. Funding for the Electoral Roll Update Must be seen as an on-going activity till issue of writ
2. PNGEC must adopt the old Village recorder system by allowing ward members/committee do the update daily and PNGEC will have to retrieve the data to merge on to the Base roll for that District, LLG and ward for that Province. This will assist to minimize duplicate of names and other issues on the roll.
3. Funding for the General Election must be given on timely manner before the issue of writs in order to manage well the election cycle as well the service providers who are to engage to provide services to PNGEC in the province. Funding must be release to the Province.
4. Appointment and gazette of Returning officers and Assistant Returning officers must be release by the Electoral commissioner before the issue of writ for planning and administration purposes in the province.
5. Budget must be given according to the request budget submission, and must be sent to the provincial treasury office managed at the Provincial level by the Election Manager and oversee by the Provincial Election Steering committee for acquittal purposes. This will help to manage the elections without any outstanding's that may arises.



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6. Roll – Electoral Roll exercise must be seen as the MAIN OBJECTIVE of the PNG ELECTORAL COMMISSION and must be funded by the Government and must be seen as an on-going activity for the next 4 years till issue of Writ for another General Elections.
7. Enrolment by law is compulsory
8. Voting is not compulsory therefore I suggests if the organic law can be amended so all voters must vote in their LLG, ward and district level. I suggest if there must be a penalty fee of K20 for the voter whose name on the electoral Roll but did not take part during voting – on the other end the voter process justify voter turnout.

Handwritten notes in the right margin, including the word 'Voting' and other illegible scribbles.

Conclusion

On behalf of my Bougainville Regional Election Steering committee especially my Chairman and chief Secretary to the ABG Government Mr. Cedric Himata, Deputy Chairman and OBEC Commissioner Mr. George Manu, I am happy to present to this committee issues encounter during elections and recommendation's that can be approved by the National Government to assist and fund PNG Electoral Commission to better manage its Election cycle in the future.

Thank you,

Justine Pantumari
Provincial Returning officer – 2022 National General Election
Election Manager
Autonomous Region of Bougainville